



NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEREWETHER HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Established 1970

PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET



Strive and Serve

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I welcome new parents and carers to Merewether Heights Public School. Our school has a long and proud history of providing quality education for the students in the Merewether Heights area.

Merewether Heights Public School is a vibrant and innovative learning community committed to working together to equip students with the skills to become future focused global citizens. With the school community we provide opportunities for our students to become confident, creative, responsible and successful learners in an environment that promotes equity, excellence and respect for all. Students benefit from a learning culture that promotes high standards of achievement and develops within them a passion for learning.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide some information about day-to-day organisation and administration processes at Merewether Heights Public School. It is important that the school and home communicate and work together to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for students.

Our weekly school newsletters, annual school reports and other information sent home from time to time is an important tool to ensure clear communication. These documents are also available from our website. (www.merewethht-p.schools.nsw.edu.au). We aim to minimise the 'information overload' that often accompanies school newsletters. Our newsletters are capped at 2 pages in length except for the first newsletter of each month, which includes as much information as is required for the month / year ahead.

Merewether Heights Pubic School enjoys the support of a hard working parent body and community partnership. The success of our organisation depends on the support afforded by its community and the quality of interpersonal relationships and understandings we achieve between adult members of the community. I welcome and encourage all parents of Merewether Heights Public School to get involved in the life of the school and the educational journey of their children.

Our P&C meets in the school multipurpose room the first Monday of the month at 7pm and everyone is welcome.

All teachers at Merewether Heights Public School are committed to ensuring the best possible learning experiences for children in a safe and challenging environment. Teaching and learning programs are responsive to individual needs and the school is well supported to help students who may be experiencing difficulty in their learning. The school is also committed to the education of gifted and talented students, and seeks to provide enrichment opportunities where appropriate.

Please contact the school should you require further clarification on the policies and practices of the school, or have further questions about how we can best support your child.

Timothy Beaven

Principal

Merewether Heights Public School



CONTACT DETAILS

The information presented in this booklet is intended to be helpful to you as your child enters our school. Merewether Heights Public School looks forward to a pleasant and harmonious relationship with you.

In partnership, we aim to provide a happy learning environment where children feel safe and secure and work toward reaching their emotional, social, physical and academic potential.

Phone Number	02 4963 3192
Mailing Address	PO BOX 3246 MEREWETHER NSW 2291
Street Address	Cedar Crescent MEREWETHER HEIGHTS 2291
School e-mail address	merewethht-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Webpage	www.merewethht-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
School App	Skoolbag Merewether Heights Public School
Facebook	www.facebook.com/merewetherheightspublicschool

COMMUNICATION

WEBSITE

The School Website is regularly updated. The School Website contains links to many policies and procedures at Merewether Heights Public School as well as an up to date school calendar. In the events page, you can use the links at the bottom of each event to set up a calendar link from your smart phone. This QR code will take you directly to our webpage.



<https://merewethht-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

<https://merewethht-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/events.html>

NEWSLETTERS

The School Newsletter is published each Tuesday on our website, on our Skoolbag App and is also emailed to parents who have requested the email copy. A hardcopy of the newsletter is also available upon request.

The Newsletter is an important means of communication between the school and home, so we ask that you ensure you receive a copy of the Newsletter each week, or view it online, and carefully read it. This will ensure that you are kept up to date with school policies, procedures and activities, as well as having the enjoyment of reading about the wonderful efforts and achievements of our students, staff and parents.

Parents are able to access the school newsletter via the school website at:

www.merewethht-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

SCHOOL APP

Our school app, **Skoolbag Merewether Heights Public School**, is an efficient way to communicate absences or your change of details to the school. **Please note:** When sending through a Skoolbag absence notification, this is printed out by the office staff at the start of the day and sent to the classroom teacher that afternoon. It is not automatically updated on the class roll.

The school regularly sends alerts out regarding excursions, reminders, and any last minute change of details for the day. Please consider having this on your mobile phone to keep up to date as possible.

FACEBOOK

Our school has a Facebook page which can be found at www.facebook.com/merewetherheightspublicschool

We use this as a promotional tool only, eg so parents can see what the students have experienced on excursions or sporting events.

If you need to contact the school for any reason, please do so by telephone or email.

SMS

For emergency situations, the school will distribute a SMS message to all mobile phone numbers listed as 'Contact 1'. Please make sure you keep the school informed of any changes to numbers or circumstances.

A daiy SMS is sent out around 10am from the school for any student absence with no explanation. You can respond to the SMS with a reason for the roll. If you believe your child should be at school and receive this message, please contact the office immediately on **4963 3192**.

An SMS for absence is sent for each individual student. If you wish to update the school with a reason of absence for more than 1 child, you must respond to each message received individually or contact the school.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

OFFICIAL UNIFORM

Girls

- Grey check summer tunic
- Red School Polo Shirt
- Grey Box Pleat Culottes **LOWES OR CLOTHING POOL**
- White socks or black stockings
- Black footwear
- Red Hat Bucket or Brim



Optional:

- Tartan skirt / dress with white long sleeved collared shirt
- Grey long pants in winter

Boys

- Grey Microfiber shorts or long trousers
- Red School Polo Shirt
- Grey socks
- Black footwear
- Red Hat Bucket or Brim



Optional:

- Grey long pants
- Red long sleeve Polo Shirt



Jumpers/Jackets

- Red/Grey Track Jacket
- Red Fleece Jacket **SCHOOL CLOTHING POOL**



Hats

- School hats can be purchased at the Clothing Pool or at the school office.
- Hats are \$15 each. Cash only please.

Sports Uniform

- Red Polo Shirt
- Red Long Sleeve Polo Shirt
- Grey Microfiber Sport Shorts (Boys and Girls)
- Red Sport Skirt optional for girls **LOWES OR CLOTHING POOL**
- White socks



Please Note:

- The sports uniform applies to children from Kindergarten to Year 6.

