

Prep Parent Information 2015



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Welcome to Prep at The Patch Primary School!

We look forward to working with your children this year and the successes and developments the year brings.

Communication between home and school is essential for a successful year. We encourage you to keep us informed about celebration, issues, problems or questions that may arise during the year.

Email is an easy and effective way of keeping in touch. We can also arrange a suitable time to meet to discuss any issues with you. Another great way to let us know about important things in the morning is to leave us a message in our basket! There are pens and paper there ready for you to jot something down quickly. We will always read these during the morning session.

Thanking you for your support.

We look forward to working in partnership with you.

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SECTION ONE

Routines and Administration

Bell Times

8.50am	Long bell - all students expected to be in classrooms.
9.00am	Short bell - start of learning time.
11.00am	Recess play
11.25	Long bell – start heading to classrooms
11.30	Short bell - line up outside classroom
1.30	Lunch order bell (Mon, Wed, Fri)
1.35	Lunch eating time
1.45	Lunch play
2.25	Long bell – start heading to classrooms
2.30	Short bell - line up outside classroom
3.30	School day ends

All Prep students are dismissed at 3.15pm. Older siblings of Prep students may leave at 3.15 with their younger brothers or sisters.

Term Dates

Term 1	Wednesday 28 th January to Friday 27 th March (Weds and Thurs are student free days)
Term 2	Tuesday 13 th April to Friday 26 th June
Term 3	Monday 13 th July to Friday 18 th September
Term 4	Monday 5 th October to Friday 18 th December

Punctuality

All students are expected to be in the classroom ready to start the day at 8.50am. If for some reason they are late arriving at school, parents will need to sign in electronically outside the general office area and take a late arrival pass to the child's teacher. Punctuality is of the utmost importance as teaching sessions will begin at this time and students who are late arriving not only miss out on critical teaching and learning, but also interrupt the learning of others.

Prep Timetable – we’ve filled in our times for specialists so you’re aware. All other times will include literacy, numeracy and investigations.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		Music/Philosophy	P.E.	Assembly
Science/Library		Philosophy/Music		
RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS
Library/Science		Art/Library		
Enviro/Japanese		Library/Art		
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
Japanese/Enviro				

Class Communication

Within our Prep grades we will use our communication folder for take home books, notices and communication with you. Please bring the blue folder to school everyday and have children place in the tub.

We will supply our email addresses to you for your convenience, but please remember that we don’t always get to our check and access our email, so if there is anything urgent please call school.

Class Newsletters will also be available on Tiqbiz and the school website: <http://www.thepatchps.vic.edu.au>

SECTION TWO

Behaviour Management

A culture of positive reinforcement, support and encouragement underpins all our interactions with children.

A whole school approach to behaviour management is used to ensure that there continues to be few issues with behaviour at The Patch. This management strategy is called 'Step Up For Success' and it is consistently used in all grades across the school.

STEP UP FOR SUCCESS

STEP UP FOR SUCCESS is a 3 step approach that is simple for students to understand and for teachers to implement. STEP UP FOR SUCCESS focuses on positive outcomes and is clear visually for students and teachers. STEP UP FOR SUCCESS acts as a catalyst for teachers to focus on those children who always do the right thing but can sometimes be overlooked due to others demanding or needing more attention.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Each classroom will use a chart divided into 7 sections titled 'Step Up For Success'.
- Each student will begin the day with their name in the middle section of the chart, the aim being to move up 3 steps to the top of the chart by the end of the school day.
- Once a student reaches the top of the chart there will be a reward according to the system in place in each particular grade.
- If a student does something positive (e.g. working well, giving a good answer, listening well, helping someone) the teacher can tell them to 'step up' and their name is then moved up to the next step on the chart.
- If a student does something inappropriate (e.g. arriving late for class after lunch, disrupting the class, being rude) the teacher can tell them that they have to 'step down' and their name is then moved down a step.
- The first step down is a warning to the child.
- At the second step down the child needs to be removed from his/her peers for 15 minutes as a more serious warning. This could be in the middle room, at the side of the classroom on a chair, in a corner of the room etc.
- If a student has 'stepped down' into the second last section after a second warning, the teacher can unobtrusively focus on helping this child move up again by 'catching them doing something positive'.
- Clear guidelines and consequences need to be in place and communicated clearly at the very start of introducing this 3 step approach because everyone needs to be clear about what the final consequence is if a student reaches the bottom of the chart – as well as the reward available to them if they 'step up' 3 steps to the top of the chart.
- The consequences of reaching the bottom of the chart after 3 steps down are to take work and go to a designated teacher for the rest of the day. Parents will be informed via a note home or a phone call if their child has had to be sent to another grade due to inappropriate behaviour.
- If a child has 'stepped down', been sent to a designated teacher for the rest of the day and then still misbehaves, he/she will be sent to the Assistant Principal or Principal for further action.
- If a child is being removed from his/her class too often, the teacher and Principal or Assistant Principal will meet to discuss what further intervention is needed to break this pattern and move forward more positively. Parents would be informed and be involved in the process.
- Specialist teachers will send a note back to class listing the names of any students who have shown positive behaviour/responses or otherwise.
- **Each day is a new day** as children all begin again in the middle section of the chart.

