

PRE-PREP HANDBOOK

for prospective families

2025-2026



St. Paul's School



Welcome to St. Paul's School

We are the British school of São Paulo. At St. Paul's we always strive to be the best we can be. We have the courage of our convictions, essential values, and the freedom to imagine and create. This is achieved through our high-quality British and Brazilian holistic education which drives the personal and academic development of pupils, within a caring, inclusive and united community. We share the core values of Aspiration, Adventure, Resilience, Responsibility, Inclusion and, above all, Kindness.

St. Paul's Pre-Preparatory School

We want every child and family to feel that they "belong" in our school, know and understand what the Pre-Prep offers and enjoy the experiences that we invite you to share with us. This booklet gives you a brief insight into the Pre-Prep at St. Paul's with basic information which we think will be useful.

We work closely as an integrated team across our Pre-Prep School. All members of our staff are skilful, highly trained educators, who are knowledgeable about how children learn, about child development, and have a passionate commitment to teaching and learning in the early years and to St. Paul's School and its aims.

Our early childhood curriculum is enhanced by the contributions from our families. It is important that children have a developing understanding of themselves and their experiences so that they become confident in who they are and their place in the wider world. We encourage participation from our parents so that children and their families are reflected through our curriculum and children are able to make meaningful connections in their learning.

Right from the start...



Pre-Prep experiences are often a child's first venture into the larger world outside the family and the home. What children experience and learn in the Pre-Prep creates strong and lasting foundations on which to build on in later life. We believe it is essential that these experiences are of the highest quality. By working in partnership with parents we aim to provide a stimulating, challenging environment which is a warm and friendly extension of home. A place where children and adults can explore, have fun, play, talk and learn together, developing as happy, confident and independent individuals within our community.

We also believe that children should be challenged and that our Pre-Prep School should provide children with rich, stimulating experiences through which children can make connections, interact, learn and play happily together.

Just playing?

A high-quality early childhood education is about much more than colours, shapes, numbers and letters. It is about learning to be confident, strong and curious. It is about developing children's natural joy and wonder of the world they live in.

Early learning should allow children to develop a positive attitude, help them to form positive relationships and build their self-confidence. If children can learn to "have a go", learn from their mistakes and try again, they will succeed in their future learning.

Young children learn by doing things for themselves, by exploring and investigating, watching and listening, talking and discussing, creating and communicating, in other words playing.

We feel that singing songs, being creative, reading together, playing games with letters and numbers and having fun with friends give your child the best start to their education.



"Play is a child's work"

Jean Piaget (Educationalist)

"Learning through play helps young children learn, grow and have fun. It helps them understand the world and to develop socially and emotionally."

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Pre-Prep Curriculum



At the heart of our curriculum are the children that we teach, and we value and respond to their interests in our lessons. High quality children's literature, talk, knowledge and understanding of the world that surrounds them are central to teaching and learning. We support the curriculum by providing firsthand experiences for the children to enjoy. We offer these both in and out of school through trips to a park, gallery or museum or visits from local religious leaders, artists or indeed parents. Our aim is for children to feel a deep sense of belonging to their community, their city and their world.

Young children learn from everything around them - the people, the environment, the atmosphere, the routine, and the experiences. All these elements make up our curriculum that weaves the goals from **the English Early Years Foundation Stage** and **National Curriculum** within an international and truly Brazilian context.

We also divide our curriculum into **seven areas of learning** so that we can ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, as well as challenge children in terms of their acquisition of knowledge and skills.

The Pre-Prep curriculum follows 7 areas of learning, with 17 “Pre-Prep Goals” to be aimed for by the time that children begin the Prep School.

The three “prime areas of learning” that underpin all other learning are:

1. Personal, social and emotional development
2. Physical development
3. Communication and language

The four other specific areas of learning are:

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the world
7. Expressive arts and design

An essential part of our Pre-Prep curriculum is our approach to planning. We use topics that revolve around developmentally sensitive units of study that challenge children and allow them to experience success across all areas of development. Our topics are broad and balanced. They allow flexibility for children to explore the themes in the way that is most meaningful to them, therefore making the learning engaging and long lasting.



