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A Message from the Prep Team

Starting school is an exciting time for you and your family - the world that your child knows is about to become bigger. We know that your children are your most valued treasures and as their first teachers, parents are the ones who know their children better than anyone else. At Fairfield Primary School we work together to build on your child’s knowledge, ideas, experiences, skills and questions.

We believe that all children should be treated with respect, be kept safe and be guided forward in their learning, growth and development. Our philosophy places the child in the centre of our thoughts, guiding us each day in our planning. Through observation, listening and sharing with children we organise experiences and activities to develop their social, academic and creative skills.

Experiential learning—'Exploration Time'

Much of the planning we do for children is centred around our experiential play program. Each fortnight the Prep team plans rich and varied experiences, based on their observations of the children’s interests and areas teachers would like to further develop. Teachers begin with learning intentions, which include the literacy and numeracy focus for the fortnight. Together they develop open ended experiences in the areas of art, drama, science and construction as well as sensory, fine and gross motor development.

Literacy

Children start school with an enormous range of skills and abilities. Some children come to school recognising their own name and a few letters of the alphabet, while others arrive with the ability to read and can write a simple sentence. Teachers recognise that children will start at many stages along the literacy continuum and develop at different rates. Early in the school year we will conduct a literacy interview with your child to build an understanding of his or her strengths and challenges. We cater for these individual differences with targeted activities and small group work aimed at building on your child’s interests and abilities. Along with alphabet and phonics work, children are taught to use a range of reading strategies, which they build towards using independently.

Much of the writing process is focused around our experiential play program, where children draw and write about an experience they have just had; again building their skills at an individual rate – which depends on their oral language ability, their understanding of letter-sound relationships and their fine motor skills.

Numeracy

As with literacy, new prep students start school with varying levels of knowledge about number. Some children will have an understanding of two digit numbers and simple addition, while others are working towards counting to 10. A numeracy interview at the start of the year helps teachers to understand your child’s abilities in this area, and to plan appropriately for his or her development of numeracy concepts. In prep we use a wide range of hands on experiences and concrete materials for children to manipulate and build on their knowledge and ability.

We look forward to getting to know your child and sharing their learning journey during their first year of school.

The Prep Team!
Prep Times 2014

The first day of school - Friday 31st January 2014
The first day of school is a time of great excitement for all families. These new experiences can be both exhilarating and tiring for both children and parents.

Start times are staggered to provide a relaxed and comfortable handover for parents and children.

Start times are:

- Prep A
  - 9.10am - 12.40pm
- Prep B
  - 9.20am - 12.50pm
- Prep C
  - 9.30am - 1.00pm
- Prep D
  - 9:40am - 1:10pm

Parents and children will proceed to their designated classroom to be greeted by their new teacher. Following farewells, parents are invited to our staff room for tea or coffee. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and share first day nerves.

First day packing checklist - please note that no lunch is required on this day as our preps are dismissed before lunch time.

Please provide your child with a school bag packed with:
- Recess snack—this can be a piece of fruit or cut up vegetables
- Fresh fruit/vegetable snack—for our Fruit and Vegetable Snack time
- Drink bottle - filled with water
- Change of clothes (including socks)
- Medications (if required) - Please hand in to the school office.
  - It is a legal requirement that a parental permission slip and dosage description be provided for all medications administered at school.
- School bags need to be clearly named. Bags can be made easier to identify by customising with a keychain.
  - Please ensure all children’s belongings are labelled.

Pick up
At the end of each prep session, children will be brought to you in the undercover area. To prevent congestion it is requested that parents avoid congregating within the school buildings. Parents are welcome to visit and view the classrooms after pick up time.

The first term at Fairfield Primary School has been designed to support you and your child in a successful and smooth transition to school life.

The first week of school

Monday 3rd & Tuesday 4th February
School will commence at 9.00am and conclude at 1.20pm for all preps.

Wednesday 5th February
Rest day (no timetabled classes) except for those students scheduled for assessments.

Thursday 6th & Friday 7th February
School will commence at 9.00am and conclude at 3.30pm for all preps.

Lunch and snacks
Children will be required to bring a recess snack, fresh fruit/vegetable snack and packed lunch from Monday 3rd February.

Numeracy and Literacy Interviews
Teachers will conduct Numeracy and Literacy interviews on Wednesday 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th February and 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March. Children will be required to attend two independent 1 hour sessions during this time.

Children do not attend school on these dates unless timetabled. A timetable will be posted in the Prep area in early February 2013.

The first full school week will be the week commencing Monday 31st March.
Student Orientation Sessions
To prepare our students for their transition to school life, they will attend five 45 minute orientation sessions. The first of these sessions will take place on Thursday 7 November. Parents have been advised of their session time for this day. Four more orientation sessions will be held on Thursday 14, 21 November and 5 and 12 December. These sessions will be held from 10:15—11:00. You will be provided with a more detailed timetable at the first orientation session.

