

THE A-Z

ADMINISTRATION

If you have any queries concerning the school in general, please do not hesitate to call the office between 8:30am and 3:30pm. At times when the office is unattended, the answering machine will be switched on. Please leave your name and message and we will return your call at the next convenient break in classes.

Biddeston State School encourages parent participation in decision-making and strives for effective communication. You are encouraged to keep in regular contact with your child's teacher.

We hold parent-teacher interviews early in Term 2. However, if you wish to discuss your child's progress, please organise a time to meet with the teacher

The best time to contact the Principal is from 8am to 8:30am each school day or from 3 – 5pm on the school phone (46916145) or mobile (0409 896 233).

ADMISSIONS/ENROLMENT GUIDELINES

Preparatory Year of schooling has replaced the Preschool program. Children must be aged five by 30 June in the year in which they enrol. Consideration for early entry, based on information and at the Principal's discretion, is given to those children who turn five by the end of July. Parents can enrol their child in the Preparatory Year by contacting the school directly. There will be no waiting list for enrolment in the Preparatory Year.

For a child enrolling, schools require proof of the child's date of birth, such as a birth certificate, passport or visa. Admission of students to all other years is on the presentation of a Certificate of Transfer issued by the child's previous State School in Queensland. Students being enrolled from a non-state school or from interstate are requested to produce documentation from their previous school before enrolment proceeds.

ARRIVAL AT AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

Students are not allowed in the school grounds before 8:30am. Before 8:45am, there are no adults rostered on playground supervision as this is the time when staff is preparing for the day. Parents are requested to pick up their child/children before the bus leaves at 3:25pm. The two Adventure Playgrounds are out of bounds before and after school for safety reasons.

If there is occasion when your child/ren needs to be at the school earlier than 8:30am, **you will be required to notify the Principal.** Students who arrive early will be required to sit under the shade structure behind Block A until 8:30am.

A *Departure Roll* is used at the school for the departure of students every school day. The roll has two columns – one for students who normally travel by bus and one for students whose parents collect them. Parents are asked to never take their children without either marking their child/ren on the roll or notifying the teacher on Bus Duty. At 3:20pm when the final bell rings, ALL students remaining at the school must assemble in the shade area to answer a roll call. This process ensures that the school effectively dismisses every student from the school grounds. Any students still waiting to be picked up following the roll call must sit on the verandah of the main building. Parents/caregivers must visit the office to sign the Departure Roll after the bus leaves. If your child/ren is/are leaving the school with a person other than you, their parent - the school MUST be notified either by phone or letter. Your child/ren's safety is of utmost importance to us.

There will be occasions when parents/caregivers will collect their child/ren who normally travel by bus. Please notify the school (written or verbally) of the time of collection, otherwise your child/ren will be sent on the bus. Please do not expect the school to act on a verbal message given by your child/ren.

On occasions, parents may need to take their students out of school for appointments etc. or a child may take ill and need to go home. On such occasions, you are required to sign the *Register of Part-Day Absences*, which is kept in the office. This register will also need to be signed if the student has been to an early appointment and is coming to school after the normal starting time.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

The attendance of all school age children is compulsory by law. Parents are reminded that children are only permitted to be absent from school for the following reasonable excuses:

- sickness
- temporary or permanent infirmity
- an unavoidable cause
- fear of infection with disease

Parents are encouraged to ensure that family commitments do not encroach upon school time *as any absence from school has a detrimental effect on scholastic performance*. With careful and thoughtful planning, dental appointments and family trips can usually be arranged for school vacations.

Advice from parents is required to explain ALL absences. This note is needed to satisfy legal requirements and must detail the specific reason for absence. Unfortunately a note which only advises that the child was absent on a particular day will not suffice. Notes explaining student absences should be handed to the child's class teacher. All absences are recorded on the school's Administration System and, unless a reason is submitted detailing the absence, it will be recorded as 'Unexplained.'

