Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Welcome to our Prep families for 2016. It is only Week 4 and the children are already beginning to settle into the routines and procedures of Prep.

This year, Prep children will have many opportunities to learn at their own pace in accordance with the Australian Curriculum. Teachers meet regularly to share ideas and resources and to discuss children's needs and interests.

The key learning areas and content are:

- **English** - Each week the children will be investigating two sound/letter relationships. Throughout the term, the following rhyming families will be studied: am; it; an; to and it. The sight words - I; am; the; is; can; see; in; that; it; on; at and look will be introduced within meaningful contexts. The students will listen to, read and view a variety of spoken, written and multimodal texts for enjoyment. Our chosen theme for this term is: Nursery Rhymes and Traditional Tales. The title of this unit is “Here is a Tale, Rhyme or two, some are silly, old or new...” where we will be focusing on rhyming words along with the rhythm and the lilting tones of nursery rhymes.

As almost all classroom-based learning relies on oral language, our primary focus for homework in Term One is the further development of language skills. Children will be required to prepare for Show and Share as per roster; as well as engaging in “Talking” homework (suggestions for this homework will be sent home weekly). Homework discussions can also assist the consolidation of learning that is currently being explored in the classroom (the sounds; word families and sight words that have been already outlined).

- **Mathematics** - The exploration of **Numbers** to 9; **Patterns and Algebra**: Comparing groups. **Measurement**: the concepts of long, short and tall; heavy and light; full, empty and half-full, and length; **Geometry**: what is a circle, triangle and square; curved and straight; **Statistics and Probability**: comparing groups.

- **Science** - In the ‘Weather in my world’ unit science is linked with literacy in the classroom. Students’ beliefs and understanding about the air, Sun and wind will be developed as they work through hands-on activities. Through investigations, they will increase their knowledge of how the characteristics of weather affect their daily lives.
History - As the children settle into Prep, routines need to be established. The children need time to get to know each other as well as their school environment. We are beginning Term One with a unit entitled, Belonging. It will be a time for us to get to know the children and the families they belong to. During this time, we will focus on our similarities and differences as individuals and as family members. We will also compare our family images with those of the past to gain further insight into the features of families. The children will learn each other’s names and how to relate to each other, beginning to develop friendships and a sense of belonging in their new class communities. If you have not brought in a photo yet of your child’s family could you please do so as soon as possible for ‘Our Family’ photo wall.

The students will also explore the place they live in and belong to, and learn to observe and describe its features. Learning about their own place and building a connection with it contributes to their sense of identity and belonging and an understanding of why and how they should look after places. They will begin exploring their feelings about places by talking about their own special places, and what makes them special.

Religious Education - Commencing with Ash Wednesday, there will be a focus on ways to improve oneself, by trying to follow Jesus’ example through Lent. The children will be introduced to Gospel stories and Catholic teachings. Particular attention will be paid to relationships with peers and ways to treat others in Prep. The children will participate in Daily Prayer; the Virtues program and will be developing their vision of how they want their classroom environment to be. As part of this visioning process the students are exploring the book “Have You Filled a Bucket Today?” by Carol McCloud. This book utilises the metaphor of filling and dipping in an invisible bucket to help illustrate to children how our actions and words impact on the well-being of ourselves and others.

Fostering an environment where the children feel secure, happy and valued members of Guardian Angels’ is paramount. It is essential that we take every opportunity to encourage the children to share the knowledge and skills they have already acquired so we can then plan for more individual needs and interests. Therefore, activities may vary in each of the Prep rooms.

Before/After School
From Week 3, there will be a change to our before school procedures. When children arrive at school, they will put their bag on the port rack at their classroom and then go to the green playground for play. This area is supervised from 8:10am. No children are to wait outside the classroom in the mornings. Teachers will collect the children from our designated line up area when the first bell rings at 8:25am and walk the children to the classroom. No children are to play on the adventure playground before or after school or the downstairs playground for their own safety.

Specialist Lessons
The Prep classes have begun participating in specialist lessons each week. We visited the library to borrow books, share stories with Mrs Carolyn Matta and learn more about how the library works. Children will only be able to borrow if they have a Library bag. Other specialist lessons that will take place include: Drama, H.P.E and Music.

Assemblies and other special events
Prep classes will continue to attend school assemblies on Wednesday mornings. We will be leaving from the green playground when the second bell rings. If you are late to school you will need to bring your child to the undercover area on the Mt Carmel campus (across the road). We will also be taking every opportunity to be involved in school liturgies and celebrations throughout the year and we encourage you to join in with us whenever possible.
Tuckshop
Tuckshop is now available to Prep students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Orders need to be placed online through flexi schools, please be advised that Prep students are unable to order slushy drinks.

Useful junk for craft and play
We would appreciate any donations of resources for the children to use in their craft and other creative endeavours (e.g. empty small boxes, magazines, egg cartons, etc.) Anything that you think might be remotely of use and of value can be brought in to us. If you are unsure or can assist us in any way, please see one of the Prep teachers.

Responsibility for belongings
We are endeavouring to get the children to look after their belongings as much as possible. Thank you to the parents who have been encouraging their children to put their own bags, notes, red folders and drink bottles in the right areas in the mornings. It saves time and effort and teaches the children to take care of their belongings, an important life lesson. We ask that all belongings be named, including shoes and socks.

Lunches and Snacks
As the day progresses it has been observed that some of our children's behaviour begins to change especially after lunch or snack times. Sometimes, there is a correlation between the contents of a lunchbox and learning and/or behaviour. For optimal learning our children's diet should contain unprocessed natural foods, not food in packets. Highly processed foods; foods containing artificial colours, flavours and preservatives and those high in sugar should be avoided. "If your Grandmother didn't eat it, neither should you!" (from the book, 'How to Get Your Kids to Eat...But Not Too Much' by Ellyn Satter).
If an occasional packaged item is in the lunchbox, please ensure children are able to open it as some packaging can be quite difficult to open. Children should be able to open all lunch items independently.
Some of our children are becoming confused with what foods are to be eaten at lunch or snack. If they help to pack their lunches it may help ease this confusion whilst encouraging our reluctant eaters - they eat what they make!
In our Prep community there are children who are allergic to peanuts, peanut paste and nut products. Consideration of this is recommended when preparing lunches.

Fruity Fridays
Encouraging children to eat fresh fruit can be difficult. Lunch boxes inevitably end up with squashed or bruised fruit pieces and we see a lot of fruit thrown straight into the rubbish bins. To avoid this we are hoping that our families will support us by sending in one whole piece of fruit each Friday to share. We will cut and share our fruit platters in each class during our day so that the children are able to try new and different fruits without being turned off by the "brown look". Seasonal fruits are more appetising when your friends are trying them with you.

Letter and Number Write and Wipe Sheets
All prep students were give a laminated worksheet with red arrow prompts to aid in letter and number formation. The purpose of these handouts is for you to use and reuse at home.

Date Claimers
29 Jan - Welcome Liturgy (8:35am-9:15am)
12 Feb - P and F Welcome Barbecue
10 Feb - Ash Wednesday
17 March - St Patrick’s Day
22 March - Class Visions at 8:45am in each Prep Classroom (all welcome)
24 March - Last day of Term 1
11 April – First day of Term 2
(Parent volunteer information and training dates to be confirmed)

We are looking forward to a great year working with you and your children.

Kind regards, The Prep Team.