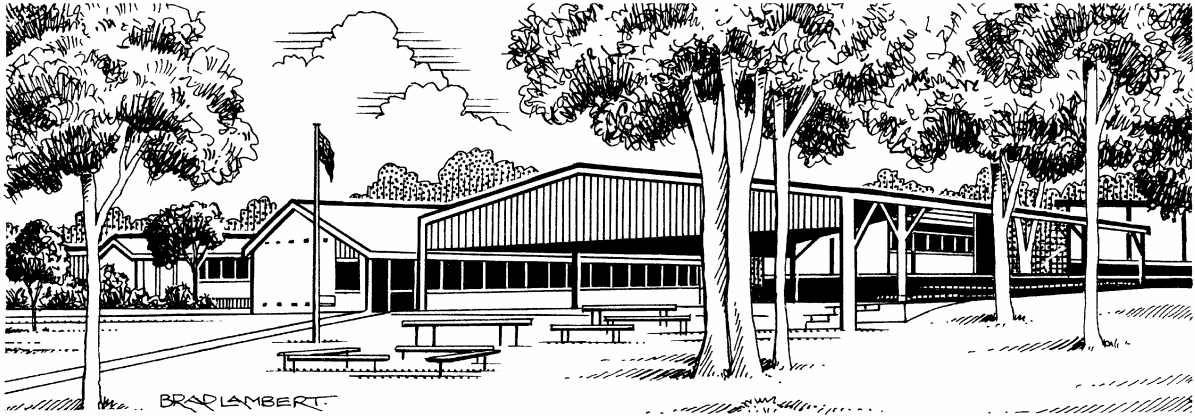


Biddabah Public School



Information Book introduction

Parents, Students & Teachers, Working Together to
Make Our Good School Better

2008

CHILDREN

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you, And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

which you can never visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to Biddabah Public School. I hope that this book will be of value as a ready reference and a source of information about the school and its policies.

At Biddabah, the goal we are all working towards (staff, parents and students) is **to make our good school better**. The belief that every child can learn justifies the way we go about things at this school. Continually seeking the right mix of traditional and contemporary values assures that we are always looking to do the best we can. Consequently the contents of this book are subject to amendment as our ideas and outlooks change.

I invite you to take an active interest in your child and school by attending P&C meetings and by taking an interest in and supporting the functioning of the School Council. P&C meets at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month and School Council meets eight times a year. Dates will be notified in the Parent Newsletter.

The Parent Newsletter is sent out each Thursday to inform you about things that are happening in day to day operations as well as the long term directions that influence the way the school operates.

Although much time is invested in communication between school and home, there will always be times that the message from classroom or school becomes confused or some other problem arises. If you have a concern I would encourage you to contact either myself or the appropriate member of staff as soon as possible and we will do everything we can to resolve the issue. In the first instance however I would request that you **assume good will** on the school's part and believe that we will do everything in our power to make Biddabah a happy and safe schooling experience for your child.

I look forward to a happy association with you and your children.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Mason
PRINCIPAL