1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development is about:

- Forming meaningful relationships with other children and adults
- Having respect for other people
- Being an individual and also belonging to a community
- Being able to express and cope with feeling and emotions
- Being able to make choices and taking responsibility
- Developing a sense of fairness, what is right and wrong
- Understanding appropriate behaviour
- Respecting and being able to empathise with others
- Having feelings of wonder and joy
- Sharing and celebrating festivals, tradition and special occasions

2. Physical Development is about:

- Developing confidence and independence through achievement
- Learning to use tools competently (e.g. using cutlery independently at meal times)
- Learning co-ordination and control
- Building confidence, stamina, energy and strength
- Learning to move in a variety of ways
- Expressing ourselves through movement
- Understanding the importance of exercise
- Learning to make healthy choices about food, and taking care of ourselves and our healthy body

Important notes:

Increasing children's independence so that they can manage and be aware of their own physical needs is an important developmental stage. Before children are three it is expected (if they are developing at an expected rate) that they will be able to use the toilet when they feel the urge, clean themselves afterwards and wash their hands. Children will often need lots of reminders about aspects of this routine and we regularly remind children in school.

By the time children start Pre-Prep it is expected that they will have already been toilet trained at home and therefore it is the responsibility of parents and carers to support their child in how to go to the toilet and clean themselves afterwards. School will also help reinforce these important personal skills as children do occasionally forget and have toilet accidents in the Pre-Prep. However, we urge parents to work on this aspect of child development at home to ensure that their children are meeting developmental milestones and increasing their independence.

3. Communication and Language is about:

- Developing confidence to be able to express our opinions and make our own choices
- Talking, listening, discussing and recalling experiences in a range of different situations
- Being able to describe and explain things in our own words, using our own ideas
- Listening to stories, anticipating what might happen and responding appropriately to the story

- Listening and following instructions and being able to answer questions appropriately.

4. Literacy Development is about:

- Believing in ourselves as a reader and writer and developing the skills to become one
- Enjoying stories and a wide range of reading materials e.g. books, poems, print in the environment
- Learning to make marks and give meanings to those marks
- Learning to recognise letters and the sounds that they all make

5. Mathematics is about:

- Appreciating pattern and relationships in maths
- Logical thinking
- Exploring, comparing and describing shapes, quantities, heights, etc.
- Finding ways to solve mathematical problems e.g. estimating, measuring
- Learning to use and understand mathematical language
- Understanding and using number
- Counting, understanding and using numbers
- Calculating simple addition and subtraction problems

6. Understanding the World is about:

- Exploring the local environment
- Finding out about the past
- Developing an understanding of travelling to other places, distance and maps
- Using technology, making models in a variety of ways
- Planning, making and designing things
- Exploring and solving problems
- Using I.C.T. for a range of purposes
- Exploring, experimenting and having ideas
- Being curious, wondering why, how, what if...?
- Understanding why and how things happen
- Observing carefully and closely
- Experiencing and changing materials
- Sharing the joy of finding things out with our friends

7. Expressive Arts and Design is about:

- Representing and communicating our thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of ways e.g. art, music, movement, dance language and design and technology
- Expressing ourselves through a wide range of media e.g. paint, clay, drawing, 3D materials
- Expressing and enjoying beauty
- Imagining, expressing and creating
- Having original ideas and thoughts

Specialist Lessons

Our curriculum is enriched by a team of specialist teachers for sport, music, art and Portuguese. These lessons are taught in our purpose-built rooms and teaching is planned to support the learning that takes place back in the classroom.



Important information for all prospective families

The use of toilets

- By the time children start Pre-Prep it is expected that they will have already been toilet trained at home and therefore it is the responsibility of parents and carers to support their child in how to go to the toilet and clean themselves afterwards.
- It is expected that children coming to PP1 are able to use the toilet when they feel the urge, clean themselves afterwards and wash their hands.
- School will also help reinforce these important personal skills as children do occasionally forget and have toilet accidents in the Pre-Prep.

School Routine

- School day goes from 8.15 am to 2.30 pm

Classroom doors open at 7.45 am and the register is called at 8.15 am.

It is important that all children arrive on time; a late arrival disrupts the start of the day and valuable learning is missed.

School ends at 2.30 pm and pupils should be collected promptly. As from PP2, when children have access to the paid after school activities (PASAs), pupils might go straight to activities.