Parents are also required to advise the school in writing if their children are to be absent for five days or more. Parents are able to apply to the Principal for an Exemption from Attendance if their child/ren are to be absent for longer than ten days.

BEHAVIOUR

Students at Biddeston State School are encouraged to look to positive attitudes and behaviour in order to maximise the educational benefits for all. We at Biddeston strive to develop the following behaviours in each student: punctuality, readiness to learn, understanding, co-operation, consideration, honesty, health consciousness, self-control and pride in oneself and school. We believe that each student has rights but with these rights come responsibilities. Our *School Responsible Behaviour Plan* sets out in detail, behaviour expectations and is the school's behavior policy. This is available on the school's website and at school.

BUS TRANSPORT

The school bus route covers many of the district roads and the majority of students are able to use this facility. Students living to the west of the school are able to board the high school bus and then transfer to the local bus to complete the journey.

Students travelling on any school bus service are bound by a Code of Conduct, which is a set of behavioural guidelines. Copies of this Code are available from the bus operator or Queensland Transport. A copy is also held at the school office.

Each bus run has a Conveyance Committee of parents who meet at least once per year to discuss the organization of the service. Matters relating to the conveyance of students, condition of the roads, times and pick-up stops are discussed at these meetings. If you require further information, please contact the school.

When our students travel to Interschool Sport or go on local excursions, we normally hire the local bus. This is funded through a student bus levy, which is paid annually.

Students using school transport services are covered by the third party insurance held by the owner of the vehicle.

CARE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

It cannot be stressed too much just how important it is to name every item of your child/children's belongings, particularly their clothing. Unless clothing is marked, it becomes extremely difficult to determine who owns what.

The cleaner is diligent in gathering any clothing left lying around and putting it in the Lost Property box in A Block. Students who know that they have missing clothing should check there on the next school day. Please also refer to Lost Property.

Students' books must be neatly covered and named and kept in good condition. Students are not permitted to bring other personal items, such as toys, to school as they can be easily lost, broken, or cause injury to other students.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

We enlist the help of all parents in keeping a watchful eye on school property and library books loaned to your child/ren. Books are costly items and we do expect our students to look after them. The most common problem is that of younger members of the family scribbling in books or tearing them.

When we feel that a child has deliberately misused property or been extremely careless with property, making it unusable, we will ask that a contribution be paid towards replacing it.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

As teachers, we believe that we are working in a team with parents to help students achieve the best possible outcomes. With this in mind, we encourage parents/carers to contact teachers to exchange information. If you require an official meeting with a teacher, we ask that you make an official interview time with your child's teacher at a time that is mutually suitable. Best times for teachers are generally in the afternoon when lessons are finished for the day.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Emergency contact information - such as home telephone numbers, work place telephone numbers, mobile phone numbers - is required for the school records. In the event that your child/ren requires urgent medical attention, parents will be contacted as soon as is possible. It is parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure that the schools emergency contact information for students is kept up to date.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL

The Department of Education policy requires that students are skilled in emergency evacuation procedures.

Students at Biddeston State School will practice the procedure once each term. On the sounding of an alarm, all teachers and students will leave their classrooms and assemble on the cricket pitch on the main oval. The roll will be called when children are assembled to ensure all are accounted for. Parents and visitors who are in the school at the time of an evacuation drill are to join the students and staff in leaving the buildings.

Alternatively, there may be a lockdown drill procedure where students are to remain in class or move to the nearest classroom and follow staff instructions until the students are accounted for and advised that the drill is completed. The lockdown drill alarm is the continuous ringing of the hand bell for a period of more than one minute.

FORMS

From time to time, there are forms that need to be completed and returned to the school. These forms can be 'posted' in the mailbox inside the office.

GROUNDS

The mowing and maintenance of the grounds are paid from a grounds care allowance in our school's General Account. Infrequent working-bees are held to maintain these conditions and make for a safe environment for our students. You are encouraged to lend a hand on these occasions.