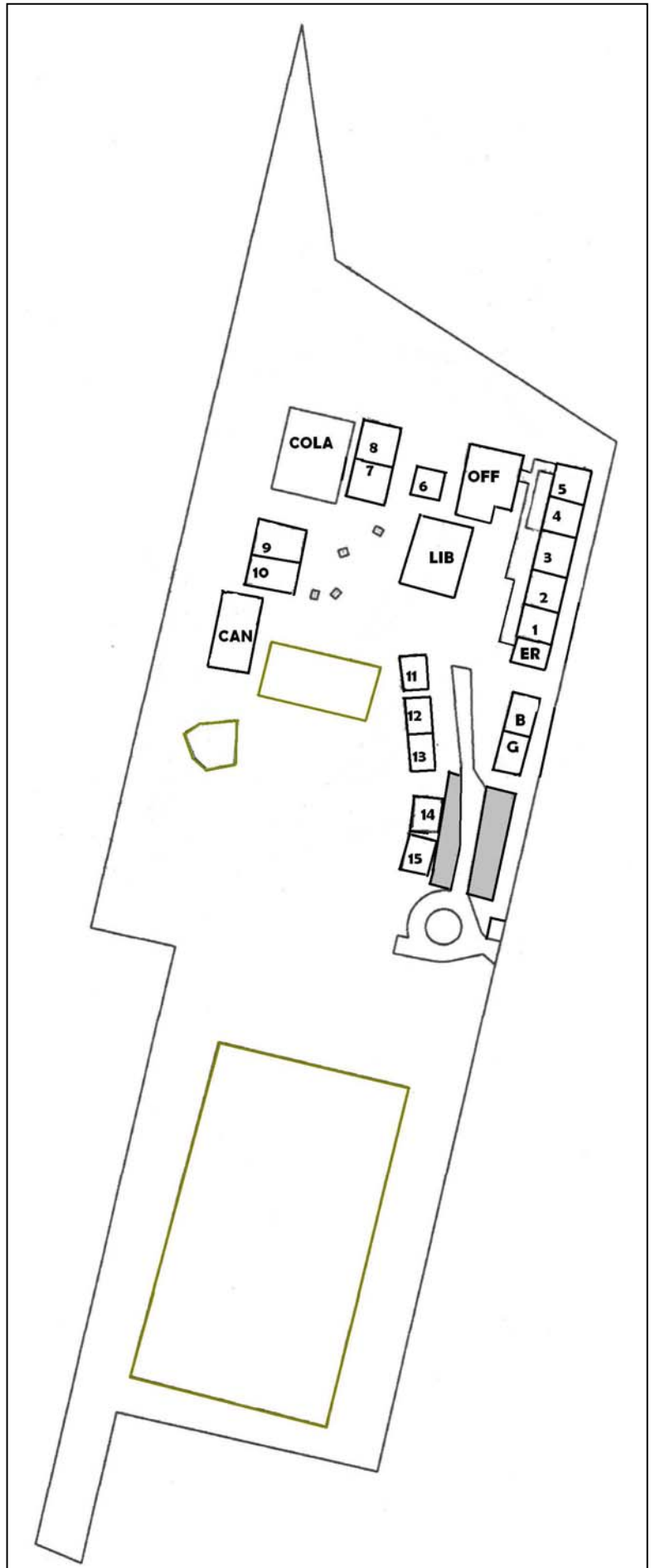


WHY BIDDABAH?

To the Awabakal People, the original inhabitants of the Lake Macquarie Area, known as Nikeen-bah - "The place of the black rock that burns" - the place we know as Warners Bay today was called Biddabah. This was a sacred place - a quiet place where the dead of the Five Island Clan were buried.

To the Koori people, death was a passing into the spirit world. The spirits live around them every-where looking after their relatives. From the spirits came the laws and traditions of the tribe, expressed through the "Dreaming". The stories, songs, dances and art that passed on the tribal laws and lores were the means through which each generation taught the next how to survive - their education system.

It seems appropriate that this link to the spirit world be carried on in our school - a place of education - of passing on the knowledge and skills that our future generations will need to survive.



THE SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Thank you for choosing our school to enrol your child. We know that the school you choose to enrol your child, is one of the most important decisions you'll ever have to make as a parent.

Biddabah school staff are experienced and dedicated teachers who keep up with current thinking and continue to improve their skills and qualifications. They maintain a school which emphasises each student's scholarship and personal development through,

the provision of a full range of Key Learning Areas from Kindergarten to Year 6,

our system of rewarding excellence and achievement at all levels,

our belief that the programs offered by Biddabah school will result in **success for all** students.

While Biddabah is a growing school it will not become too large. In 2001 however the minister advised the public that Biddabah had been placed on a four year renewal program for classrooms, library, assembly hall, canteen and covered walkways. The first part of this program was announced in 2002: a \$600 000 14 core library is now completed.

In our happy and safe atmosphere students are generally well behaved and concerned for each other's welfare. Our Commendation and Discipline policy is explained later in this document.

Our high academic standard is reflected in students' overall grade outcomes as well as their results in, basic skills testing, the Hunter Mathematics and other state competitions entered by the school.