THE COMPLETE SCHOOL UNIFORM CAN BE PURCHASED FROM LOWES AT KOTARA

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL AND VACATION CARE

The Merewether Heights OOSH runs on school grounds. Supervision is available from 7:00am until 6:00pm daily. Vacation Care is also available.

For further information, contact the centre on 0412 787 605.

CAR PARKING

Parents are requested to use kerbside parking in Scenic Drive and Cedar Crescent when calling for their children. A 'Kiss and Ride' zone has been created on Scenic Drive from 8:00am to 9:30am and from 2:30pm to 4:00pm. During this period this is a No Parking zone, and parents should be aware that Rangers do patrol schools in our area and will book anyone they see parked in the 'Kiss and Ride' zone between 8:00am-9:30am and 2:30pm-4:00pm.

Children and parents **should not** walk through the teacher's car park but use the appropriate footpaths.

The staff car park is for **staff and disabled parking** only and is not available to parents because of congestion and safety concerns for our students. Should you need to use the disabled car parking spaces, you must arrange this with the principal before doing so.

DISABLED PARKING

We have one disabled car parking space available for students with RMS Disabled Parking Permits. The parking spaces are situated just inside the car park entrance off Cedar Crescent. Please contact the office if you have a Disabled Parking Permit and have a need to park in the Staff Car Park.

We would like to ask that if you hold a Disabled Parking Permit and you do not need to get out of your car and come into the school, please park on the road and make arrangements for your child to meet you at your car.

The entrance to the ramp must be kept clear at all times.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify the school of any change of address, together with contact phone number, as soon as your details have changed. It is imperative that we have updated information in case of accident or emergency. This can be done by email, skoolbag app or letter.

CLASSROOM REQUISITES

Each classroom teacher will provide parents at the beginning of the year, or on enrolment, with a list of books, writing implements and other equipment needed by the children in that class.

LOST PROPERTY

Some children lose items of clothing and other property. If this property has no name on it, it is difficult to return.

PLEASE CLEARLY MARK ALL EQUIPMENT/CLOTHING.

Items found but not claimed are placed in the lost property box located outside the Hall. Parents and children wishing to examine the lost property for missing items should look in the lost property box.

COLLECTION OF MONEY

Throughout the year, money is frequently collected at school as payment for student participation in excursions, visiting performances, sporting events and other educational programs. The policy serves to explain the expectations and procedures for collecting money for all educational events. All permission notes and money for school activities and excursions are due as stated on the note supplied.

The preferred payment method is:

POP – Parent Online Payments is an online payment option available through our website. Please ensure you send the receipt number to school to ensure your payment has been processed correctly. Permission notes have a QR code on them for you to access our payment page directly.

CASH When money is brought to school for various purposes, the correct amount should be placed in an envelope which clearly states Child's Name, Class & purpose for the money. All money should be handed in to your child's class teacher.

Although every endeavour will be made to do so, it may not always be possible to give change for money paid by parents at the school office. Likewise, it may not be possible to give a receipt on the spot. Receipts will be sent home at the earliest opportunity.

EFTPOS is available at the school office between 9:00am and 3:00pm. As set out by the Department of Education Finance Directorate, strict guidelines must be adhered to. These include:

- No cash refunds or withdrawals
- Card must be presented with signature verification
- EFTPOS transaction must have a receipt

School Guidelines and Policy:

- NO over the phone transactions
- No P&C transactions (hats, shorts, socks, stockings, canteen, etc)

COMMUNITY USE OF BUILDINGS

The School Hall is used by a number of community groups to run activities such as Dance. Classrooms and other learning spaces are occasionally used by music tutors.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

When children attending school are in the custody of one parent or guardian, a copy of the court orders outlining the conditions should be sighted by the Principal. It is important that this procedure be carried out in the interests of your child, so that the school is aware of the situation. The Department of Education has guidelines that we are required to follow.

For the benefit of the children, and in the interest of keeping things comfortable for children at school, it is our expectation that when one parent receives a permission or information note, that information is shared with the other parent, or that you advise them that the information is readily available on the school's webpage.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

It is essential to advise the school of all up to date emergency contact details. It is imperative that we be able to contact someone for your child at all times.

INTERNET ACCESS AND EMAIL

Students are provided with an Internet and email account to enable learning opportunities. Parents will need to inform the school in writing if they **do not** want their child to have access to the NSW Department of Education (DoE) Internet and email facility.

MONEY

Large sums of spending money should not be brought to school by children. Parents are asked to monitor this situation carefully.

Money for specific items should be sent to the school in an envelope with the child's name, class, amount and what for, clearly written on the front.

PHOTOGRAPHS AT SCHOOL

Occasionally photographs are taken of students at school and may be used for Newsletters, school website, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, newspapers, video, television or DoE promotion. If you **DO NOT** wish your child to be photographed, please indicate this on your child's enrolment form. If your child is already enrolled at our school and you would like to change their level of permission, please supply the office with a written request.

ROAD SAFETY MESSAGE

With more than a million young people heading off to school each day in NSW, school road safety needs to be in the minds of parents and other road users. Travelling in a car, walking across the road and riding on a bicycle are all ways that people can get seriously hurt on our roads. Children under 10 years do not have the skills to be safe in traffic environments. They should be accompanied to and from the school or bus stop and should not ride a bike to school.

Please take note of the following recommended guidelines:

- Only children in Years 3-6 are to ride a bike to school. (Permission will be granted to younger children in **exceptional** circumstances and on application to the Principal)
- Park outside the school gates and in the correct areas
- Pick up children on the same side of the road as the bus stop or school
- Never call your child across the road
- Make sure all children travelling by car are correctly restrained
- Make certain children use the kerb side door to alight from the car
- If your child rides a bike, ensure he/she wears a helmet at all times and in all places
- Do not allow your child, who is under ten years, to ride a bike on the road
- Helmets **must** be worn. Bikes **must** be walked in and out of school grounds and secured in the bike rack area provided

Please note: We discourage children riding scooters to school. If your child must ride a scooter to school, they are subject to the same rules as a bike rider.

