

MacFarlane Primary School

Including MacFarlane Preschool



Parent Handbook

Grevillea Road Katherine NT 0850

Phone: 08 89723666

Fax: 08 89723488

Email: admin.macflash@ntschoools.net
<http://www.macfarlaneprimary.nt.edu.au>

Principal: Jennifer Henderson

Welcome to our School

The MacFarlane Primary School staff and members of the School Council welcome all parents and students to our school. This school is committed to providing the best education possible for each and every child. Parent involvement and input into the child's education is encouraged and appreciated.



Vision and Values

At MacFarlane Primary School we strive for our best in a safe and supportive environment. Our vision is to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students by getting the students to school, preparing and inspiring them to learn, and once at school teaching them well. We strive to work in partnership with our families and acknowledge that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children.

Our values are: respect, responsibility and resilience.

School Information

Our School

MacFarlane Primary School, located in Katherine East, has 3 blocks of classrooms, a Pre-School building, an assembly area and an Early Years play based outdoor learning area. It features an information centre centrally located that houses the library, the computer laboratory, the Teacher's Resource Centre and the Intensive Learning Unit. The grounds are spacious and provide pleasant shady areas for outdoor activities. The school is fully air conditioned.

The school officially opened in 1987 and was named in honour of Les and Peg MacFarlane due to their valuable contributions made to the Katherine Community.

The school day at the Primary School begins at 8.20am and concludes at 2.40pm. The students eat lunch and recess in designated areas and each classroom has a refrigerator to store students' food. Students are encouraged to eat a balanced, healthy diet, wear shoes and wear hats when in the sun

The Preschool is incorporated in the Primary School. It is well equipped and has qualified staff. The Preschool has a morning and afternoon session.

Key Staff

Principal	Jenny Henderson
Assistant Principal	Marie Bryans
Senior Teacher	Damien O'Brien
Administration Manager	Kirsty South
AIEW (Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker)	Trish Roach
ILU (Intensive Learning Unit)	Jackie Harvey

School Council

Meetings are held on a Wed each month, starting at 3.00pm.

MacFarlane Primary School Council is comprised of parents and staff of the school. The School Council is incorporated under the Northern Territory Education Act and has wide powers within the school community, including financial responsibility for all the school funds, upkeep and extension of facilities and community involvement. Parents hold the majority of positions on the School Council and are elected at the Annual General Meeting in March. All interested parents are encouraged to nominate for Council positions. The Council meets regularly and all parents are welcome to attend meetings.

The School Council consists of:

- 6 Parent Representatives
- 2 Teacher Representatives (elected by peers)
- 1 Preschool Representative (elected by each preschool sub-committee)
- Up to 2 Other Members (invited by council)
- 1 Principal as an Ex-Officio member

The functions of the MacFarlane School Council are contained in the Education Act. School staff and council members work together to meet the legal responsibilities and provide a positive learning environment.

The monthly School Council meetings are advertised in the school newsletters. All parents are welcome to attend, but only elected members can vote. The Annual General Meeting for the election of parent members is held early in the school year.

Sub committees are formed as required to work on short term projects, for example, school action plan and fundraising.

School Song

Hey! This is MacFarlane School!
The best in the Territory.
Participation, lots of friends,
Great teachers & me.

Hey! Here at MacFarlane,
Respect is our key.
Be proud of yourself,
Help each other,
Be good to your community.

(Chorus)
Strive for your best,
That's the way to be cool.
Strive for your best,
That's the way to be cool,
At MacFarlane Primary School.

We don't put each other down,
We live in harmony.
Show appreciation,
Be what we want to be.

Doesn't matter what people say,
Stand up for your rights.
Cooperate, educate,
Bright future in our sights.

(Chorus X 2)
Strive for your best,
That's the way to be cool.
Strive for your best,
That's the way to be cool,
At MacFarlane Primary School.

