



A BOOKLET ABOUT

**STARTING
SCHOOL**

**Frequently Asked
Questions and Answers**

Lane Cove West Public School

*Educational excellence in a
creative and caring environment*



From the Principal's Desk

We warmly welcome you to Lane Cove West Public School.

Our school has a reputation as a caring and closely-knit community school. We have large grounds and offer a pleasant physical environment with shady trees, a large covered outdoor learning area (COLA), play equipment and expansive grass areas.

At Lane Cove West we have a very close relationship with our parent community and encourage participation by community members in all decision-making processes in the school. We find that by encouraging parent participation in school activities, parents become partners with teachers in their child's education.

We encourage open communication with your child's teacher and ask you to contact the school for an appointment if you wish to discuss any matters relating to your child's progress.

Students are the central focus of our attention and we cater for their educational, physical, social, emotional and cultural needs. We encourage students to develop independence, a love of learning and a desire to be active and caring members of the school community and the community at large.

We wish you many happy years at Lane Cove West Public School where your child will form many life-long friendships and become life-long learners.

Judy Doherty M.Ed., B.Ed., Dip T.

Principal

What is the role of the kindergarten teacher?

The teacher's role is to:

- create a positive learning environment for the student
- cater for individual differences
- nurture the child's development
- identify the stage of development of physical, emotional, social, intellectual and language in each child
- work from the child's prior learning and experiences and develop teaching and learning experiences which will develop the child's knowledge, skills and attitudes
- prepare the child for the future
- involve parents in the learning process
- inform parents/caregivers about their child's progress

What is the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment?

From 2010 *Best Start* is compulsory for all children commencing kindergarten. Children come to school with different levels of literacy and numeracy. Some children are familiar with books, can recognise some letters even write their name or count to ten, while others have not yet learned these skills.

Our Kindergarten teachers have always observed their new students and used different methods to find out what each child knows and can do so that they can plan and teach what their students need to learn next.

Best Start has been developed by early learning experts in the Department of Education and Training. *Best Start* is giving our teachers, and those teaching Kindergarten across New South Wales, a common set of high quality assessment tools and professional training.

We believe that *Best Start* will build on the strengths of our teachers and give your child an even better start to school.

The *Best Start Kindergarten Assessment*, will be conducted prior to children commencing school on Tuesday 2nd February. During our Orientation Program starting Thursday 5th November 2009, you will be asked to select a convenient time for your child to come in to school to be assessed. The assessment dates are Thursday 28th and Friday 29th January and Monday 1st February. The assessment takes approximately 30 minutes per child.

Your child and the *Best Start Kindergarten Assessment*

It is very important to emphasise that the *Best Start Kindergarten Assessment* is not a test. Its purpose is to help the teacher gather information to guide the teaching of your child.

The teacher will observe each child and use tasks, such as talking about a book they have read, and record what the students know and can do. The teaching of your child will be based on the information gathered in these ways.

You'll be given feedback about what your child's teacher has learned about your child, which you are welcome to discuss, if you wish, in keeping with our usual practice.

What is being assessed?

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

If you would like more information please look at the *Best Start* Website: <http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/beststart/index.htm>

When can I talk to staff?

The first place to start is with the class teacher, who can arrange a time to discuss any concerns you may have at a mutually convenient time. Please phone the school office to arrange an appointment. For major concerns, please make an appointment with Mrs Doherty. We discourage doorstep interviews as the teacher's attention is taken away from the other students in the class.

What are the school hours?

School commences at 9.25am and finishes at 3.25pm. Kindergarten children will, however, go home at 2.55pm on their first day for an approximate period of four weeks to help with their transition to school. In the mornings we encourage students to always arrive at school on time, at least 10 minutes before the bell.

If children arrive at school after the bell rings at 9.25am, they must be accompanied to the school office by the parent/caregiver and a late note must be completed. This note must then be taken to the child's class teacher. If a student needs to leave the school early to attend appointments etc, parents need to report to the office and complete an early leaver's slip before going to the classroom to collect the student. This is a legal requirement for the safety of your child.

Teachers are on playground duty from 8.55am. Children should not arrive at school before this time. If you are running a little late to collect your child at the end of the day, please telephone the school office on 9427 4743 and we will arrange for them to be supervised at the office.

At 9.25am all students assemble outside their classrooms. Please help your child to develop independent skills by leaving them prior to the morning bell.

RECESS: 10.55am – 11.15am

LUNCH: 1.00pm – 1.55pm

What will my child need to bring to school?

Textbooks will be on sale in the school hall in the second week of Term 1.

Please do not cover textbooks.

Textbooks should be clearly named on the FRONT COVER.

