



Helping at Oatlands

A guide for parents helping in school



Welcome to Oatlands

Firstly, all the staff at Oatlands would like to express their thanks to you for offering your support in the classroom. Your help is invaluable, and your presence in the school is appreciated by teachers and children alike. We hope the experience will be an enjoyable one for you, and will give you a greater understanding of your child's life at school.

Please remember that you will have a privileged position, and be aware that exposure to the children carries with it a responsibility to be discreet. Sensitivity is required when talking about your role with other parents, and we ask you not to discuss individual children with anyone outside the classroom. If another parent asks you about their child in class please refer them to the class teacher.

Please feel free to have a tea or coffee in the staffroom before or after playtimes (during breaks it is rather too crowded). We would ask not to join your child in the playground as it makes it much easier if the staff on duty have responsibility for the children and sort out any disagreements.

If you are not sure about anything please ask a member of staff - they will be happy to help you!

Once again thank you for your time and enthusiasm.

The School Day

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Start of School: | 8.50am |
| Assembly: | 9.15am - 9.30am (Fridays 10.15am) |
| Playtime: | 10.30am - 10.50am |
| Lunchtime: | 12.10pm - 1.15pm |
| End of School: | 3pm |

At Oatlands we encourage children to develop their confidence by giving descriptive praise.



When working with a child, we explain to them exactly what they have done well to help them to build up confidence in their abilities.

For example: 'Well done, you have remembered to point at each object when you were counting so you didn't get muddled'. This is much more beneficial for the child than just saying 'well done!'.

Helping in Class

Preparing your own child for your role:

Talk with your child beforehand about helping in class. Children can respond very differently to having their parent in class so it helps to have prepared them for your arrival.

Explain that you are coming to help all the children in the class and so won't be able to be with them all the time. Sometimes you may also be doing jobs outside the classroom. If you find your child does 'play up' for you in class, please speak to the class teacher to discuss strategies for dealing with this.

Always acknowledge your child when you arrive and before you leave to avoid disappointment - for many children it is the highlight of the week to have their parent in class!

On arrival:

Please make sure you sign in at the school office before you come to the classroom in order that we know who is on site during the school day. When you leave, please also remember to sign out.

Please try to arrive promptly in the classroom. If the class teacher is already working with the children, each class usually will have a selection of ongoing jobs you can help with. These might include filing, pencil sharpening or preparing resources; alternatively if there are other adults in the classroom such as an LSA, they may also be able to help you.

If this is not the case, please sit and listen to what the teacher is explaining to the children for the session so you know what you might be supporting the class with.

Do not hesitate to ask the teacher or LSA if you are unsure about anything. There can be a lot going on in a classroom so we are always happy to clarify a role or activity.

Working with children

Generally you are there to support the children and wherever possible motivate them to try things for themselves. We encourage independence so the children do not rely on adults doing everything for them. There will be times however, when you see a child has gone beyond the point where they can focus on the task and so you may need to provide extra support to round off the activity.

When reading and writing, encourage children to sound words out themselves or use resources such as word cards and displays in the classroom to support them in their learning. It is important to be clear as to what the objective of the activity is so that you can focus in supporting that particular area of learning.

Remember all children develop at different rates in different areas, please be sensitive to the differences in children's abilities when you work with them and be aware children may need differing levels of support.

Behaviour:

Discipline is the class teacher's responsibility. When working with a group of children, a reminder of appropriate behaviour can be used to help with any disruption. Drawing attention to other children in the group who are behaving appropriately is also another good strategy for encouraging good behaviour. Use lots of praise, focusing on what the child is doing well.

Please do not hesitate to speak to the class teacher or end an activity if you feel that a child's behaviour is not appropriate. Class teachers are more than happy to support you if needed. Similarly if you believe a child's behavior has been exceptional, the class teacher would love to hear this too!!

Each class also has a set of class rules displayed in their room which can be referred to when discussing behaviour with children.

Children do their best learning when they feel happy, safe and secure.



At Oatlands, when we speak to children we do it in a positive way. We encourage, praise and are sensitive when children find things difficult. If a child is having difficulty with something we can acknowledge they are finding it hard but can support them and encourage them to try.

Mistakes give us the opportunity to learn more!

It is always better to praise effort rather than achievement, then they are then more likely to try harder next time on something else!

Activities:

Depending on the year group you may be asked to help with a range of different activities. These might include:

- playing a game
- supporting an activity
- filing work into folders
- supporting verandah activities
- working on computers
- sharpening pencils
- tidying and sweeping verandahs
- washing up painting equipment
- sorting resources
- photocopying / laminating (please make sure someone has shown you how to use the equipment)
- reading a story with a small group
- cookery

If you have a particular passion or interest (such as cooking) please let your class teacher know - they may be able to find an opportunity for you to use your skills in class!

What to wear:

Please be aware you may be painting or going outside with the children so it is always best to wear practical and appropriate clothing for helping in school! Remember your trainers if you are helping in PE.

And finally:

We hope you have fun helping in class. We really appreciate the time you are giving up to help our school. We understand that there may be times that you cannot help - please try and let the class teacher know in advance if this is the case in order that they are able to make other plans if needed. Thanks.

Parents, staff and children all belong to the Oatlands School community. We work together to give the children at Oatlands the best possible start to school life.



Belonging

As such, it is the responsibility of all of us to model the values which make Oatlands a happy and successful school.

Demonstrating values in our everyday behaviour and using a values-based vocabulary helps to give children a greater understanding of them and encourages them to use values in their own lives.

We refer to values when working with children to help them with this! For example 'you showed great co-operation when you tidied up together!' or 'it was very thoughtful of you to get that for me!'