Semester Dates-2014

Semester One

Term 1	Friday 24 January – Friday 4 April (for urban schools only) (Students resume Tuesday 28 January) (for urban schools only) Tuesday 28 January – Friday 4 April (for remote schools only) (Students resume Wednesday 29 January) (for remote schools only)
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Term break	Monday 7 April – Friday 11 April
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Term 2	Monday 14 April – Friday 20 June
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Semester break	Monday 23 June to Friday 18 July
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Semester Two

Term 3	Monday 21 July – Friday 26 September (Students resume Tuesday 22 July)
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Term break	Monday 29 September – Friday 3 October
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Term 4	Monday 6 October – Thursday 11 December (for urban schools only) Monday 6 October – Friday 12 December (for remote schools only)
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Public Holidays

New Year's Day- Wednesday 1 January
Australia Day- Monday 27 January
Good Friday- Friday 18 April
Easter Saturday- Saturday 19 April
Easter Monday- Monday 21 April
Anzac Day- Thursday 25 April
May Day- Monday 5 May
Queen's Birthday- Monday 9 June
Picnic Day- Monday 4 August

School Times

Breakfast	7.00am
Classes begin	8.20am
Recess	10.20 – 10.50am
Supervised eating lunch	12.40 – 12.50pm
Lunch playtime	12.50 – 1.20pm
School finishes	2.40pm

Teachers are on duty outside from 8.00am. Parents who allow their children to enter school before 7.45am must accept responsibility for their behaviour and safety. Children are expected to leave the school grounds as soon as possible after the final bell at 2.40pm.

Special Features of the School

Preschool

The purpose of Preschool in the Northern Territory is to provide a stimulating and educational environment as a basis for later learning. This will increase each child's opportunity to develop the appropriate language, thinking, social, movement skills, knowledge and attitudes. Our Preschool program is planned to cater for the learning and needs of individual children.

Preschool is not compulsory but an important first stage of Primary School. The Preschool program provides a balance between free play and teacher planned activities both for individual children and groups. It allows the child to move easily between home and school and establishes a pattern of continuity in the child's learning.

Session times are as follows:

<i>Morning</i>	<i>8.15am – 11.15am</i>	<i>Monday – Friday.</i>
<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>11.45am – 2.45pm</i>	<i>“</i>

There is close liaison between the Preschool and the Early Childhood section of the school. Regular visits take place to use the school facilities, for example, the library, to prepare children for the transition to the primary school.

Transition

In our Transition program we have emphasis learning through play and developing communication skills, social skills, physical co-ordination and early literacy and numeracy skills. An active play based curriculum in these early years prepares children for the adaptability and responsibility needed for the future.

Intensive Learning Unit (ILU)

MacFarlane is Special Needs inclusive and has specific programs in place to cater for the diverse range of students at our school.

A number of wellbeing programs, including 'Nurture Groups', Perceptual Motor Program, self-esteem programs and social skills programs, have been implemented across the school. Within these programs, special projects, for example, gardening and cooking, have been designed and implemented to assist students with coordination and manipulative skills as well as assisting students with the transition from primary school to high school. The writing of specialised programs is often done in collaboration with the Special Education teacher, the classroom teacher and the parents and/or caregiver.

School Curriculum

Curriculum Framework

The Australian Curriculum guides the teaching and learning programs in the school, as in all Territory schools. The Australian Curriculum identifies learning outcomes for all the students from Transition – Year 10 in all subject areas. Outcome focused education emphasises what is expected of learning rather than the curriculum content and accepts that learning progresses along a broadly identifiable development pattern. Outcomes describe the observable changes in students' learning and define how they can use what they know and have learned. The outcomes in the NTCF inform curriculum planning, are used to make judgements about learner's progress and provide a common language for reporting achievement.

English

The focus of our English curriculum is explicit teaching in groups. Students are introduced to the concepts of print through Barbara Brann's "Building Blocks" then move onto the First Steps literacy program. This resource focuses on the explicit teaching of English by working from whole texts and studying aspects within the text as a means of developing student's ability to manipulate the language they use for effective communication. It links assessment to practical classroom based activities and strategies to ensure that steady progress is made and maintained throughout the years in reading, writing, spelling and oral language. MacFarlane incorporates the teaching of the 'Big 6' in daily literacy blocks to assist in improving students reading skills.

The 'Big 6' focuses on:

- Oral language linguistic skills
- Phonological awareness
- Letter-sound alphabet principles
- Vocabulary

Maths

Opportunities are provided for students to acquire concepts, skills and factual knowledge in settings that foster positive attitudes to mathematics. The aim of our mathematics program is to develop skills and understandings of number, space, measurement and their application through problem solving using manipulative materials. NZ Maths is our Mathematics program that specialises in number which is matched with the Australian Curriculum Framework. Our focus is on 'hands on', 'real life skills'.