KISS AND RIDE ZONE

Kiss & Ride Zones are designed for your convenience and your child's safety. Designed for quick entry and exit, these zones operate under the same conditions as no parking zones, which means you may stop to drop off or pick up children for a maximum of 2 minutes.

Kiss & Ride Collection Area

The supervised area for students waiting to be collected from Kiss & Ride will move from the surfboards to the gate near the OOSH sign / staff carpark. This is to ensure cars in the Kiss & Ride will flow toward the collection zone as opposed to the collection area being centralised in the Kiss & Ride Zone.

The car parked at the front of the Kiss & Ride zone will be called forward by the teacher on duty. When this is done, please move your car forward; across the staff carpark driveway. The staff member will then send your child/ren to your vehicle once your car has stopped moving. All children are to enter the vehicle from the footpath side of the vehicle.

The Kiss & Ride Zone is for families to collect their child/ren from the Kiss & Ride supervision area and is not an additional area for families to park and collect children directly from classrooms.

Pick Up Times

Remember to arrive at the Kiss & Ride Zone to pick your child/ren up in the afternoon ***from 3:30pm onwards*** as it takes children a little while to walk from their classrooms to the new Kiss & Ride assembly area. All students should be collected from Kiss & Ride ***by 3:40pm.***

Name Labels

It is important to display the surname of your child/ren in the side rear passenger side window or on the passenger visor (flipped down) so the teacher on Kiss & Ride duty can call your child to the gate, ready to walk to your car as you pull in front of the carpark. This helps to keep the traffic flowing and makes the Kiss & Ride Zone work effectively.

Making the Zone Safe for Children

Parents are asked to ***drive as far along the zone as possible*** so there is space behind your vehicle for others to pull in out of the traffic flow. This helps the zone to work efficiently and, even more importantly, improves safety by ***discouraging overtaking and reverse parking. These are both hazards when young children are about.***

Cars must move forward in succession to collect children from the Kiss & Ride assembly area. If you approach the zone and see a gap further along the zone, please wait at the end of the queue rather than driving forward and reverse parking into the spot.

Complying with the Road Rules

There are two road rules on the use of Kiss & Ride Zones:

- Drivers must remain with their vehicles;
- Vehicles are only allowed to stand in the Kiss & Ride Zones for a maximum of 2 minutes. ***Once the two minutes are up, drivers must drive around the block to allow time for their child/ren to arrive at the Kiss & Ride Zone.***

Drivers are subject to fines and demerit points if they do not comply with these conditions.

Final Note

This is about ensuring the safety of young children and attempting to make the afternoon pickup as hassle-free for everyone as possible. The school seeks your support in achieving both of these goals.

Please ensure you deal courteously with other drivers and school staff when using the zone.

SAFE TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

If there is to be any change in after-school arrangements for young students, please write the teacher a note. This can prevent unnecessary upsets. Should you need to make last minute changes, please phone the school on 4963 3192 and your child will be notified. This is especially important in the case of separated/divorced parents and differing access arrangements.

Please travel to and from school with your Kindergarten child. If this is not possible, please arrange for them to be accompanied by a responsible and reliable older brother, sister or neighbour. Small children feel secure when accompanied by someone they feel they can depend on.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

The school administration staff work from 8:45am to 3:30pm daily, with the office being operational for business from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Whilst these are our operational hours, we try to have someone available for your enquiries.



PROBLEM SOLVING

Problems of any nature should be communicated to the school as soon as possible. The school needs to know if a problem arises so action can be taken. Early notice can often avert major difficulties.

The following procedures will hopefully streamline communication and set out clear procedures should problems arise.

PARENTS

If parents have an issue at class level, then the first point of contact should be with the class teacher.

If a problem concerns a teacher other than the class teacher, then an approach to the teacher concerned should be made. Alternatively, each Stage has an assistant Principal who is the supervisor. Please contact them if your issue is related to their stage:

Assistant Principal – Early Stage 1 / Stage 1 (K-2): Mrs Amy Hannah

Assistant Principal – Stage 2 (3-4): Mrs Kate Townsend

Assistant Principal – Stage 3 (5-6): Mr Mathew Casserly

Appointments should be made through the School Office or directly with the teacher or Assistant Principal. If parents or caregivers feel a problem is not resolved after speaking to an Assistant Principal, please contact the Principal with any further concerns.

STUDENTS

If students have a problem, they should first contact the teacher on playground duty or the class teacher. If a problem persists then parents should follow the procedures outlined above.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are not necessary at school. They are an expensive item that risks damage or loss in the school environment. At Merewether Heights Public School any student who needs to contact their parents is able to use the school phone after asking permission. Parents that need to contact students can ring the school at any time.

However, should a situation arise where a student needs a mobile phone after school, it must be switched off during school hours and left in their school bag. Student safety and protection is one of our prime responsibilities and problems may occur if students are making and receiving unsupervised phone calls or taking unsupervised and unsolicited photos at school.

DOGS

Dogs in our playground can pose a problem. For the safety and wellbeing of all our students, parents who walk their dogs to school in the morning and afternoon are expected to wait outside the school gate / fence with their pet. Dogs and other pets are not allowed on the school grounds.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Child protection is a sensitive and challenging area for school communities. Because children and young people are relatively powerless in abuse relationships, they rely upon responsible adults to intervene and assist them. The NSW Department of Education (DoE), as an agency responsible for the care and welfare of students, has a charter to protect young people in its care from sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect, and from improper conduct of a sexual nature. The school is bound by legislation, to report any suspected abuse or neglect of children in cases where the school has reasonable grounds for such suspicions.