Within our level, a student, who steps up once in the day, gets a 'pat on the back' and verbal praise. A student who steps up twice in the day collects a sticker. Once the student has stepped up 3 times they get a pick out of the rewards box. (Any donations towards these treat boxes will be greatly appreciated).

SECTION THREE

Curriculum

Environmental Education

Environmental Education is given a strong focus at The Patch School. The school has two large “outdoor classrooms” (our beautiful wetlands and our sustainable living gardens) and an Eco-Centre where formal and informal experiential learning take place.

The environmental program aims to provide students with an understanding of the principles of ecology and education for sustainable development.

Activities such as preparing and planting a food garden, collecting seed from indigenous plants, building a worm farm or compost bin, constructing a trellis for climbing plants, revegetating the natural bush corridor, incubating eggs and raising chickens, identifying and harvesting bush foods from the Koori garden and creating an interpretive tree trail around the school provide processes and skills that involve observation, communication, classification, interpretation, questioning, measuring, reporting, predicting, designing, experimenting, testing, problem solving and hypothesizing.

Throughout the program it is hoped that the students acquire a knowledge and understanding of the living world and their place in it that enables them to live sustainably and responsibly.

Environmental classes are taken every week for one hour.

ICT

At The Patch Primary School we make extensive use of current computer technology. All pupils have regular access to the latest in multi-media computers and software as well as the Internet. Computer literacy is seen as an important part of our curriculum. Our new building is equipped with a class set of 24 notebook laptop computers which all students will have ongoing access to, as well as an interactive whiteboard in each room.

As a parent, you play an important role in helping your children have safe and positive experiences online. Become aware of how children and young people use the internet, some of the risks they face and strategies to manage these risks. Guide your child to enjoy the best of the online world. We recommend visiting <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents.aspx> for information, tips and advice to help you and your family make the most of being online and staying safe.

Indigenous Education

The Patch Primary School’s Indigenous Education is underpinned by the School Vision statement and is based on the agreed values of Respect, Integrity and Responsibility. We acknowledge the land as part of the Kulin Nation and specifically as a Wurundjeri Place.

As a school we show respect towards the original custodians of our land at assemblies, with “Welcome to Country” and raising the three flags at assembly – the Australian flag, the Torres Strait Islander flag and the Aboriginal flag. We celebrate focus days of importance for Aboriginal communities such as Close the Gap and incorporate Wurundjeri Studies in the curriculum. We are currently in the process of incorporating this with our Japanese program. Our outdoor environmental program, ‘Learning Landscapes’, fosters a multidisciplinary approach to Indigenous studies by providing a Bunjil Tree Trail and Bush Tucker trail.

The school curriculum in Australia has made Indigenous Studies a priority because it provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding enriches students' ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia as they see similarities and differences between people and become more aware of diversity in the wider community as well as the concept of change over time.

Foundation – Year 2: Curriculum focus: Awareness of family history and community heritage.

This history curriculum enables students in Foundation to Year 2 to learn about their own social context of family, friends and school, and the significance of the past. They engage with the remains of the past; develop a concept of time as present, past and future, and through role play use their imagination to speculate about the lives of others in the past.

Japanese

At The Patch Primary School, the Languages Other than English Program focuses on Japan and the Japanese language.

While it can take up to 2000 hours of language study to become fluent in the Japanese language, primary school students have the ability to learn and retain new language readily, particularly in regard to written Japanese characters. Recognition of hiragana characters and the way they form words and sentences will be introduced and reinforced through a variety of learning activities and games. Japanese vocabulary and grammar will be emphasized, as well as learning about Japanese culture and etiquette associated with speaking in Japanese. Students will also have the opportunity to get involved in activities related to Japanese festivals as well as some historical aspects of Japan.

