



**SIMPLE STEPS TO MAKE
DROP OFF EASIER FOR
BOTH YOU & YOUR CHILD.**





Establish a goodbye routine

Children love routine. It helps them to process what's happening, promotes a sense of belonging and helps them to feel safe. Establishing a routine for school drop off is the same as establishing a bed time routine at home.

Some ideas to try for your goodbye routine could include:

- A cool handshake that you've made up together
 - A high five, thumbs up or fist bump
 - A funny phrase
 - A squeeze hug

Once you have agreed on your routine, it's important that you stick to it. Doing this will reinforce to your child that drop off is the same as last time and the outcome will also be the same. They will have a great day and you will return later in the day to collect them.

It's important to note that being on time for drop off and pick up at school is crucial.

Dropping your child off late could mean that the class has already started and your child may have missed important settling time. This is a big adjustment for your child to process. Rushing in late can also heighten feelings of anxiety in both yourself and your child.

Likewise, collecting your child late from school can create worry and anxiety in your child, who watches all the other children be collected and wonders where you are. This can often make the next drop off more challenging as your child wonders what the afternoon may look like. Obviously things happen that are out of our control and in this case it's important to let the school or class teacher know so that your child is not left wondering.



Make your goodbye short and sweet

Ensuring that your drop off is a positive experience is important for both you and your child.

Use your goodbye routine and try to keep your drop off as short and sweet as possible.

Despite how challenging it can be to see your child upset or distressed, a quick exit is the key to your child accepting, settling and moving forward in a positive way.

Our staff are experienced in dealing with these situations and will assist your child to settle as quickly as possible, allowing them to get on with their day.

It's important for you to appear calm and confident as this reassures your child that they are in a safe space where they belong.



Show your child that you trust the school and our educators

Leaving your child in the care of other responsible adults is a stepping stone in their development.

As this happens, your child will learn to trust other adults and begin to learn that they can belong in more than one setting (for example, at home as well as at school).

It is important that your child gets a sense of trust from you as you calmly and confidently hand over care to an educator after using your drop off routine.

Children are very skilled at picking up on your feelings and by showing them that you trust the school and the staff, your child can begin to trust them too.



Acknowledging your child's feelings

Children often have emotions that they are unsure how to deal with. It is important to acknowledge, accept and respect what they are saying and feeling.

You could try saying something that acknowledges that you understand and that you feel the same way, such as "It's really hard to say goodbye when I drop you at school, but I'm very excited about picking you up this afternoon and hearing all about your exciting day."

Make sure you use positive language to convey how you are feeling.



Never “sneak out” on your child

Children often find settling into a new environment challenging and it's important that they feel support and trust during this time.

“Sneaking out” may seem like an easier option at the time, however it is important to let your child know you are leaving, even when you know this may cause temporary sadness. Having your child turn around and find that you are no longer there causes unnecessary distress and anxiety for your child. It may also make it more difficult to drop off the following day as your child does not know what to expect.

Trust the process of your goodbye routine.



Working together

Sometimes when children are dropped off by an alternate adult, drop-off may run smoother. This may include a grandparent, neighbour or family friend. If you are feeling overwhelmed by the drop off routine, this can offer you some relief.

Don't hesitate to ask for help from these people or from school staff.

Handing your child over to an educator is sometimes necessary and making sure you do this quickly and confidently can make the goodbye routine less distressing for everyone.



Do not “hang around”

When students are settling into school it can be difficult and distressing for them when a parent remains in the environment after using their goodbye routine.

Once your child has said goodbye it is time for you to leave.

If you need to chat to another parents, its best to do this out of sight.

Staying for “a couple more minutes” or checking on your child through the window can be upsetting for your child and for others and only prolongs their distress.



Stay calm and positive

Transitioning to school can be overwhelming for parents as well as children.

It is important that you model calm and positive behaviour, even when you don't feel it.

Speak enthusiastically about the fun your child will have at school and speak positively about the schools educators.

You could try saying something like "I'm so excited for you, I feel very grateful that you have such a lovely school to go to and I'm excited to hear all about your day when I pick you up later."



Encourage friendships

Having playdates with other children you know that go to McLaren Vale Primary School can work wonders in helping your child settle into their new school.

Even if the children don't create a firm friendship, it's still beneficial for them to have a familiar face around.

This creates a sense of belonging and wellbeing for your child and allows them to feel a part of the school community.

By working together, we can
achieve the best outcome
for you and your child.