EsseNTial Learnings

The EsseNTial Learnings lay the foundation for 'connected life-long learning' and are essential in preparing students for complex future life roles. These learning outcomes include capabilities, understandings and dispositions that students develop across their schooling years. The EsseNTial Learnings provide a foundation for strong learning communities and are organised into the Inner Learner, Collaborative Learner, Creative Learner and Constructive Learner domains.

Learning Technologies

Learning Technologies involves applying what we know about human learning, to develop strategies and use tools such as computers, to enhance learning. Interactive whiteboards are featured in all classrooms and are used by teachers and students as an effective teaching/learning tool. MacFarlane Primary School assists students to develop ICT capabilities through providing opportunities for students to appropriately access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all areas of the school. Each class also has a number of computers and a flip camera as well as access to iPads, notebooks and video cameras. There is a computer laboratory in the library block. To ensure that you and your children understand what is expected when accessing the computers, we ask you to read, sign and return the 'Acceptable Use Policy' on enrolment. Please read it carefully before verifying that you understand your child's responsibilities. Teachers will ensure that students understand their responsibilities before using the computer facilities and external networks.

Indigenous Cultural Unit

An Indigenous Cultural Coordinator is employed at the school to work with the classroom teacher and students. Together the coordinator and teacher plan an indigenous studies unit with a focus on linking culture and heritage. Throughout the 2 or 3 week block students attend excursions, make artefacts, participate in aboriginal song and dance, storytelling and many other engaging activities.

Gateways to Literacy

An integrated approach: Perceptual motor skill development, oral language and phonological awareness.

Assessment

Student work is assessed regularly and all results are kept by teachers to monitor the progress of the children. Work samples are moderated and kept in an Evidence of Learning Folio and are available for parents to view and discuss during interviews or upon request.

It is a teacher's duty to report regularly and comprehensively to parents on the academic, social and behavioural development of the child. At MacFarlane, teachers provide written reports at the end of terms 2 and 4.

Students in years 3 and 5 participate in NAPLAN in Term 2 each year.

Transition and preschool students are assessed using Assessment of Student Capabilities.

All students reading comprehension skills are summatively assessed each semester using Benchmark Reading Recovery.

Maths is summatively assessed each year using NZ diagnostic testing.

Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy

Essential to effective learning is a safe, supportive and disciplined environment where people respect:

- The rights of all people to be treated with respect and dignity
- The rights of all students to learn
- The rights of teachers to teach
- The rights of all to be safe

At MacFarlane Primary School we focus on the following 3 values:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resilience

We also use the behaviour agreements:

- Mutual respect
- Attentive listening
- Personal best
- Appreciations
- No put downs
- Right to pass

The school expects a high standard of behaviour at all times. Good behaviour is fostered through positive peer and teacher feedback and acknowledgement through awards, certificates and stickers.

Swearing, fighting, rudeness and other poor behaviour will result in disciplinary action. Students are guided by a level system as to their behaviour both in the classroom and outside in the playground. Parents will be notified if their child's behaviour is consistently unsatisfactory and are invited to discuss possible solutions. Charts detailing the level system are on view in all classrooms.

For serious incidents involving physical or verbal intimidation and assault, suspension will be considered by the school principal.

Whole School Approach to Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. At our school we do not tolerate bullying behaviour and have a whole school approach to bullying where all members of the school community can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing. We promote and provide a supportive learning community where all students feel, and are safe:

- Use programs, such as “Bounce Back”, “Komichi”, “Friendship Groups”, “Peer Support” and “Rock and Water”
- Actively promote that bullying is not acceptable
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspect incidents of bullying
- Listen empathetically to students who need support when they have been bullied
- Remove opportunities for bullying by active supervision
- Take immediate action when bullying is observed or reported. All teachers and school staff must let children know that they care and will not allow anyone to be mistreated
- Listen receptively to parents who report bullying and investigate reported circumstances so that immediate and appropriate school action can be taken
- Keep parents informed
- Work together with staff, students and families to address issues that arise within the school
- Nurture groups to help children build relationships with others

Parents as Partners

Education begins in the home and continues throughout life in the home, the school and the community. At MacFarlane Primary School we encourage parents to be involved in their children’s education. All parents also have the right and are encouraged to be actively involved in the educational decision-making process at all levels. The learning outcomes of students are enhanced when parents, caregivers and the school work together.