Numerous studies have indicated that learning a second language has many advantages other than being able to speak another language. Studying a second language in the earliest years of primary school is shown to advance the age of readiness in English. Language skills are transferable; what we learn in one language helps us with any other language. Learning Japanese helps the students to strengthen their English skills. Learning a second language enhances the student's ability in writing and maths as well as advancing cognitive development. Research has also shown that people who learn a second language at a young age are more likely to have more advanced grey matter in their brains.

The Japanese program at The Patch supports the school's English literacy and numeracy programs. It is difficult to teach another language without re-enforcing English structures. Numeracy is also supported through activities such as telling the time, counting money and calculating change.

Each year, the school holds a cultural day, where students spend time participating in Japanese activities including sport, famous Japanese folktales, craft, music. We are also applying for a Japanese sister school, so that students will be able to engage in meaningful language learning with students in Japan.

We hope that students at The Patch will find learning Japanese a fun and rewarding experience, and that students will choose to continue Japanese at high school, where available. If you have any queries, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact our Japanese teacher, Jane Capon, who is here on Monday – Thurs.

Library

The Library program provides instruction for students on how to use a library effectively, how to access resources and how to borrow selectively and responsibly. It also offers opportunities to promote literature through book discussions, reviews, clubs, open times and shared reading.

Prep children spend time in the Library each week. Please make sure your child has their Library bag and books on this day. Prep students may borrow one book per week.

Please ensure books are looked after and borrowed and returned via a library bag e.g. plastic bag/ blue reader folder. If books are lost please let your home group teacher know and the lost book needs to be replaced with a book similar quality, topic and value.

Literacy

Our Early Years Literacy Programme includes exploration and explicit teaching of reading, writing, spelling, handwriting skills and speaking and listening.

Assessment

Teachers are always assessing students both formally and informally. During Term 1 Prep children will be involved in completing the Online English Interview. This will enable us to get a snapshot of where your children are in terms of reading, writing, oral language, spelling, and phonemic awareness. Based on this information, we are able to identify individual needs and tailor learning to support them in progressing to the next level.

Reading and Writing

The ability to read and write with understanding is a core element of our literacy program. As a team we all have a love of reading and remember being drawn to books and spending countless hours 'getting lost' in them. It is this love of reading we want to develop in the young children we work with each day. We are aiming to build a community of strategic readers and writers. To do this we will be explicitly teaching the reading and writing strategies they need to be successful.

Independent reading and reading conferences

The Prep's participate in 'Independent Reading'. This involves choosing a 'just right book' and looking for meaning in what they read. 'Independent Reading' time is not just silent reading. Students are thinking while they read; this may involve asking questions, making predictions or making connections to themselves, other texts or to the world. Students use their 'reader's notebooks' to write the date, title and 'track their thinking' using sticky notes. During this time, teachers conduct individual reading conferences or work with small focus groups. This is the time where we talk to your child about their reading, listen to them read a 'just right book' to determine what their needs are, and establish a goal to work towards. We look at all facets of reading – not just decoding. These include: comprehension, fluency, speed, punctuation, expression, ability to self-correct among others. We record this information and keep track of their progress by conducting conferences daily (**We aim to conference with each child once a month**).

You may see us sitting at our reading conference with a child. This communicates to the children that we are unavailable to discuss things with them at that time, we would appreciate if you could also respect this time while we are conferencing with students.

Writing

Writing time is sometimes driven by your child's interests; sometimes it is a set topic and sometimes a small group explicit teaching task. Not everything is corrected as we encourage children to write so that they can tell us what they have written. It only needs to be perfect if others are going to read it or if it is going to be published.

Prep children will receive a set of golden MI100W during 1st term. Children will be tested at school as to whether they can read the words out (without sounding out). Children move through different sets of coloured words which will help them with their reading (often these are called 'sight words'). Encourage children to practise these at home with you. You could make it fun and play games with the words!

Reading Eggs

ABC Reading Eggs and Reading Eggspress is a program developed by the Blake Education literacy team, the publishers of Storylands, Go Facts, Sparklers, Giggles etc. The program allows students to experience a unique online world, supporting individual learning by offering one-on-one lessons where children progress at their own rate. With interactive animations, fun games and memorable songs, Reading Eggs is great fun. The program also allows teachers to keep track of individual student's progress and move children on so that each child is working at their own level.

Music

Students will attend specialist music classes on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

In the early years of schooling children relate to the world primarily through their bodies. Music and dance provide a natural way for them to explore this connection. Singing, dancing, listening to music, telling stories, responding to sounds, creating sounds and gestures are all pathways to learning. The focus is on creative and experiential learning of beat and rhythm and singing and the gradual introduction of playing specific melodies or rhythms on instruments.