Your child will also need the following items:

- Painting Smock – one of Dad's old shirts will be fine – cut down in the sleeves to an appropriate length and Velcro attached at the neck.
- Library Bag – bags with the school logo are available from the school uniform shop but you may bring one you already have at home.
- Chair Bag – available from the school uniform shop. You may like to help your child decorate their chair bag.
- Excursion Bag – available from the uniform shop.

Please label all items clearly.

We would be grateful if you could supply the following items for communal use in the classroom:

- 1 large box of tissues
- 1 roll of kitchen paper towel or a sponge
- 4 glue sticks

Please do not send pencils, crayons, textas or scissors to school.

Do children need special lunch containers?

We encourage healthy lunches with fruit and sandwiches. Please do not include sweets. All bags and containers, including their drink bottle and bottle top must be able to be easily identified by the child and clearly named. It is a good idea to include a frozen popper-type drink in your child's lunch box in summer in order to keep your child's lunch fresh.

We ask that no nuts or nut products, such as peanut butter, nutella or other nut spreads are sent to school. Many of our students are Anaphylactic and we wish to ensure their health and safety. Peanut butter and nut products are not sold at the Canteen or served at OOSH.

Where do children have lunch?

Teachers supervise their class while they eat their lunch. They are then able to enjoy the rest of their lunch time in the playground. Please do not include food items that your child can not easily open.

When is the Canteen open?

The school canteen is operated by volunteer parents and provides healthy sandwiches, rolls, mini pizzas and other foods, flavoured milk and fruit juices. The canteen is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday at recess and lunch time. Parent help is always needed and it is a great way to get to know other parents.

How does my child order lunch from the Canteen?

Parents are encouraged to order lunches for their kindergarten children. The order should be written on a paper bag, with the money placed inside. Alternatively, an insulated, re-useable lunch order bag may be purchased from the Uniform Shop. Orders are placed in the lunch order basket outside each classroom. Orders are then taken to the canteen and the volunteers make the lunches. The baskets are collected from the Canteen at lunch time and the orders are distributed to the children by the class teacher.

Kindergarten children wishing to purchase food AT RECESS and snack items at Lunch.

We ask that parents place the money in a sealed envelope and clearly write on the envelope the child's name and recess order. Your child can then take the envelope to the canteen and they will only be sold what is written on the envelope. This procedure can also be followed for Kindy students wishing to buy snack items from the canteen at lunch time. Kindergarten children may only purchase ice blocks at lunchtime as they do not have enough time to eat them at recess.

What uniform does my child wear?

The school uniform is available from the uniform shop which opens every Tuesday morning from 9.00am – 9.45am. The shop is located up the stairs at the OOSH end of the Kindy block. If you are unable to get to the uniform shop on Tuesday morning, you may complete a uniform shop order form which is held at the school office. By completing this form and attaching payment, the uniform shop volunteers will fill your order and send the items home with your child. There is also the option of ordering uniforms online via the P&C website, www.lcwps.com.au. The uniform shop will also offer appointment times during KOP (Kindergarten Orientation Program) in November for families to purchase their uniforms. The coordinators have devised a "Summer Starter Pack" and "Winter Starter Pack" which contain the basic uniform requirements. Our sun safe policy makes sure that all students wear a hat at all times when playing outside. School hats are available from the uniform shop. We have a NO Hat – Play in the Shade policy.

What forms of positive recognition are given to children?

Each class teacher has a system of rewards, which may include stickers, stamps, stars and class awards. When a student has received 10 class awards they are entitled to a Blue award which is presented by the class teacher.

In our K-6 assembly each Friday, two students from each class are awarded Blue awards for excellence, improvement, citizenship or behaviour. Five Blue awards entitle students to a Gold award and when they have received five Gold awards the student is presented with a Banner of Excellence at assembly. Should a student receive two Banners in their time at Lane Cove West, they will receive a medal for this fine achievement.

How can I contribute financially to the school?

A voluntary school contribution is set in consultation with the P&C and School Council for classroom resources, library and computers, software and a voluntary P&C levy. Fees are requested at the beginning of term one. Consideration and assistance is provided for any family experiencing financial hardship, following confidential information being conveyed to the Principal.

How do I pay for excursions and events?

Each term you will be issued a Costs & Excursions note for your child's class. On this note you will be able to pay the term fees for the computer levy and any other costs being incurred for the term. We are always endeavouring to minimise the number of notes being sent home to parents and will email where possible.

If you have notes or payments for the office, children are asked to place these in the mailbox/basket outside your child's class at the beginning of the day. The teacher will then collect these and place these in the class money bag which is circulated each morning to collect any money/permission notes for the office. Alternatively notes etc. for the teacher/office may be placed in your child's tartan bag which is cleared every day. Please do not take notes/money to the office as the teacher needs to mark these off the class roll.

What are the school rules?