Your child’s schooling will be more meaningful if you become involved in school activities. Parent participation and assistance is always needed in areas such as:

- Listening to children read
- Helping with the swimming program
- Attending excursions
- Helping at sporting events
- Assisting in the library
- Sharing your ethnic heritage
- Becoming a member of the School Council or assisting on a sub committee

If you are available to assist, please see your child’s classroom teacher or a senior teacher who will be more than happy to arrange it.

Library

The Information Centre is open from 8.15am – 2.40pm. All material is available for loan except for reference items. Students are welcome to change their books as often as they wish. It is desirable for children to have a library bag to protect the books that they borrow.

Student Borrowing

<i>Trans – Year 2</i>	<i>1 Book</i>	<i>1 week</i>
<i>Year 3 – Year 6</i>	<i>2 Books</i>	<i>1 week</i>

This policy is flexible depending on the reliability of students and the research being done in the classroom.

Overdue/Lost Book Policy

- *Books overdue: students cannot borrow until books are returned. Students are asked to look for missing book/s.*
- *2 reminders will be issued then an account will be sent home for \$10 as a partial reimbursement.*
- *If book/s is found, replacement cost is refunded.*

General Information

Parent/Teacher Interviews

During the year the school arranges for Special Parent/Teacher evenings. A 'Meet and Greet' event is held at the beginning of each school year for parents to meet the child's new teacher. Parent/Teacher interviews are held at the end of third term to discuss your child's progress.

Absences

Attendance at school is compulsory by law. If a child is absent the school requires notification by parent/guardian in the form of a written note, telephone call or personal visit. Continued unexplained absences may result in parents being visited by the Aboriginal Islander Education Worker and/or the Truancy Officer Mel Carne. Parents are to be mindful of the effect long absences from school have on their child's schooling.

When a child leaves the classroom and/or school grounds without permission, the principal or assistant principal will endeavour to contact parents.

Emergency Contacts

In an emergency, we need to know where to contact a parent QUICKLY. It is important to have correct and current addresses and telephone numbers recorded at the front desk. Please contact the office staff to update information.

Collection of Children

Parents who need to collect a child from school during school hours are to notify the school office prior to collection of the child. Upon arrival at the school, parents are to make their presence and purpose known to the school office.

After Hours Use of School Grounds

Students are expected to go straight home after school and in most cases should have left the school grounds by 3.00pm. Unless specific permission has been gained, no community member or unauthorised person is permitted to use the school facilities after hours.

The school is not responsible for children after school hours except those children attending organised activities.

Lunch Pass

Children eat their lunch under supervision of the class teacher. Children who go home for lunch must initially bring a permission note and report to the front office on a daily basis to receive a lunch pass.

Canteen

The canteen provides a good range of nutritious foods and drinks. The service operates daily for breakfast, recess and lunch. Recess and lunch orders should be written on separate bags at home or on an envelope with the child's name, class, food required and the amount of money enclosed. Students can also write lunch orders in the morning when they go to class.

Best Start

MacFarlane Primary School in conjunction with the Smith Family operates a special Breakfast with a Mentor Program which caters for all children attending the school together with their family members. Breakfast is served daily from 7.00am – 8.00am and consists of toast, cereal and milk. There is no cost involved.

Volunteers from the community are encouraged, as mentors, to sit and enjoy breakfast with the children, spending time talking or reading to them. By just sitting down and having breakfast with the students we are sending a message that our students are important worthwhile human beings and that breakfast is an important "Best Start" to the day. It is also an opportunity for students to get to know other students and teachers.

Also 2 other programs run at this time: Before School Reading for Early Childhood students each morning and Active School Sport Program which is 2 days a week for all students, working together in a range of physical activities.

Dental Clinic

The Dental Clinic is administered by the Department of Health. All primary school children can have any necessary dental treatment free of charge. If treatment is required, parents are asked to call into the clinic or phone 89738573 for an appointment. Parents are required to be present for any examination or treatment.