In Years 3-6, the music program is influenced by the Musical Futures (<http://www.musicalfuturesaustralia.org/what-is-musical-futures.html>). This approach places informal, self-directed and peer-group learning at the centre of music education.

Students work in small groups using online resources, musical instruments and computer software to develop performances of well-known or original songs. Each term, students are given a project broken into weekly tasks, culminating in a performance during the final two weeks of term. The project combines elements from many parts of The Arts including visual art, dance, drama, media, musical and visual communication. The two key dimensions reported on in Music are Creating and Making and Exploring and Responding. Students are provided opportunities each term to demonstrate their skill and understandings in these areas.

Working in this way not only develops superior musical skills but also provides rich opportunities for personal growth, interpersonal learning and working in an effective team. Part of the project may involve input from home, including costume design or making instruments from recycled objects.

More formal music tuition is provided on an elective fee for service basis for violin, voice, guitar, piano, keyboard, brass and woodwind instruments. Information on these is available from the school.

Numeracy

The Numeracy program at The Patch is delivered in a variety of ways. Explicit teaching of key mathematical skills underpins our approach, facilitated via whole group, small group and in some cases, individualised learning activities. We encourage our children to explore problem solving in a safe environment where errors are seen as learning opportunities, and open-ended tasks encourage risk taking and multiple solutions to problems.

Comprehension in numeracy is just as important as it is in literacy. We plan for students to develop their comprehension through focused activities, class discussions and the attainment of a rich mathematical vocabulary. ICT is made available to engage and support learning, with Mathletics accessible for students in the classroom and from home.

Regular formal and informal assessment is used to develop a maths curriculum that caters for each student's point of need. Where necessary, students will be supported in small group work to consolidate and extend their understanding of key skills and concepts.

Our goal is to develop confident, creative thinkers who can apply their numeracy skills to solve problems in a variety of real world contexts.

Philosophy

Philosophy is an exciting subject that encourages students to ask questions, listen carefully, evaluate reasons, uncover assumptions, clarify ideas and concepts, make judgements and draw inferences.

Philosophical inquiry is primarily concerned with the search for meaning through activities help us to develop a framework in which questions of how we think and know are considered alongside equally fundamental questions of how we ought to treat one another and the world itself.

The practice of philosophy in schools is implemented through the community of inquiry where both abstract (conceptual) and concrete thinking are explored.

Although it is ideal to form communities of inquiry across all disciplines and subject areas when it comes to teaching children to be inquirers the discipline of philosophy has a special role to play. Philosophy commits us to persistent and disciplined thinking with social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components.

Philosophy is not so much concerned with final answers as it is with coming up with and exploring better questions and tentative answers.

Physical Education

Physical Education is the process through which sport and sport education, outdoor adventure activities, dance, gymnastics, aquatic, ball handling and athletics are used to help students learn motor skills and to learn about and achieve physical fitness. Physical Education activities also assist in the development of personal and social skills in students.

Students in their formative years P-3 develop basic education skills. These include the development of the essential fundamental motor skills - the catch, kick run, vertical jump, overhand throw, ball bounce, leap a, dodge, punt, forehand strike and two handed side arm strike. Students must be given the opportunity to learn essential motor skills upon which later learning is dependant. Mastery of these skills by students is necessary if optimum development of higher level skills is to occur.

Children will be participating in a 1 hour session of physical education each week. Depending on the activity and the weather – they will use the hall as well as the outside areas. Over the four terms we will be covering:

- Term 1: Fitness and Athletics
- Term 2: Dance- Stomp The Beat
- Term 3: Ball Handling Skills
- Term 4: Swimming
Minor Games

Science

During 2015, every class will participate in weekly science lessons using the Primary Connections program as a framework. This is an inquiry-based approach that helps students develop deep learning, and guides them to find scientific ways to answer their questions.

Science at The Patch Primary school covers all areas of AusVELS and is assessed in three main areas:

- Science inquiry skills.
- Scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Science as a human endeavour.

The learning outcomes in Primary Connections contribute to developing students' scientific literacy. Scientific literacy is described as an individual's:

- scientific knowledge and use of that knowledge to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain scientific phenomena and draw evidence-based conclusions about science-related issues
- understanding of the characteristic features of science as a form of human knowledge and enquiry
- awareness of how science and technology shape our material, intellectual and cultural environments
- willingness to engage in science-related issues, and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen

There are 4 units covered by The Primary Connections program (chemical, physical, biological and earth and space) for each year of primary school from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6. Each unit has an explicit focus on developing students' knowledge, skills, understanding and capacities in science and literacy. Units employ a range of strategies to encourage students to think about and to represent science.