The P and C appoint a Safety Officer each year. Each term, the Principal and Safety Officer make a thorough inspection of the school grounds and make recommendations to the P and C of matters that require attention.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with parents and class teachers for every student are conducted in the beginning weeks of Term 2. However, if you have any concerns with your child's progress at any other time, do not hesitate to call the office and arrange a suitable time to speak with the teacher concerned. See also "Contacting Teachers".

JEWELLERY

The wearing of jewellery is strongly discouraged and no responsibility will be taken for its loss or damage. Some jewellery, particularly earrings and necklaces, is potentially dangerous. Other decorations such as nail polish, tattoos, etc are also strongly discouraged. Watches, plain studs or sleepers for pierced ears and signet rings are allowed.

LOST PROPERTY

All possessions should be clearly named. Lost property, which is available for your inspection, is kept in a box at the top of Block A. The lost property is displayed to the children on a regular basis, however very few articles are ever claimed. Labelling your children's clothing will enable quick identification. All items not claimed before the end of each term are sent to charity. Hats are the most commonly lost item. Try using White-Out to mark hats to ensure that names are clearly visible.

NEWSLETTERS

The Biddeston Bulletin is published weekly and distributed to each family via the eldest student in the family. The Newsletter contains general information about school life as well as reports from the different classrooms. We like to include stories from the students from time to time. The newsletter is also available via email and from the school website.

Several copies are delivered to the local shop each week for the benefit of the local community. Don't miss the local 'rag'!

PARADES

Each Monday and Friday morning, a whole school parade takes place on the parade ground, located at the front of the school. Year 6 students lead parades, commencing with singing the Australian National Anthem. We sing *Happy Birthday* to students and staff who celebrate their birthdays at that time. Messages are passed on to students, and students will give reports of recent happenings e.g. sporting fixtures. The weekly behavior focus is presented at parade, with the students being explicitly taught behaviour expectations.

At the end of each term, parents are invited to attend a Special Parade. This is held in the Prep/Year 1 class. At each parade, some students present something of their current work units – samples of work, poems learned or musical items. Gotcha awards for behaviour are presented as well as medallions. Acknowledgement of Country is recognised on Special Parades.

Students really appreciate the effort that parents make to be present on these special occasions.

PAYMENT ENVELOPES

In an endeavour to simplify procedures for parents and administration, the school provides a quantity of payment envelopes to be used when sending money to school. We ask that families complete the necessary details before 'posting' in the office mailbox. It's a good idea to keep these in your magnetic folders ready for use when required. Under no circumstances is money to be left at the office without being contained in an envelope with full details as to whom it is from and what it is for.

If your supply of envelopes is exhausted before the year is out, please don't hesitate to ask at the office for further supplies.

RESOURCE CENTRE

The school has a modern, well-equipped resource centre containing books on a wide variety of subjects, as well as pamphlets and audio-visual materials. The school places a high importance on the use of the resource centre as it:

- (a) encourages children to learn the fundamental skill for lifelong learning - the skill of finding information for oneself ; and
- (b) provides a place of enjoyment where children can find stories to extend their experience, give wings to their imagination and tickle their sense of humour!

Each class will have an allotted time to visit the library each week when the students will be able to choose a book to take home and read. The borrowing period for books is two weeks, whilst non-book material is available overnight. Extensions to loans may be made unless the material is on reserve for another borrower.

All children – from Prep. to Year 6 must have a library bag. This can double as a homework bag. The bag needs to be of a generous size to enable large books to fit in it. A very sturdy library bag, which is made from waterproof material, has a velcro fastening and has a great handle for carrying can be purchased from the Uniform Convenor. It has a picture of the school and is red.

Parents are asked to encourage your student/s to participate in borrowing books on a regular basis, as this is a positive way to improve their reading skills. Parents are also asked to encourage students to care for the books or resources they borrow. Parents will be asked to reimburse the school for lost or damaged books (refer to Care of School Property).

The Resource Centre also doubles as a mini-computer lab, which is accessible to students from all year levels.