Through its schools, it is the role of the Department of Education to:

- provide educational programs in child protection
- protect students from abuse and neglect and assist in the recognition of suspected child abuse and neglect
- provide on-going support for students within the normal duties of school staff

Child protection education aims to assist students to develop skills in:

- recognising and responding to unsafe situations
- seeking assistance effectively
- establishing and maintaining non-coercive relationships and strengthening attitudes and values related to equality, respect and responsibility

Through child protection education, children will learn:

- about feeling safe and their right to feel safe
- to recognise appropriate touching and inappropriate touching
- that appropriate touching is an important part of positive relationships
- that they have a right to say no to a person who touches them inappropriately or who threatens their safety
- that it is important to tell trusted adults about such situations
- that they may have to keep on telling people until they are believed
- that help is available to them in their communities

Research supports the idea that effective child protection education:

- commences at the point of entry to school
- deals directly with relevant aspects of sexuality
- includes practice scenarios which deal appropriately and specifically with child abuse

There is a need to use correct anatomical names to label specific parts of the body. Mandatory units of work may be viewed by parents at any time. If you **do not** wish your child to take part in the program, you need to put this in writing and present it to your child's teacher.

COMPUTERS

There are computers or Ipads available in each classroom across the school and a multipurpose room with networked computers. Every learning space has a large screen display for instruction.

Students have access to the Internet via the DoE Portal login protocol. Once enrolled, students are issued with an individual e-learning account and password. Children have access to the Internet and an individual email account through a safe DoE browsing filter. This means that a wide range of programs are available for students and teachers to use. Students are taught diverse technological skills from Kindergarten to Year 6. These skills include advanced keyboard, word processing and document enhancement skills, management of databases, spreadsheets and tables, research processes using the Internet, email communication, power point presentations and interactive games skills.

CURRICULUM: KEY LEARNING AREAS

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) sets the syllabus standards that all NSW schools must follow. There are syllabus documents in six Key Learning Areas that primary schools are mandated to teach. All syllabus documents are organised into a framework of learning outcomes and indicators within the four developmental stages: Early Stage 1 (*Kindergarten*), Stage 1 (*Years 1 and 2*), Stage 2 (*Years 3 and 4*) and Stage 3 (*Years 5 and 6*). Your child's class teacher is available to discuss in detail the standards and content of the teaching/learning programs of the stage at which your child is working.



The six Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are:

English

Speaking and Listening, Writing and Representing, Handwriting and using Digital Technologies, Reading and Viewing, Spelling, Thinking Imaginatively, Creatively and Interpretively, Expressing themselves, Reflecting on Learning, Responding and Composing and Grammar Punctuation and Vocabulary

Involves the development of skills needed:

- to listen and communicate effectively in a variety of contexts
- to identify and consider different viewpoints
- to read widely with understanding and enjoyment
- to spell accurately
- to write grammatically in a variety of forms for different purposes
- to critically analyse and share responses to a range of texts
- to use an integrated range of skills, strategies, media and technologies

Maths

Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, Statistics and Probability Involves:

- learning the basics of number, space and measurement concepts
- developing skills of calculating, reasoning, predicting and verifying
- gaining a foundation for future study in Mathematics
- being confident, creative users and communicators of Mathematics
- learning to investigate, represent and interpret situations
- developing an understanding of mathematical concepts and fluency with mathematical processes
- being able to pose and solve problems and reason in Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability
- recognising connections between Mathematics and other disciplines
- recognising Mathematics as an important aspect of lifelong learning

Geography and History

Involves:

- developing investigation, communication and social skills
- gaining knowledge and understanding about the history of Australia, its geography, social institutions and place in the world
- developing a commitment to maintaining and improving the environment
- exploring, comparing and appreciating religious and moral beliefs and values
- learning about cultures and languages

Science and Technology

Involves:

- learning skills of enquiry, investigation, design and problem solving
- gaining knowledge and understanding about natural and built environments, and people's interaction with them
- acquiring a knowledge of design process
- understanding the interaction of technology and society

Creative and Practical Arts - Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama

Involves:

- developing technical competence and skills in designing and performing
- learning appreciation and self-expression in visual and practical arts

Personal Development / Health / Physical Education (PD/H/PE)

Involves:

- learning to develop an active and healthy lifestyle
- developing skills in interpersonal relationships and positive values, attitudes and beliefs
- participation in regular physical activity including exercise, sports, games and gymnastics

EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATION

The Principal manages all the school's educational programs and administrative and organisational procedures across the school. The Executive Staff (Assistant Principals) supervise each learning stage and support and mentor the teachers in those stages. Executive teachers are available to discuss the learning and wellbeing needs of the students in the classes of the teachers that they supervise. The Principal is actively involved with teachers and students in the educational, cultural, environmental and sporting programs at the school. The Principal is available to discuss the learning and wellbeing needs of all students.

Currently the school is organised into 13 classes from Kindergarten to Year 6, spread out across the school site. Teachers work together in grades and stages to plan and implement educational programs for the students in their classes. The classes are organised into grades within the four stages of learning. Kindergarten is Early Stage 1, Year 1 – 2 is Stage 1, Year 3 – 4 is Stage 2 and Year 5 – 6 is Stage 3. Every stage has access to a Learning and Support teacher who works with students and staff to assist individual students with additional learning needs (support or extension).

School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) are employed to work with students to provide additional adult support for identified learning, emotional or behavioural needs.

EXCURSIONS



Educational excursions or performances are planned as experiences to supplement and extend class and school programs. Our excursions are planned for the whole school, classes or stage groups.

If, for some particular reason, a parent does not wish his/her child to participate in any excursion, visit or performance, this information can be conveyed to the relevant Assistant Principal. It is realised that at times the cost factor of excursions can cause some difficulty. However, our aim is that all students participate in what is often an integral part of the learning process. Please contact the Principal if there is a financial concern so that arrangements can be made for part-payment or deferral of payment.

A permission note signed by a parent or guardian will be obtained and is necessary for all other excursions and activities.