Sustainability

At The Patch Primary School sustainability is a major focus. It underpins our school values, vision and practices and provides opportunities for students to take action in ways that benefit the world we live in. The Environmental Education program, environmental groups such as Gang Green (for students in years 3), EarthKeepers (for students in year 5), Garden Club (open to all students during lunch once a week), Garden Team (parents and staff) and the Sustainability program provide a range of activities that raise awareness, responsibility and respect for the environment and embed practices in the school that aim to improve biodiversity, reduce energy use, better manage waste and conserve water.

We are registered as a Resource Smart School with Sustainability Victoria, are actively involved in the Learning for Sustainability Program with the Yarra Ranges Council, have received numerous awards with the Victorian School Garden Program and are a member of the "Water, Live It, Learn It" initiative. Our school resource use is regularly uploaded to the ResourceSmart data base and used to monitor and influence our use of these valuable resources (energy, water, waste).

Visual Arts

Creative learning experiences in the visual arts during schooling provide individuals with necessary skills, understandings and confidence to participate fully in the arts throughout their lives.

Learning in the visual arts at The Patch Primary School takes several forms. Through arts practice students learn to develop ideas by drawing upon experience, exploring feelings, observing and researching. In order to communicate ideas, students learn the elements, principles, processes and techniques as well as the cultural and aesthetic values associated with specific art forms.

In responding to the visual arts, students learn to analyse and interpret art works. They learn how the visual arts are practised and valued in different societies and cultures, past and present. They form personal judgements of their own and those of others. They understand the skills and intentions of artists and the social or cultural contexts in which their works were produced.

SECTION FOUR

Extra-Curricular Activities

Camps & Excursions

Excursions

Excursions form an integral part of the learning experience of pupils at The Patch Primary School. It is expected that all children will attend excursions. Costs of individual excursions and the number of excursions each year are kept to a minimum.

Prep children will attend a buddy excursion in term 4 with their grade 6 buddy. They will possibly also do an excursion in term 2 and this will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Information will be provided for all excursions. Please ensure that all details are completed before returning to the school with payment by the due date. **Payments cannot be made on Fridays.**

SECTION FIVE

Assessment

Assessment at Your Child's Level

Assessment at Prep level includes the following:

- Online Numeracy Interview
- Online English Interview
- Running Records of reading (during individual reading conferences – known as “FP Testing”)
- Individual reading and writing conferences
- Teacher observations and records
- Moderation rubrics
- Class tests

At The Patch Primary School we upload information for analysis to both the Victorian Department of Education and our own web-based data base. Data analysis is used to inform the future teaching of your child.

SECTION SIX

How to Help Your Child

Homework

In the Prep area children are expected to read for 10-15 minutes every school night.

*Mathletics and Reading Eggs are encouraged but not an expectation. Passwords for these programs will be sent home.

Parent Assistance

As school and home is a partnership in educating your child we welcome your assistance in many ways. The following are just some of the ways you may assist your child and their school:

Excursion helpers

Reading/spelling

School Council Membership

Involvement in Wetlands Activities

Working Bee Involvement

Garden Team Membership

Tips on Helping Your Child at Home.

Some Tips on helping your child at home

- Give your child roles and responsibilities as it makes them feel valued and worthwhile and helps to make them independent.
- Give your children clear boundaries and realistic expectations for behaviour.
- Develop resilience.
- Never underestimate the importance of speaking and listening to your child as it underpins all their learning. Remember you are their primary teachers; engage them in lots of talk. Through talk help them to wonder and question the world around them.
- Talk to them about their learning, what they find difficult, easy, puzzling etc. Help them clarify their thinking by throwing in lots of why questions and 'because's'
- Encourage them to be critical thinkers, independent-minded readers, speakers and listeners.
- Introduce them to 'powerful words' and the power of words this develops their vocabulary and encourages them to use interesting words.
- When learning spelling encourage looking at word patterns, word building, usage and the origin of words.
- Display, in prominent places, things that need to be learnt, like times tables, spelling words etc.
- Use real life, everyday situations, like cooking and shopping to help them develop their mathematical skills and thinking.
- Involve them in the use and handling of money when shopping. Compare prices, weights etc. and discuss 'best buy'.
- Still read to and with them. Talk to them about their reading, even read what they are reading. Discuss things like, what inferences are made, what predictions are reasonable and what conflict and resolution takes place. Stop and discuss interesting words and descriptive, emotional (beautiful) passages.
- Share their music with them and discuss the lyrics. That may be difficult.
- Encourage your child to make connections in their learning and with the world around them.
- Finally discuss social issues with them to help develop their awareness, thinking and understanding of the world around them