Morning routine

Arrival

- **The morning routine** - In the Pre-Prep, parents are expected to bring their child into the classrooms. Children will be welcomed into the class to settle themselves by their teacher and assistant and are expected to put their folders in a basket, then their bags on pegs. Parents ought to be aware that the morning greeting is focused on children, so that they have a positive start to the day. The morning arrival can be a delicate moment for some children in the Pre-Prep School; so we ask parents to say goodbye to their child at the classroom door and encourage them to perform their morning routines independently.

- **Arriving Late** – If arriving late parents will not be able to access the classrooms. If arriving after 8.15 am, parents will need to go to the Pre-Prep office and the school secretary will ask you to sign the late book.

Absence

If the child is going to be absent, we ask parents to fill in the absence form using the school app, informing the reason. If the pupil will be absent for a reason other than illness, a letter must be sent to the Head of Junior School, well beforehand, requesting permission.

Going home

- **End of day 2.30 pm** – We kindly ask parent to be punctual as children get upset if they are still waiting long after the others have gone. If parents are unavoidably delayed, we kindly ask them to phone the school.

- **Wednesday afternoons** - PP1 children are allowed to go home at 10.45 am on Wednesdays. This should be arranged and agreed with the class teacher so that permanent arrangements can be made. It's not compulsory and it will only exist for PP1s.

Meals

Three meals (lunch and two snacks) are provided by the school every day. PP1 and PP2 pupils have lunch in the Pre-Prep dining room. PP3 pupils use the main dining room as part of their transition to the Prep School.

Lunch is supervised by members of the Pre-Preparatory staff. Meals are well balanced including a selection of salads and hot vegetables, rice, beans and soup. Fruit is offered for dessert every day and once a week, on Fridays, a sweet dessert is also offered as a choice. The children will be encouraged, but never forced, to try everything on their plate. The lunch menu is available on the school app and updated monthly.

If a child is allergic to a particular food item and requires a special diet, parents are asked to inform the school by filling out the "Emergency Medical Form" on the school app.

Paid After School Activities (PASAs)

There are also a number of paid after school activities that your child can attend after school as from PP2. These groups and organisations are carefully chosen by the school based on the requests from parents.

We have a wide variety of activities for your child to choose, however we recommend that you do not sign your child up for too many of these activities as they do take place after a long day at school. Young children also need plenty of rest after school and it is important to find a healthy balance. PASAs are not available for PP1s.

Communication between parents and teachers

- Diary – All children receive a diary at the beginning of the school year and parents are encouraged to use it as the main way to communicate with the class teacher. The diaries are checked early every morning as the children arrive and the Pre-Prep secretary will advise the teacher of any urgent messages that come via email.
- Complex issues – Only under exceptional circumstances will the teacher step outside the classroom to talk to parents for a private conversation at the beginning and end of the day. If an issue needs further time for discussion parents are asked to book an appointment with the teacher through the diary or by sending an email to the Pre-Prep secretaries.
- Meeting the leadership – If parents remain concerned about any aspect of their child's education or development, the Head of Junior School and Deputy Head of Junior School are always happy to meet to discuss anything further.
- Pupil progress – Teachers are always willing to discuss a pupil's progress with parents by appointment in addition to our parent-teacher meetings held each term. Teachers also write a detailed report describing each child's progress at the middle and end of each school year.
- Learning Journals – Ongoing assessment is at the heart of Pre-Prep teaching and learning. This is done through observations as children act and interact in their play, carry out every day and planned activities and through what parents tell us about learning at home. Observing, reflecting, assessing and recording children's progress is key to future planning, so that we are able to meet the needs of each individual child.
- Tapestry - Each child's teacher keeps a record of their progress in their "Online learning journal" called Tapestry. When the children start school, the school will provide parents with a unique log in details so that parents can share success and key learning together.
- Letters from school – Invitations to special events, school outings and other important correspondence will usually be sent via school app. For school outings, parents receive a letter detailing visits and activities via app and are

required to complete a permission slip allowing their child to take part on the app.

- School app – Parents can find all useful information on the parent portal, to be presented to new families as the year starts. In the app, parents can find:

- Pre-prep Information
- Emergency Medical Form
- Term Dates
- Events
- Uniform
- Lunch Menu
- Clubs and Societies
- Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)

Important documents to read

We invite all prospective parents to read and get familiarised with some important document available on the school's website:

- [Curriculum Policy](#)
- [Junior School Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Health & Safety Policy](#)
- [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy](#)
- [School's values and ethos](#)
- [Admissions Process & Criteria](#)