The school (through the Principal) reserves the right to exclude a student from any excursion, visit or any activity if there is considered to be some safety or behaviour problem which could create difficulties. Parents will always be involved in this decision.

HOMEWORK

The school's Homework Policy has been designed to encourage students to undertake a reasonable amount of homework over a week commensurate with their age and developmental level. Homework is an experience whereby each child should reach a stage of responsible self-direction and is designed to support work in class.

Homework is set by class teachers and will be outlined to parents by the teacher at the beginning of the school year. The focus of homework and the time to be taken to complete activities will vary through the stages. Please discuss homework issues with the class teacher.

LIBRARY

Merewether Heights Public School has a well-equipped library which is widely used by teachers and students across the school. With the support of the P&C and through a variety of fundraising activities, the school continues to purchase quality books and resources for teachers. The Library also has a range of computers which are used for research activities and technology tasks. Children require a library bag in order to borrow books. They are encouraged to take care of these books as they are expensive to replace if lost or damaged.

The library is also open to students during recess.



RELEASE FROM FACE TO FACE TEACHING PROGRAMS

Across the school there are a range of quality educational programs in which students participate, interwoven into the school's organisational structures to enhance learning opportunities and outcomes for students.

Each week, class teachers have two hours of release from face to face (RFF) teaching, to program and develop resources for teaching/learning activities, complete administrative duties and meet with parents. RFF Teachers are employed to take classes from K-6 and implement stage programs in Key Learning Areas to complement class teacher programs. All RFF teachers address outcomes and indicators from syllabus documents and complete assessment tasks in these areas.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies are held regularly for all students in the school hall. These assemblies are run by the students, with the student presenters reporting on school activities. Teachers are invited to speak to the assembly about any matters they wish to discuss with the students. Classes regularly present some aspect of their schoolwork to the assembly. Student awards are also presented at these assemblies.

Assemblies are a time to recognise the fine achievements of individuals and our school in general over the week. The School Song, National Anthem and presentation of awards are a feature of the assemblies.

Assemblies occur on a Friday afternoon, starting at 2:30pm. Parents are always welcome to attend.

SPORT

Merewether Heights Public School has a long history of sporting success. We celebrate our students' successes and encourage the qualities of fair play, sportsmanship and consistent effort. All classes from Kindergarten to Year 6 participate in organised sports programs. All students are encouraged to enjoy sporting activities and participate at their own level of expertise.

Sports Day for Years 3 to 6 is on Friday morning in Terms 1 and 4, Friday afternoon in Term 2 and 3. Students are organised into four sporting houses and compete in a range of in-school activities. The school also has sporting teams that participate in interschool activities at district, zone and regional level. You will be advised of these activities as they occur.

Sporting programs for K-2 classes are organised by class or stage teachers and generally take place on Friday mornings, unless otherwise advised. Students wear joggers and their sports uniform on nominated sports days.

The sporting houses and colours are:

ALGONA

MANOOKA

TOORUMBEE

WARRAWONG

Parents of Kindergarten children will be advised as to which house their child has been placed in.

House point competitions are held at Athletics Carnival, Swimming Carnival and Cross Country.

In Term 1, a Swimming Carnival is held for students from Years 3 to 6 and students in Year 2 turning 8. In Term 2, a whole-school Athletics Carnival is held. Older students have the opportunity to qualify for participation in Zone, Region and State Carnivals.

The School Swimming Scheme is available for all Year 2 children in early Term 4 at Charlestown Pool. It is run by Department of Sport and Recreation instructors.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

School Leaders are elected from among Year 5 students at the end of each year. These students perform many important tasks in a variety of school functions, lead school assemblies, welcome and thank visitors and represent the school at functions outside the school. They are chosen by popular vote of the student body and are expected to provide an example of appropriate behaviour and attitude to the rest of the school.



REPORTING TO PARENTS

In line with updated Department of Education policies, the school has a reporting system to show parents their child's progress in relation to the expected stage outcomes in the six Key Learning Areas. A variety of assessment tasks and tests are designed throughout the year, as part of the regular class program, and work samples will be collected to demonstrate the level of attainment towards the outcomes.

At the beginning of the school year, class teachers will outline their class routines and teaching programs to parents in an information session. Stage outcomes, class priorities and teaching/learning strategies will be discussed and assessment processes explained.

The formal reporting process will include:

- Written Student Reports at the end of Term 2 and Term 4, based on student progress in relation to stage and grade syllabus expectations
- Parent-Teacher Interviews towards the end of Term 1 to discuss students and report on progress

Parents can make appointments with teachers at other times to discuss their children's welfare, performance and progress. As teachers have a range of teaching, school management and student supervision responsibilities, it is more convenient if the appointment times are negotiated with teachers. The Principal or Assistant Principals are also available to discuss parent concerns. Working together, as parents and teachers, will ensure the very best welfare and learning outcome for your child.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT

Children who turn five years of age by 31st July of the year they start Kindergarten are eligible to enrol at our school.

To register your child, go to the school webpage and click on the Enrolment Tab. This page has information on enrolment procedures and protocols and a link to enrol online. You can add attachments of the required documents:

- Proof of Age (eg Original Birth Certificate);
- Immunisation history (medicare printout showing immunisation is up to date); and
- Proof of Address (refer to Merewether Heights Public School Student Enrolment: Procedures and Protocols)

Please understand that class groups may be subject to change during the first few weeks of Term 1.

GRADES 1 - 6 ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Parents seeking enrolments for their children in Grades 1 – 6 also apply online. They should contact the school to make an appointment to see the Principal. Students are placed in a provisional class for up to two weeks to determine their social and academic suitability to the class.