The Resource Centre also houses a selection of books to assist parents and teachers when circumstances arise in which some guidance or assistance is needed. Parents are encouraged to borrow from this section as often as needed. Invariably this type of book is expensive, therefore we ask parents to be diligent in their care throughout the borrowing period.

SCHOOL LEADERS

Two school captains and two sports captains for each house are elected at the beginning of each school year. All year six students are eligible to apply, with the selection process including an oral presentation and a ballot of students in upper school levels and teaching staff.

School leaders are expected, at all times, to demonstrate sound leadership qualities. They are to be excellent role models to younger students in dress, presentation and conduct and are required to undertake certain public speaking duties throughout the school year such as votes of thanks to visitors, ANZAC and Remembrance Day parades, etc.

School leaders whose behaviour or performance is unsatisfactory may lose their leadership privileges at the discretion of the Principal.

STORM DRILL

In the eventuality of a storm during the school day, all students will be detained in their classrooms until the conclusion of the storm. This policy is also adhered to if a storm strikes at 3.00pm or there is fear of a storm just after 3.00pm.

Parents should also be aware of the following points:

- (a) Due to the danger of using telephones during storms, the school telephone will not be answered until the danger has passed, so please contact the school mobile (0409 896 233).
- (b) Where time permits, arrangements will be made for parents to pick up children early. Parents must collect students from the classroom (allowing students to dash to the front of the school trying to find cars could lead to a very dangerous situation). Under no circumstances are teachers to release students to the care of any person other than the children's parent or guardian, unless a message from the child's parent is first received.
- (c) The decision as to whether the children will walk or ride home rests with the Principal unless a parent has rung with specific instructions.
- (d) Parents are responsible for collecting children held at school if a storm is prolonged after school hours.
- (e) Buses will not depart early but may be held at school especially if the driver advises that there is some danger in going out.

SUN PROTECTION

The school's Sun Protection Policy states that all children must wear a suitable hat (broad brimmed or cap with attached flap) if they wish to play outside. If the student does not have a suitable hat, they will be required to remain under the main school building. Parents of students who continually arrive at school without a hat will be contacted.

Sunscreen is available at the school for all students to use each day. The wearing of plastic sun-safe sunglasses is encouraged.

Break times are arranged so students are not exposed to the summer sun more than is necessary. There has been extensive planting of trees in the grounds to supply shade areas for the students to enjoy.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Parents are reminded that although teachers are usually at school early, there is no organised supervision. For this reason, parents are requested not to deliver their child/ren to school before 8:30am.

Adult supervision is provided throughout the remainder of the school day. A playground duty roster allocates duty to all teachers and teacher aides.

Please also refer to *'Arrival To and Departure From School'*.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Biddeston State School has a fully operational sports shed, with a large variety of sporting equipment. Our 5/6 students operate the sports shed at first and second break. Students are able to borrow equipment such as balls, hoops, skipping ropes, etc for use during playtime. As there are sufficient numbers of equipment available, students are discouraged from bringing their own sporting equipment from home.

SPORTS HOUSES

Competition between house teams is encouraged in sporting activities. Once enrolled, a student will be allocated to either Campbell or Leslie House, with families being kept together in one house. Students from Year 6 – a boy and a girl (where possible) are elected as house captains each year.

Each house has their war cries. Each house has an individual polo shirt (green or blue) which students are encouraged to wear each Friday. At Friday's parade, students line up in their house teams.

STUDENTS ON TRANSFERS

If a transfer to another State School is required, it should be requested in writing or by phoning the office, stating the reason for the transfer and the school to which the student is being transferred.

All reading books and school materials must be returned to the school before the child leaves. Children should collect all their own books and personal items before leaving.

TUCKSHOP

The tuckshop is run by the P & C Association. The day of operation varies according to availability of helpers. Tuckshop does not usually operate in the first week of Term.

Our tuckshop operates through the efforts of parents who volunteer their time to this worthy cause. We encourage you to help in some way as funds are always used for the benefit of our students.