The school offers a wide range of sporting activities including boys and girl's softball, cricket, soccer, swimming & athletics. The school's performances include :

1993	A performance of 'Billy Goats Gruff ' (In German as well as English) & 'Joseph and The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat',
1995	'Wakadoo Zoo' and 'Biddabah Remembers'
1997	K-6 performed 'Tangled in Time' and 'Showtime '97'
1999	Biddabah Dance Festival
2001	'Kids at Sea'
2003	'Wackadoo Zoo' and 'Postcards from Home'
2005	'Stories of Kings & Queens' and 'Kids in Camelot'
2007	Bushwahzee

Both teachers and parents actively encourage the wearing of school uniform. The school is open to parent involvement of all kinds (classroom, coaching, parent/teacher liaison) as well as open to parent concerns and suggestions. We expect support and communication to be a two way process, with issues raised in the appropriate venue resulting in a genuine endeavour towards solution.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR STUDENTS

Students are expected to:

- Behave in a polite, cooperative and safe manner
- Follow school rules and the instructions of those in charge
- Work carefully and strive to do my best at all times
- Show respect for myself and care for the rights and feelings of others
- Show respect for the property of others and the property of the school
- Come to school on time each day
- Wear my school uniform with pride
- Be a proud and responsible member of my school and community.

Why Not Get Involved?

Parents & Citizens Association

meets at 7.30pm, the third Wednesday of each month in the school Library
Contact Lindy Dunlop on 4954 6918 or 0414 546 918

Fundraising Committee

contact Mandy Swan on 4954 3136

Canteen Volunteer

contact Leanne White or Jayne Gill
Phone Leanne 4954 4479 or Jayne 4956 8226

Classroom Volunteer

contact your child's teacher or phone the office on 4954 6058.

INFORMATION FOR NEW JOEYS STUDENTS



BACKGROUND

The Biddabah Joeys Program at Biddabah Public School was established as a result of community need. Local parents had been approaching the school with concerns over the best educational choices for their children. In 2002 Biddabah Public School had a significant number of students in the younger age band listed for enrolment in Kindergarten 2003. In discussions with these parents we discovered that some of these children did have a very real need to be in our school system. Biddabah staff believed that our school had programs in early childhood and an environment, which provided very well for the individual needs of all children. This belief was supported by research into the needs of four and five year olds.

RATIONALE

The Biddabah Public School Biddabah Joeys program was established on the philosophies contained within the document, "KINDERGARTEN, The First Year at School", which stresses the implementation of school curriculum through practices which are appropriate to the developmental levels and needs of each child, and links their previous experiences, to school in a real way.

BIDDABAH JOEYS PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program is based on the appropriate levels of the Key Learning Areas, as described in school based Curriculum, Department Of Education and Training Document and Board Of Studies Syllabus.

- ❑ Experiences are provided that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas- physical, social, emotional and intellectual.
- ❑ Each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development. The curriculum and adults' interaction are responsive to and learning styles are expected, accepted and used to design appropriate activities.
- ❑ Interactions and activities are designed to develop children's self esteem and positive feelings toward learning.
- ❑ Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials
- ❑ Children select many of their own activities from among a variety of learning areas the teacher prepares, including dramatic play, construction toys, science, math, games and puzzles, books, recordings, art, music, fine motor and gross motor
- ❑ Children are expected to be physically and mentally active;
- ❑ Children choose from among activities the teacher has set up or the children spontaneously initiate.
- ❑ Children work individually or in small informal groups most of the time
- ❑ Children are provided with concrete learning activities with materials and people relevant to their own life experiences
- ❑ Teachers move among groups and individuals to facilitate children's involvement with materials and activities by asking questions, offering suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to a situation
- ❑ Teachers accept that there is often more than one right answer.
- ❑ Teachers recognise that children learn from self-directed problem solving and experimentation.

ENROLMENT

In public schools, there is a place for every child of legal entry age, regardless of the developmental level of the child. Any child who turns five before July 31st is entitled to enter school that year. The school's learning programs adjust appropriately to the developmental needs and levels of the children it serves.

ORIENTATION

Children will be notified by mail of their starting day and appropriate time for arrival at school.

Groups of approximately 5 children are invited to participate in at least two morning sessions and then the whole class is brought together for a final orientation.

If the child is happy to be left and parents are comfortable with this situation, parents are encouraged to stay and are invited to have morning tea in the ER room, thus creating an informal, short separation period.

Children who don't participate readily or are uncomfortable with any separation period are invited for further visits.

Orientation visits for children with special needs may take place over an extended period of time to allow for smooth transition into the school setting. The transition team determines this.

During Orientation visits, teacher observations are made of each child to begin to establish their developmental level and individual needs. This process should highlight any individual needs that require further investigation. With parental cooperation contact could be made with early childhood centres and specialists involved with the child's development.