NON-LOCAL ENROLMENTS

The schools' current enrolment policy is currently available on the school website. Non-Local enrolments are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students seeking enrolment from out-of-zone areas will need to complete an Out of Area enrolment application online. Go to the school webpage and click on the Enrolment Tab. This page has information on enrolment procedures and protocols and a link to enrol online. All Out of Area enrolment applications will be assessed by a school panel on a case by case basis. A place for Out of Area applicants depends on availability of places and the individual merits of the application.

TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER SCHOOL

Parents should notify the school in advance either personally, by letter, or via email if a child will be leaving the school. The intended new address and school should be available if possible.

SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT - OPAL CARD

The School Opal card replaces the old paper School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) travel passes for travel in the Opal network.

The School Opal card gives eligible school students free or subsidised travel on public transport between home and school on trains, buses, light rail and ferries.

Please visit: New Applications <https://apps.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts/applyNow>
Update Details <https://ssts-apply.transport.nsw.gov.au/ApplySSTS/UpdateEntitlement.html>
Lost/Stolen Passes <https://ssts-apply.transport.nsw.gov.au/ApplySSTS/ReplaceCard.html>

SCHOOL PHOTOS

During the year we arrange for individual, class and special group photos to be taken by specialists in school photography. Generally, the photos are taken in Term 2 and are distributed early the following term.

SCHOOL SONG

This is the song we are very proud to sing,
So on The Heights you will hear our voices ring,
While we are learning to work and play,
Building our friendships and knowledge everyday.

This is our song,
These are the bonds that we share;
In all we do
We know it's right and it's fair;
"TO STRIVE AND SERVE"

To keep us healthy in body and in mind,
We'll learn to think and to tolerate mankind.
Play fair at sport, try hard to do what's right,
Then out in life we spread a little light.

This is our song,
These are the paths that we walk;
Where e'er we go
People will know we have sought
"TO STRIVE AND SERVE"

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

All students are expected to always wear full school uniform, in accordance with the school's uniform policy developed and endorsed in collaboration with our parent organisations. Support of parents is sought in this matter.

The wearing of the school uniform at Merewether Heights Public School is seen as a valuable agent in the development of the child as a total, contributing member of a special social group – the school family. Exceptions to the wearing of the uniform would be rare and it would only be on those occasions where it would be impractical because of the type of educational experience being undertaken at the time.

A good deal of thought has been given to the design, material types, availability, durability and costs so that families will not be disadvantaged.

SUN SAFE POLICY

As part of the school's sun safe policy, we have a NO HAT, PLAY IN THE SHADE rule. It is expected that all students will wear a school hat when they are outside in order to reduce the risk of sun exposure. Students without hats are directed to play under shaded areas.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Visiting clergy and other volunteers conduct religious instruction for most classes every Wednesday. Children receive religious instruction by religious denomination. They are expected to attend these non-denominational lessons. Students are excluded from this program only on written instructions by parents. Information of SRE and Special Education: Ethics (SEE) options is available on the school website.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE SCHEME

In the case of financial difficulty, parents can apply for assistance from the Student Assistance Scheme. This scheme serves to provide financial assistance for excursions, events, competitions, performances, textbooks and uniforms. If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please do not let this preclude your child from participating in valuable educational events. The process is confidential and the funding is provided within the school budget to ensure equal access to educational programs and opportunities for all of our students.

Student Assistance can only be granted once the appropriate form has been completed and the parent contribution to the cost of the activity has been made.

The school has limited funding so please seek assistance as early as possible.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS

Voluntary School Contributions

School Contributions were introduced in 1991 to cover photocopying costs, paper, art and craft equipment, etc. Money collected is used to buy equipment for your children to be used in classrooms and the large quantity of copy paper. The school uses a very large quantity of paper for use by the children.

The School Contribution has been set at \$45 per child per year to help offset these costs. Parents are asked to pay the levy as soon as possible after the start of the school year. Parents may elect to pay this amount over four terms in four equal instalments.



HEALTH AND MEDICAL

ADMINISTERING PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

Parents of children who require prescribed medication to be administered at school must complete a REQUEST FOR SUPPORT AT SCHOOL OF A STUDENT'S HEALTH CONDITION.

The Principal will provide the form to the parent.

Students must not carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents that this is a planned part of the student's health care support, and must be supported in writing by a medical professional. Except in an emergency, only individual staff members who have volunteered and been trained, will administer prescribed medication to students. The Principal will oversee the implementation of the course of action that has been determined as necessary for the support of the student's health needs.

Medication must be handed immediately to the office staff upon arrival at school. Parents should supply correct dosage of the medication, where possible, on a weekly basis in a container dispensed by a Chemist, labelled with the student's name, details of medication and dosage including time to be administered and storage conditions. Most Chemists will print an additional label and put it on a small plastic bottle to be used as a school dosage container. Medication will be kept in the Office until the required time. It is the child's responsibility to report to the office when medication is needed.

Schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested in writing by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition. In some cases, the medical practitioner may not write a prescription for such medication because it may be available over the counter. NSW Health advises that this does not mean that the medication is not potentially harmful and that schools should follow the same procedures for such medications as for prescribed medications.

Where students have acute health needs, individual Health Care Plans may be developed for students. Health care plans must be developed for students who:

- are diagnosed with severe asthma, type 1 diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis and/or
- are diagnosed as being at risk of an emergency and/or
- require the administration of health care procedures

ALLERGIES, DISABILITIES, SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS

It is very important that all information about special medical conditions, allergies, physical disabilities or other health concerns is given in written form to the school. If we do not know about these issues, your child's health and safety could be jeopardised. Some students may require an individual health plan to ensure the safety of the student during school hours. An overview of all children with medical problems or special family circumstances is provided to classroom teachers in a 'Notification Folder'.

If medical or health circumstances change, please notify the office to ensure all information is current.

ASTHMA MEDICATION

It is especially important that the school has a record of all students who suffer from asthma. An Asthma Management Plan needs to be worked out and documented in the event of an asthma attack at school. An Asthma Plan, completed by your child's doctor, must be provided to the school in order for us to administer medication.