Parent Contributions

All parents are asked to make contributions which are used for enriching every child's education. These contributions allow our school to provide funds for the school bus, additional text books, art and craft materials, physical education equipment, music, ambulance fees, insurance, water safety program, information technology resources, grounds improvements and resources for all key learning areas. These contributions are voluntary and are not a requirement of your child attending the school.

Excursions/School Camps

Excursions are an integral part of the school program, connected to work in the classroom. Children are expected to attend all such excursions. Excursions may vary in length of time according to the age of the children and may be for a morning or overnight stay or a camp over several nights.

Uniforms

According to departmental policy the wearing of uniforms is compulsory. At our school students are required to wear the designated school or house shirt and shorts. Parents are encouraged to use their "Back to School Voucher" to purchase uniforms. Uniforms may be purchased at the school at the front office.

<i>Maroon School Shirt</i>	<i>\$20.00</i>
<i>Sports Shirt</i>	<i>\$20.00</i>
<i>Shorts</i>	<i>\$15.00</i>
<i>Hats</i>	<i>\$10.00</i>
<i>Water Bottle</i>	<i>\$5.00</i>

Children are expected to wear a hat whenever they are in the sun. Children who do not have a hat must remain in shaded areas around the buildings. Students are strongly encouraged to wear shoes to school as a safety requirement. Children are NOT permitted to attend excursions without shoes.

Road Safety

Parents who set down or collect their children by car are asked to take all possible care and to obey the road law relating to stopping vehicles near the school crossing.

Bus Service

Parents are requested to contact the school if they wish their child to travel on the bus. Children who catch the bus are expected to wait sensibly at the front of the school until their bus arrives.

Children travelling on the bus must stay sitting down and behave themselves. They must not disturb the driver.

Pre-schoolers cannot catch the bus.

Bicycles/Scooters

There is provision at the school for parking of bicycles and scooters. Responsibility can not be taken for bikes and scooters brought to school. Students should ensure they securely lock their bikes and scooters to the rack. Helmet wearing is required by law.

Swimming

A water safety program takes place in Term 3 for all students in Years T-6.

Money and Valuables

The school cannot accept responsibility for items brought to school. Any money or valuables for a specific purpose should be given to the class teacher as soon as possible in the morning. Audio devices (eg, Walkman, MP3 Player, iPod), electronic games (eg, Gameboys, PS2) and mobile phones are not permitted to be brought to school. We actively discourage students from bringing toys and other valuables from home and we will not take responsibility for them.

Lost Property

You are welcome to ask at the front office at any time to go through our collection of lost property. Please ensure that all clothing, school bags, hats etc. are marked clearly with your child's name.

Dogs

For the safety and health of children, dogs are not permitted at school. Dogs will be tied up until collected by a parent or the Town Council Dog Catcher.

Christian Option

Twice a year (before Christmas and Easter) a team of people from Katherine Inter Church Council (KICC) conduct religious education programs with the students. Each class has a 60 minute lesson each day for 3 days. All students are expected to attend unless the school is otherwise notified by the parents that they do not wish their children to participate.

Medication for children

The school will administer medication for children who require it, upon request in writing from the parent/guardian.

In the case of minor illnesses, Panadol will only be administered to students, if approval has been received by the school from the parent.

Accidents

Accidents occur at school on occasions. Several of the staff have Senior First Aid Certificates. In the case of suspected serious injury, the school will notify parents. If a child requires urgent medical treatment and parents are unable to be contacted, the school will take the initiative.

Assembly and Awards

Assembly is held Friday weeks 3, 6 and 9 of each term, starting at 8.30am and is a celebration of the awards and achievements. Classes take turns in organising and hosting the assembly, which encourages students to develop their public speaking skills. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend these assemblies. Student of the week awards and merit certificates are awarded to students for special achievements at these assemblies. Children should save them and when they have 10, present them to the front office. The student is then presented with a MacFarlane Principal's Award and a book at the next School Assembly.

Newsletters and Noticeboards

The school wishes to keep parents informed of all events, happenings, school council and sub-committee news, community events, educational matters and samples of children's work and uses the newsletter, noticeboard and sign out the front of the school to do so.

Newsletters are issued every Tuesday to each child. If you have an item of information which may be appropriate to our school community, we would be happy to print it in our newsletter. You can arrange this by providing a written copy to the Front Office before Friday of the week prior.