Discussions with parents at this stage should determine whether Biddabah's Joeys Program is the most appropriate choice for their child.

STARTING SCHOOL

WHAT TO BRING?

- Children will need to wear their uniform, including a green hat (labelled with name).
- Lunch and Morning tea should be provided in a lunch box clearly labelled with the child's name. Please make sure that your child knows what you have packed for recess and lunch. A sandwich cut into quarters, a small piece of fruit, some grapes, strawberries, a carrot stick and a drink makes a really healthy lunch.
- Children will need a school bag to keep belongings together, please ensure that you label your child's bag.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

The structure of the morning will be the same as the orientation visit.

Bring your child to the Joeys' room (room 4) and let them select from the available activities.

Feel free to stay with your child/children as long as you wish. Try to choose your parting to be at a time the child appears relaxed and busy.

If you need to leave and feel uncomfortable, staff will support you.

Occasionally parents have difficulty separating from their child and may need to call on staff for support to establish a positive parting routine -

(We have a waving window and a cuddle is always available; if needed);

INTERVIEWS

Informal and formal interviews are available throughout the year, so parents can be better informed about their child's development and the teacher can use this time to gain a larger picture of the child.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are invited to participate in group activities (maths/reading) throughout the year. Parents will be advised when these groups will run and will also receive training.

SPECIAL DAY AND EVENTS

Parents are invited to appropriate excursions, performances, happenings, educational days and working bees.

SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Parents are encouraged to participate in the established school Committees:-

- Parents and Citizens Association (meetings held 3rd Wednesday of each month)
- Canteen.

NEXT YEAR

It is recommended that following the Biddabah Joeys Program:

- Children attend a school in their local area.
- Children are not encouraged to remain at Biddabah Public School if they are out of zone.
- In exceptional circumstances, if all parties consider it in the child's best interest, out of zone enrolment could be considered following school policy and would only be possible if positions were available.

- Parents are given extensive information about their child's development in all areas and encouraged to include home school staff and Biddabah Staff in determining a Kindergarten or Year One placement for the child in the year following the Biddabah Joeys Program.

INFORMATION FOR NEW STUDENTS OF KINDERGARTEN

Children entering Biddabah school have many characteristics and needs in common. They also have their own unique rates of development, and needs that derive from differing cultures, language backgrounds, experiences, child rearing practices and parental expectations.

The ways in which these similarities and differences are responded to in the Kindergarten class at Biddabah school is crucial. The beginning year of schooling must not only be happy and a valuable attitudinal experience for young children but it must provide a sound basis for continuing education.

Routines are established as part of an ongoing process which allows children to develop gradual familiarity with their new environment. This process takes time, requires consistency, and is extremely important in providing children with feelings of security.

A few simple rules are set, which the children can easily understand. It is a time for learning how to learn, so that later the children gain in real achievement, and activities are provided well within their capabilities. Once routines are established children are able to begin taking responsibility for the selection and management of resources.

Learning through Play

Learning for the young child is accomplished through play. Children have a natural curiosity and motivation that drives their learning through play.

Play provides the opportunity for physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. It enables the child to interact, initiate, observe, imitate, discover, communicate, express, investigate and verbalise. Play provides opportunities for reasoning, problem solving, playing out experiences, gaining, using and sharing knowledge and for socialising with others.

Teachers structure play periods to enable children to gain the maximum learning development through play, and to build on the children's spontaneous interest-driven play. The play period runs on a daily basis. Shelves, bookcases and large containers are used to house resources and activities. Although different kinds of play will overlap, teachers have divided them into categories to ensure that experiences are provided and monitored in all areas,

Situational Play	dolls house, shopping, washing, mothers and fathers.
Educational Play	library corner, shared books, class made books, writing.
Constructive Play	jigsaws, threading, box construction, puzzles, lego, blocks, painting etc.
Environmental Play	water, dough, waste material, collage etc.
Outdoor Play	climbing, crawling, balancing, throwing etc.
Imaginative Play	dressing up, puppets, dramatic play etc.

As well as play having an important role in the classroom, the children work through a program which integrates the six Key Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Human Society in its Environment, Science and Technology, Creative and Practical Arts and Personal Development, Health, Physical Education.