We understand that asthma medication should be immediately accessible to students, but student use needs to be monitored.

We advise that a clearly labelled "puffer" and "spacer" be provided and left at school along with written instructions by parents on how it is to be used by the student at school. All puffers are to be kept in the school's first aid cabinet and not in the student's bag. Puffer usage by students must be supervised by a staff member.

In older students, we encourage immediate access and responsible use of asthma puffers, but staff must be notified by students when they use the puffer so that usage can be monitored. It is advised that parents regularly instruct their children on the correct and responsible use of asthma medication.

As an Asthma Friendly School, and as advised by Asthma NSW, puffers are administered at a rate of one puff to four breaths, and repeated according to the number of puffs required.

ACCIDENT/ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Please provide the school with current emergency contact numbers, should you be unavailable in the event of your child becoming too ill to remain at school. In the case of separated parents, please ensure that access details are clearly defined so that staff can contact the designated parent. These contact phone numbers need to be updated regularly. If your child is ill before school, it is better for him/her to stay at home to avoid the spread of infection. When a child becomes seriously ill, or is seriously injured in an accident at school, medical attention will be immediately sought by the School Principal or his nominee. Parents are notified as soon as possible.

At other times a child may feel ill but respond to a rest period in the sick bay, before returning to class.

If your child becomes ill at school and needs to go home, we will contact you to collect your child from the office. The student's leave will be recorded.

Ambulance Cover

The school pays a comprehensive ambulance subscription which covers all children while in attendance at the school and on school excursions. This covers transporting injured students from the accident scene to hospital only and does not cover the return trip home.

Infectious Diseases and Minimum Exclusion from School

Chicken Pox	7 days after first spots appears. Sores must be scabbed over
German Measles	7 days after first spots appears
Measles	5 days after rash appears
Mumps	10 days after swelling appears
Glandular Fever	Exclude till fully recovered, or on receipt of medical certificate
Hepatitis	Exclude till subsidence of symptoms, or on receipt of medical certificate of recovery. Minimum 7 days after onset of jaundice
Head Lice	Hair must be treated with special anti-lice lotion or shampoo, available from a chemist and lice and eggs removed
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased
Impetigo	Exclude until sores have healed. Child may return if treatment is being carried out and if sores are completely covered with a dressing
Ringworm	Exclude until treatment completed, supported by a medical certificate
Scabies	Exclude until treatment completed, supported by a medical certificate

Please note:

In all cases children must be fully recovered before returning to school.

IMMUNISATION

The Department of Health recommends that children entering school be fully immunised. This is particularly important because your child will be coming into contact with many children and infection can spread easily.

Children starting school who have not already had booster immunisation should have those immunisations outlined by the National Immunisation Program. Please contact the Community Health Centre or your family doctor for details. Dates and times of clinics can be obtained from the local Council. Please provide the school with a Medicare printout showing all immunisations are up to date upon application to enrol.

Please note:

Children who have not been fully immunised may be excluded from the school should an outbreak of an infectious disease occur.



PARENT/CARER INVOLVEMENT

Research indicates that the link between home and school is a vital one for the child. Parental interest and involvement contributes greatly to the creation of an optimal learning environment for children. At Merewether Heights Public School, parent assistance is welcome:

- as a member of the Parents and Citizens' Association or School Council
- in the classroom as a parent helper
- on excursions
- at special days
- Athletics, Swimming Carnivals and Cross Country, as officials
- social events
- working bees
- canteen

If you are able to help in this way please contact your child's teacher. The Department of Education requires all volunteers to complete a *Declaration for volunteers and non-child related contractors*. These forms are available at the school office. All visitors must sign in at the school office.

PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Parents are encouraged to participate in a range of school activities. One way to participate is to support P&C activities and regularly attend meetings. The school has an active Parents and Citizens Association that supports the school in a wide range of activities. The P&C works to raise money for the school for the direct purchase of equipment for classrooms and improvement to school grounds. P&C meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30pm. The P&C attempts to keep parents informed on school issues related to their children as well as increasing understanding of wider educational issues.

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

SCHOOL CANTEEN

The Hungry Heights School Canteen operates three days each week – Wednesday to Friday, catering for children's needs at lunch and recess. The canteen operates under the Healthy Canteen banner which is a requirement of the Department of Education for the provision of healthy food for our children.

Prices of meals and over the counter sales are not expensive so there is no need for children to bring large sums of money to school. Children who do will be referred to the school office. Other than over the counter sales all meals are ordered online via www.quickcliq.com.au. This site is also used for the School Uniform Shop and P&C Events.

Hungry Heights is an operation of the school's P&C and can only function with the assistance of volunteers under the direction of the Canteen Coordinator. Volunteers can be parents, grandparents or members of the community who have a connection to the school and a WWC check. Shifts are only 2 hours long and very rewarding as the canteen is often a reward for our students and a much-loved part of the school community. Volunteering is easy through our online registration system.



SCHOOL HOURS & SUPERVISION

LATE ARRIVAL / EARLY LEAVING

School hours are from 9:25am to 3:25pm. It is a legal requirement that parents give an explanation for a variation in attendance.

If children arrive later after the start of the school day, parents are requested to accompany them to the office, where a late note will be printed for you. The form is then taken to the class teacher. An occasional late absence is understandable, but continual late absences impact upon the learning of children.

Similarly, if children leave early, parents are requested to go firstly to the office, where the reason for leaving early is recorded and the child called to the office.

We thank you for your ongoing support of this very important procedure as we have strict regulations governing the monitoring of student attendance.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON ROUTINES

Morning Routines

- Parents are requested to ensure students **do not arrive at school before 8:55am** when teacher supervision commences, unless attending teacher-determined activities.
- Students arriving before 8:55am are to remain seated in the basketball court area.
- No ball games commence before 8:55am.
- On the 8:55am bell, students put their bags in designated areas near their classrooms and move to the supervised areas to play.