UNIFORMS AND PERSONAL GROOMING

Biddeston State School is a 'uniform' school and it is expected students at the school will abide with this policy, which has been established in consultation with the Parents' and Citizens' Association. We request each parent's support in this area because the wearing of uniforms:

- (a) should prove long-wearing and economical,
- (b) benefits students in that they learn to present themselves neatly and appropriately and they learn to take pride in their appearance and the school they represent,
- (c) encourages identification with the school and promotes school spirit, and
- (d) reduces distractions caused by variations of dress and grooming.

Every student is expected to wear the correct school uniform every day. Our uniform is simple, smart, practical and relatively inexpensive. We hope that every student who attends Biddeston State School is proud to be associated with our school and therefore keen and happy to wear the uniform correctly.

Students are also expected to maintain an appropriate standard of personal grooming. This includes hair styles, length and colour of fingernails and general appearance.

Inappropriate personal grooming could be deemed as being:

- (a) anything that portrays the school in negative image,
- (b) unsafe for the student or others,
- (c) likely to result in a risk to the health of the student or others.

Biddeston colours are red and black.

Summer Uniform:

Students wear a red tab-front polo shirt. Boys wear black shorts and girls have a choice of black skorts or netball skirts. Black hats and black socks complement the uniform. When purchasing shoes for school, you are asked to consider black shoes. All students are expected to participate in sport on a daily basis. Therefore, boots are an unacceptable form of footwear.

Winter Uniform:

For the winter months there are several items to protect against the elements. A long-sleeved polo shirt is a great starter while students can add a red polar-fleece jumper or vest and black pants. There is also a black spray jacket available. Girls are encouraged to wear black tights with their summer skorts/skirts.

Parents have found that the most economical way to outfit students for winter is to check out the chain stores as these items are frequently on sale at the beginning of the season. Home-sewers, of course, will know the best place to purchase fabric if they wish to make sweatshirts and track pants. However, sweatshirts and polo shirts purchased elsewhere will not have the Biddeston emblem screened on them.

Sports Uniform:

Students wear polo shirts in their house colours for interhouse sports. Campbell House wears royal blue with Leslie House wearing green. Students are encouraged to wear these shirts every Friday with the exception of Years 3-6 when they play sport with another school.

Wearing of Hats:

Due to the high incidence of sun cancer in Queensland, students are requested to wear a broad brimmed hat or school hat (caps are unsuitable cover for the whole head) while playing outside on the oval and surrounds (please refer to "Sun Safety Policy").

Most items of the uniform can be purchased through the school's uniform convenors. Patterns for skorts can be loaned for those who wish to make their own.

The Uniform Committee also operates a second-hand uniform pool, where items of uniform can be purchased for a very minimal cost. The name of the uniform convenor and a contact phone number is in each newsletter. If you require a uniform item, please contact that person to make arrangements to secure your needs. Uniform items are not available through the office. A uniform price list is available on the school website.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Members of the community are most welcome to use the school's facilities and grounds for worthwhile purposes when not required for school purposes. However, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Prior permission must be sought from the Principal before school facilities/grounds can be used.
2. Due to large amounts of personal information collected in our classrooms pertaining to students, it is illegal for any person to be in a classroom unless a staff member is present.
3. An adult **MUST** accompany any person under the age of 18 years while on the grounds.
4. The residence and its yard is private property and not for community use.
5. Cars are not permitted in the school grounds.
6. Smoking is not permitted in the school grounds and alcoholic beverages must not be brought onto the school's premises.
7. All areas of the grounds used must be left clean, neat and tidy. Wheelie bins are situated on the eastern side of the sports shed and rubbish can be deposited in them.
8. In the event of using the school facilities, eg the tennis court or bike track, please locate, read and sign a short term hire agreement form located in a plastic envelope at the tennis court or bike track.

Please note that due to legal considerations, persons entering the school grounds without Principal authorisation may face police action.