DEAR PARENTS OF A NEW KINDERGARTEN STUDENT

The following items are mentioned for your information.

1. Kindergarten co-ordinator will be Mrs Susan Burton.
2. Parents will be invited to help with group work during school hours. A request for helpers will be sent home once the children have settled into school routines.
3. Equipment
 - a. Most items of equipment including coloured pencils, books, etc., are provided.
 - b. Make sure names are on all items of clothing, lunch boxes, drink bottles, etc.
 - c. Scrap materials for Arts and Crafts are always appreciated. Coloured magazines, margarine containers and ice cream containers, egg cartons and empty cardboard cylinders are useful and will be requested from time to time.
4. Getting Your Child Ready
 - a. If your child can tie his/her shoe laces and manage to buckle sandals by the end of Term 2, it would be a great help. You will probably find that doing these things is very difficult for most children and you must be careful not to expect immediate results.
 - b. Above all, provide plenty of opportunities to discuss things with your child.
 - c. Reading with your child is also a good idea.
 - d. Home Reading will begin when most children are ready for this. Read them with your child by all means but do not expect them to know every word. (Some books are purely for enrichment.) There is a dvd available in the parent library that gives assistance to parents in reading with children.
5. Writing

Handwriting: When helping your child with writing, you can use the demonstration sheet with the N.S.W. Foundation Style illustrated. This sheet will be in the Parent Package you will receive.
6. Safety

Pupils arriving at and departing from Medcalf Street **MUST** use the gate nearest the crossing. Pupils coming into the grounds from Ruswell Avenue are asked to use the Pelican Crossing rather than just crossing the street in any random spot. Pupils are to walk behind the log boundary of the carpark to ensure their safety. Please follow this direction even when you are accompanying your children, as it gets them used to the correct way.
7. Hats

All children are expected to wear a broad brimmed school hat (no caps)! Kindergarten children will receive their hat as part of their kindergarten package. Biddabah school has a "No Hat - Play in the shade" policy.
8. Discipline Policy

We are justly proud of the excellent reputation our school has throughout the community. To ensure that we maintain a secure, happy and safe environment for our children, we have implemented a specific discipline policy the whole staff feels is worthwhile. We are only too happy to discuss this with you.

Above all, if you want to know anything about your child's schooling - do not hesitate to call us and make an appointment.

Sue Burton
Kindergarten Co-ordinator



SCHOOL LUNCHES (WHAT TO PROVIDE)



Once children come to school they do not usually eat as much as they would at home.

Children are supervised while they are eating and teachers try to encourage them to have healthy food.

Similarly, the school canteen promotes the sale of healthy food.

An example of a suitable healthy lunch is a sandwich cut into quarters (this allows children to eat varying amounts according to their appetite on a particular day). You could also include a small piece of fruit or some grapes, strawberries or some carrot sticks and a drink.

Please limit snack foods or keep these for home.

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

WHEN DOES A CHILD HAVE TO ATTEND SCHOOL

All children are required by law to attend school between the ages of 6 and 15 years. Some children attend school below the age of 6. That's fine, but once the child is enrolled, it is expected that he/she will attend school as often as everyone else in the class.

WHEN DOES ATTENDANCE BECOME IMPORTANT?

From the first day. Much of the play that goes on at school, teaches skills. If the basic skills are missed in the early years, they are rarely learnt fully later on. It has been shown that poor attendance in infants and primary, leads to worse attendance in high school.

DO I NEED TO SEND MY CHILD EVERY DAY?

YES - this includes sports carnivals and excursions. If your child is absent, a note, explaining the absence, needs to accompany him/her when he/she returns to school. This is a legal requirement of the department.

WHEN MAY MY CHILD BE AWAY FROM SCHOOL?

The Department of Education accepts few reasons. Generally, they are:-

- * The child is too sick to leave the house.
- * The child has an infectious disease like chicken pox, mumps, measles, etc.
- * The child is incapacitated by injury and unable to move around at school.
- * Religious commitment or family annual holiday - by arrangement with Principal.

Doctor and Dental appointments should be made after school. Having a birthday IS NOT a reason for a day off.

WHAT AFFECT DOES NON-ATTENDANCE HAVE ON MY CHILD?

Research has shown that 1 day off is equal to 3 days off, because of the catching up that needs to be done, as well as 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.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS TO HAVE A DAY OFF SCHOOL?