Afternoon Routines

- Students are dismissed and at 3:25pm leave the school immediately by the most suitable gate, walking directly home.
- It is illegal to park across the school driveways.
- Parents are requested to observe the limited parking signs in front of the school.
- A teacher is on duty until the last school bus leaves.
- In the event of a parent being late, students will be supervised in the administration block or in Kiss & Ride lines. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified if delay is prolonged. Please make sure your contact details are correct.



SCHOOL HOURS

BELL	PRIMARY
Morning Supervision Bell	8:55am
Warning Bell	9:22am
Morning Session Bell	9:25am
Lunch Eating Time Bell	11:35am
1st Lunch Bell	11:45am
Warning Bell	12:12pm
Middle Session Bell	12:15pm
Recess Bell	1:55pm
Warning Bell	2:22pm
Afternoon Session	2:25pm
Dismissal Bell	3:25pm

STUDENT WELFARE

ATTENDANCE

All children are required by law to attend school from the age of 6 years. Some children attend school below the age of 6 years. Once a child is enrolled, it is expected that he/she will attend school every day.

From the first day, regular attendance is important. Friendship groups are formed and play activities teach social skills that are very important for later learning.

Research has shown one day away from school is equivalent to three days away, because of the catching up that has to be done, in addition to the present day's work. So, a child who is absent for 10 days, has effectively fallen 30 days behind the rest of the class.

The Department of Education accepts few reasons for absence. In general, they are:

- The child is too sick to leave the house
- The child has an infectious disease
- The child is incapacitated by injury and unable to move around the school
- Religious commitment or annual family holiday by arrangement with the Principal
- Emergency dental or doctor appointments (although after school is preferred)

If your child is absent from school, you need to:

- Ring the school if the period will be longer than three days
- Send a note with your child, on the first day back, to explain the reason for the absence

Please note:

It is legal requirement that all absences be notified to the school within 7 days.

Written notes are also required for:

- Any absence (whole or part days) including arriving late or leaving early and leaving the school grounds
- Indicating a change of address/phone number or changes to living circumstance
- Medical problems and administration of medication
- Travel variations e.g. if someone different is collecting your child

Exemption from Attendance

Applications may be made for exemption from attendance at school for long-term absences due to medical reasons. Principals, School Education Directors and Regional Directors are able to grant exemptions.

Applications should be made in advance where possible, and forms are available at the school office.

Applying for Leave (Travel or Holiday)

Applications may be made for Leave: travel or holiday to the Principal. It is the NSW Department of Education's position that family travel and holidays should be planned during the end of term or end of year breaks. If your intended period of absence exceeds 5 school days a formal application in writing is required. The appropriate paperwork can be collected from the office.

Home and School Liaison

Attitudes to learning and values are formed at home. Parents are the first and most important teachers. Don't underestimate your value as a teacher and take an active interest in your child's school life.

Your children are very important to us and we will do our best to give them a good start to school life. The quality of relationships established between adult members of the school community will impact positively upon the quality of life and learning within the school.

To help children achieve their best, it is helpful for us to know as much as possible about them. We ask you to communicate frequently with us and let us know about any situation at home which may affect their learning or behaviour at school. Changed situations like family illness, a parent being away or changes in family living arrangements or circumstances may affect the emotional wellbeing of children and thereby impact on their learning. If we know about these issues, we can understand your children's needs and support them while they are at school. Send a note to your child's teacher or arrange a meeting to discuss issues of concern. If talking about your child to any of the staff, it is preferable if you do so when your child is not with you.

Maintain a positive attitude to school and build up supportive relationships with staff and other parents. Contact us early if you have any concerns about your child at school or incidents that happen. When we work together, we can sort things out much more quickly to the satisfaction of all concerned.

SMS Absence and Message System

Merewether Heights Public School uses an SMS Absence and Message Notification System. If your child is marked absent from school or arrives late at school with no explanation from a parent/carer, you will receive an SMS notification.

Parents should reply to these messages with an explanation of the absence, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unjustified.

There are a number of guidelines to ensure your child's absence is recorded correctly.

- You will receive a text message for each of your children that are away. You must respond to each message individually. You cannot explain two children's absences in one message.
- Absences cannot be notified in advance via SMS. You can only explain the absence for the day indicated on the text message. Paper notes, phone calls, emails or Skoolbag to the office are acceptable means to communicate extended absences.
- If you wish to query an absence message, you must call the school on 4963 3192. Responding with a question or query will result in your child being marked unjustified.
- Please ensure your mobile phone number is kept up to date.



LEARNING & SUPPORT TEAM AND SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

The school has a Learning Support Team comprising the school executive and school counsellor that monitor student performance, welfare and behaviour across the school. When students are experiencing difficulty in learning or their behaviour is causing concern, a referral can be made to the school counsellor by teachers or parents. Referrals can also be made in response to critical situations requiring sensitive counselling and support.

When a problem has been identified, the school counsellor meets with the student and conducts a range of diagnostic tests to determine his or her needs and abilities. Parents and class teachers then meet with the school counsellor and decide what action needs to be taken in response to the information gathered and resources available. The student's needs are then met within the school's programs and resources but some students are eligible to access district or state program options.

STUDENT WELLBEING POLICY & DISCIPLINE CODE

In line with Department policy, Merewether Heights Public School has developed a Student Wellbeing Policy and Discipline Code. This was achieved after much consultation with the community, P&C and staff in the school, to reflect the views of staff and parents at this school. The policy has as its main aim to recognise, value and develop each student as a complete and unique person in the context of society. The policy is regularly updated to reflect current procedures.

STUDENT EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

The Student Emergency Contact Details form documents relevant information on each student. It is used as the first point of contact in the case of emergencies, illness or notification of incidents at the school. We request that it be updated regularly by parents. Please ensure that you keep the school informed of changed circumstances so that all information is correct.



Strive and Serve