Each child is expected to abide by the School's Code of Conduct. This code asks each child to:

- be an active learner
- respect other people and property
- respect our school's good name
- cooperate at all times
- be in the right place at the right time
- be careful and play safely
- be prepared for school
- be honest

What is a Buddy system?

This is a system where kindergarten students are given a Year 5 or 6 buddy at the beginning of the school year. These older students help the younger students in the playground and support them when they are not sure about school procedures. The buddy classes also get together for reading, writing, art and sports activities. This is a process which assists the younger students and gives the older student a sense of responsibility and care for the younger students.

How do I enrol for Before and After School Care for my child?

The Lane Cove West OSHC Centre (Out of School Hours Care) operates every morning from 7.00 to 9.00am and every afternoon from 3.25 to 6.15pm. Positions for permanent places in 2010 are now available.

Qualified carers provide fun activities both inside and outside the centre. We provide afternoon tea and also have supervised Homework club as well as cooking and science clubs. In the first few weeks of school, during the period the kindy children finish at 2.55pm, Kindy teachers take the children from their classrooms to the centre. The OSHC staff will take the children to their class in the morning during the first few weeks of school.

The Centre phone number is 9420 8830 and our email address is lcoshc@primaryoshcare.com.au. Please contact Judy (Co-ordinator) or Fiona (Assistant Co-ordinator) for further information. You are also welcome to call into the Centre to look at our facilities, children's work displays and to meet the staff.

School staff

A list of school staff is included in the first newsletter of the year. The executive of the school comprises the Principal and three Assistant Principals.

Does the school have Special Religious Education?

We are very grateful for the time our volunteer SRE teachers give to our school. We hold Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Baha'i classes each Tuesday morning for 40 minutes between 9.30am and 10.10am. If parents do not wish their child to attend SRE, they are requested to confirm this in writing. If any child does not attend SRE they are supervised in the Library.

What subjects does my child study at school?

The subjects which all primary children learn are now called Key Learning Areas (KLAs). They are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Human Society and its Environment
- Science and Technology
- Personal Development Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)
- Creative Arts

What happens if my child is sick or hurt at school?

When your child starts school you will be given a Student Information Card to complete. This card supplies the school with contact details for parents, an emergency contact person and contact numbers, details of any allergies and medical problems and the name and phone number of the family doctor. If your child becomes ill at school, parents or the nominated emergency contact person will be notified. In case of an accident or emergency, your child will be given first aid at school and parents notified immediately. If we are unable to contact you and emergency care is required, medical assistance will be sought. For this reason, it is crucial that the school is made aware of any change in your contact details.

What happens if my child requires medication?

Medication can only be given with the written permission of the parent. Parents must complete a 'Medical Advice to School' form for the long term administration of medication or a 'Short Term Medical Authority' form for medication to be administered for a limited period of time. These forms are available from the office.

Please administer any medication your child requires before or after school if possible, however if it is essential for your child to have medication during the school day, it must be clearly labeled with:

- name of child and his/her class
- name of medication
- dosage

Medication should be delivered to the school office and the relevant medication authority form completed. ***Never leave medication in your child's bag.***

Ventolin or similar asthma puffers are the only medication which the children are allowed to carry with them. Ventolin puffers are also kept in the school's sick bay.

If your child has the need for an EpiPen, please give one to the class teacher at the start of the school year so it may be kept in a safe and accessible place in the classroom. The school also requires a copy the Anaphylaxis Action Plan which is provided by the child's doctor. A copy of the Action Plan is displayed in the classroom and in the sick bay.

How many teachers will teach my child?

Your child will have one classroom teacher, but will also be taught by the Teacher/Librarian, PE teacher and Drama/Dance teacher. When teachers are absent due to ill health or attendance at professional development courses, your child will be taught by a relief teacher who will continue to teach from the teacher's classroom program.

How will the school communicate with me?

We publish our weekly newsletter "Chatters" every Wednesday. You may access the newsletter via our website www.lanecovev-p.schools.nsw.edu.au or you may opt to have a copy emailed to you each week. If you do not have access to the internet, arrangements can be made for a hard copy to be sent home with the eldest child in the family. We strongly encourage our parents to read this newsletter every week as this will give you news about upcoming events and what is happening around the school. The newsletter also acknowledges various student and group achievements.

At the beginning of each term you will also receive in Chatters a Term Calendar which informs you of activities scheduled for the term. Kindergarten teachers also email parents a class newsletter each Friday outlining the following week's activities.

How do I know if my child is making progress?

A formal Parent/Teacher interview is conducted during Term 2. Student work sample folders are sent home at the end of each term to show student progress. A formal report is sent home twice each year. If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress, please make an appointment for an interview at any time.

When do I get the opportunity to meet other kindergarten parents?