That's okay - as long as the reason comes under "acceptable" excuses.

- * Notify the school on the day
- * Send a note on the first day back to explain the reason for the absence. (it is a legal requirement that all absences be notified to the school within 7 days.)
- * Where possible, notify the school in advance.

WHAT IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL?

Notify the school (teacher or principal) immediately.

WHAT IS A PARENT CONDONED ABSENCE?

This is where parents allow children to stay away from school for unacceptable reasons. If this type of non-attendance is allowed to continue, it may become a problem in the future.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD LEAVE SCHOOL?

The school leaving age is 15 years, but most children are aged 16 when they complete Year 10.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I KNOW OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT REGULARLY ATTEND SCHOOL?

Contact the school you think they should be going to or contact your nearest school.

WHAT IS A HOME SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER?

The Home School Liaison Team is employed by the Department of Education to assist with attendance matters within Infants, Primary and High Schools.

It is the Officer's duty to:-

1. Be the contact person between the home and the school in an attempt to improve attendance at school.
2. Encourage favourable attendance practices of students.
3. Identify and rectify factors contributing to non-attendance (school based and/or home based).

TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL

Parents should be aware of teaching by example. Be a positive role model. Remind your child on a regular basis of road safety rules.

When using your car always make sure that you and your children wear seat belts. Parents should make it a rule that children always use the safety (kerb side) door to get into and out of a vehicle.

A School Speed Zone is a 40kph limit for traffic passing any school. It applies for two hours morning and evening around school hours. In our case this is (8.00am-10.00am & 2.00pm-4.00pm). Police randomly set up speed detectors outside our school to enforce this lower than normal speed.

Illegal parking by parents in the vicinity of the school endangers the lives of school children. When dropping off and picking up at school, park only where it is legal and safe.

- (a) Never park in the bus bay or near the pedestrian crossing traffic lights.

Parking is banned from these areas because doing so directly endangers the lives of schoolchildren by obscuring the view of pedestrians and drivers. 30% of accidents involving schoolchildren happen when they come out onto a road from behind stationary vehicles.

- (b) Parents must exercise extreme caution when using the school roundabout. Parents must not leave their car on the roundabout and children must alight and be picked up when your car is stationary in a space, closest to the exit, adjacent to the pine logs.
- (c) Regardless of weather conditions, parents should park their cars legally, leave it and walk to the school gate to meet their children.
- (d) Never, under any circumstances call children across the road.
- (e) The traffic lighted crossing is the only legal way to cross Medcalf street. The request not to use the small gate is to discourage the highly dangerous "jaywalking" across Medcalf street.

Remember

Whether you are driving, using public transport or walking, you are being observed. Unsafe behaviour is most noticeable to children.



The School Roundabout



The school roundabout was constructed to provide a safe dropping off and student collection zone for children attending Biddabah Public School. Access to the roundabout is from Ruswell Avenue into another council street Watt Street. Watt street provides access to the school roundabout and is subject to RTA rules and conditions. Council parking officers and police patrol it as a condition of the school being able to use it.

Cars may enter Watt Street and proceed around the roundabout offering other motorists due consideration and respect.

Parents dropping off and collecting children may not use the teacher's car park. Apart from the congestion this would cause, children on foot in a car park is extremely dangerous.

Children may not leave the vehicle until it comes to a stop alongside the log fence in the exit lane of the roundabout, using the space nearest the exit. Children leaving a car parked on the roundabout are in extreme danger of harm.

Children should be ready to leave the car on the passenger side. They close the car door and walk through the log fence, joining the path that leads safely into the school grounds.

Parents using the roundabout should never leave their cars except in an unforeseeable emergency.

All cars should progress to the vacant place nearest the exit in the drop-off zone. Cars just stopping near the school gate when other places are available are likely to prevent other drivers from entering the drop-off zone.

Children should arrive at school by 8.50am.

Cars should not return to collect them before 3.10pm. It will take your child at least 10 minutes to get out of class and proceed to the roundabout assembly point. Queuing around the roundabout only causes delays and frustrations and nobody gets away before the children arrive any way.

If you want to see your child's teacher or enter the grounds for any reason, **DO NOT USE THE ROUNDABOUT.**

Problem at school? Assume good will and call in, write or phone for an appointment.