Your first opportunity to meet other parents will be at our Kindergarten Orientation Program (KOP) in November. We also hold a 'Tea & Tissues' morning tea at the hall after you drop-off your child on the first morning of school next year. This is another excellent opportunity for you to mingle and get to know parents from all the kindergarten classes.

You will also be invited to a class Parent/Teacher Information Night early in the school year. This evening is an opportunity to meet other parents from your child's class. The teacher will discuss class routines, organisation and expectations etc. and answer any questions parents may still have.

What do I do if my child needs to be absent from school?

Parents must notify the class teacher *in writing* of any student absence. It is not necessary to ring the office unless your child has been absent for more than two days.

Please try to arrange medical and dental appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, a note must be sent to the child's teacher and an early leaver's note obtained from the school office before collecting your child from the classroom.

What is Mufti-day?

Mufti-days are usually held once each term. These days are used to raise funds for charitable causes. Children do not wear school uniform on these days and are asked to bring a gold coin for the privilege of being out of school uniform.

Is additional help available for my child?

The following specialist services are available:

- *School Counsellor* – liaises with classroom teachers, assesses children who are referred to her (after gaining parent permission), interviews parents and guides them in seeking appropriate specialist help if required.
- *Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA)* – works with children who are experiencing difficulty with their learning. This can be done in the classroom or by withdrawing the child on a 1:1 basis.
- *English as a Second Language Teacher (ESL)* – works in classrooms and on a withdrawal basis with children who are new arrivals or for whom English is their second language.
- *Teachers Aides* – work with students with a disability to assist them in their day to day learning in the classroom.

The Learning Support Team is responsible for:

- liaising with parents
- arranging assessment by the school counsellor
- structuring programs within the school
- monitoring student progress

School Development Days

The first day of Terms 1, 2 and 3 are School Development Days, which are pupil free days in which staff are involved in planning, training and professional development. The Out of School Hours Centre is open on these days if you are unable to make other arrangements.

Where can I look for lost property?

Lost property is stored in the foyer of the Admin block. If the item has been named, it will be returned to your child. Please ensure that you label all school clothing, including shoes and socks. A supply of spare clothing is kept in the school office for those "little accidents". The office is always grateful to receive any smaller sized uniform items which your child no longer requires.

Do kindergarten children use the library?

All kindergarten students will have a library session each week and will be able to borrow books. Please provide a large cloth library bag (available from the school uniform shop), big enough for the largest size picture book, to keep the books in good condition.

Do kindergarten students use the computer lab?

There are several computers in each classroom, however students will also be taken to the computer lab by their teacher each week, to use the computers and the Internet.

What are some of the school activities in which my child is likely to be involved?

- Cultural performances – artists/groups will visit the school to present cultural performances which are linked to the school curriculum. The cost of each performance will be from \$5.00 - \$8.00 and will usually take place in the school hall.
- Special theme days throughout the year.
- Excursions – teachers will often reinforce a learning program with an excursion e.g. to the zoo or museum.
- Life Education – instruction from a visiting educationalist in a Life Education caravan, who teaches students about healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle.
- Physical Education – a fitness program is conducted in addition to weekly PE lessons by a specialist teacher.
- Swimming School – run during school hours late in Term 3.
- Hosting Assemblies and performing an item for the school.

Is there parking in the school grounds?

There is no parent parking available in the school grounds. Parents may park in Avalon Avenue or in Cullen Street. Please observe the parking signs and never park across the pedestrian crossing or driveways. There is a drop-off area located in Cullen Street. Parents are asked not to park in this area.

What health services may be available through contact with the school?

- Community nurse – screening of hearing, sight, speech and physical coordination.
- Referral – teachers and counsellors (after consultation with parents) will refer students to health specialists as required.

Other Information

- Please make sure all your child's possessions are clearly marked.
- Children sometimes like to share their birthday at school with their class. Please only send individual items such as cakes, chocolates, jelly or ice blocks (make sure there is one for each child). It is difficult to cut a sponge cake into 20 pieces. **No nuts or candles please.**
- School Banking – parents organise banking for children through the Commonwealth Bank and children may bring their money to the school hall on Tuesday mornings from 9.00am – 9.20am. Our volunteer parents will then deposit the money for the children.

How can parents become involved in the school?

- As class parents – to help organise social events.
- As class helpers – to assist with reading, maths or other classroom groups and activities. Parent helpers are also needed from time to time to assist teachers on class excursions.

What is the Parents and Citizens Association? (P&C)

The P&C is a parent-run group within the school community which works with the Principal and staff to ensure the effective running of the school. The P&C has sub-entities which are responsible for Canteen, Uniform Shop, Band, Fundraising, Chess Club, major events, and grounds maintenance.

Meetings are held each school term and the agenda is advertised in Chatters. All parents are encouraged to actively participate.