Your child will be placed in a group and will experience a general introduction to the prep program and meet some of their teachers for 2014.

These sessions are important times for the children to familiarise themselves with their new school. They are the first steps in making a smooth, independent transition to Prep.

We are also offering children and parents the opportunity to informally visit our Prep classrooms on Wednesday 13 and 27 November from 3:45—4:30.

Teachers will be available after each session for a short period of time to answer any questions you may have. If you feel you may need a longer discussion with any member of our staff, please contact the Prep Transition Coordinator, Cathy Turner.
How you can help your child to prepare for school

Literacy

Before your child begins school you can support their literacy development by:

- Encouraging your child to write their name.
- Playing games like “I Spy” using letter sounds rather than letter names.
- Providing a space for your child with pens, thin crayons, textas, junior scissors, paste and paper etc and showing them how to use them.
- Joining the local library and borrowing books and toys.
- Reading and enjoying a variety of books and other literature together.
- Encourage your child to join in where they are able, for example, rhyming or repetitive sections of a text.
- Encouraging your child to ‘read’ books by retelling familiar stories or making up a story to match the pictures.
- Talking, drawing or making puppets about characters or events from books.
- Singing songs together.
- Singing fingerplay songs such as ‘Incy Wincy Spider’ to encourage finger dexterity and interest in rhythm, rhyme and words.
- Talking about letters and words children see when shopping, reading, watching television and on the computer.
- Talking through shared activities, such as a walk to the shops or a trip to the zoo.
- Modelling reading and writing yourself so that your child can see that they are important and valued activities.

Numeracy

Before your child begins school you can support their numeracy development by:

- Providing a selection of objects that can be counted and sorted, for example, icy pole sticks, bottle caps, shells and buttons.
- Asking your child to solve real life problems, such as, how many forks are needed for dinner, how many items are in the shopping basket, how many buttons on a shirt or how much money is needed to buy an item at the shop.
- Talking to your child as they are playing, for example, “Can you make that bigger or smaller?”, “Find some more blue blocks”, “How many dolls will fit in that pram?”
- Encouraging your child to help with cooking – pouring, measuring, stirring, counting cupfuls and spoonfuls.
- Doing jigsaw puzzles and building things out of construction toys or even ‘junk’ materials.
- Playing games involving numbers, like Snakes and Ladders, Dominoes, Monopoly, dice and card games.
- Discussing how you use clocks, calendars and diaries.
- Discussing placement of objects, such as, ‘behind’, ‘In front of’ and ‘next to’.

In their Prep year your child will often play games and participate in ‘hands on’ activities during numeracy sessions. Using simple, everyday concrete examples and materials can enhance your child’s early numeracy skills.
2014 - General Information

School Hours
- 9.00 - 11.00 am - in class
- 11.00 - 11.30 am - recess in playground
- 11.30 - 12.30 pm - in class
- 12.30 pm - Fruit/Vegetable snack
- 1.30 - 1.40 pm - lunch eating in classroom
- 1.40 - 2.30 pm - lunch playtime in playground
- 2.30 - 3.30 pm - in class

Wednesday is the day that lunch orders are delivered to the school from Classroom Cuisine. You can collect details from school office or from our www.fairfieldps.vic.edu.au or www.classroomcuisine.com.au

Some helpful tips for ‘Getting Ready’
- Have some ‘practice runs’ before school starts. You may like to bring your child up to the school to play on the equipment and find the toilets etc.
- Perhaps you could start preparing the night before. Allow your child to organise their clothes and prepare their books and bag.
- Focus on the positive aspects of beginning school and don’t allow your child to overhear your anxieties about this important step. Sometimes we don’t realise that we are giving children a reason to be anxious, for example, “You don’t know anyone in the grade, but you will be fine”.

A Sleep Routine
- Establish a routine with a set bedtime to ensure your child gets enough sleep.

Dressing For school
- Look for easy fasteners when choosing shoes, bags and clothing. It is very difficult for one teacher to do up 20 pairs of shoelaces!
- Encourage your child to dress themselves so they can manage things like taking jumpers on and off at school.

Looking After Belongings
- Please label all your child’s belongings. Show your child where these labels have been placed and what they look like.
- Help your child recognise their school bag by putting a key chain or their name on the outside.
- Note where lost property is held at the school.

Food For Energy
- Children will optimise their learning if they have eaten a healthy breakfast.
- Please pack a healthy snack, lunch and fruit/vegetable snack and explain to your child when they should be eaten.
- A great resource for healthy lunch box ideas is: www.goforyourlife.vic.edu.au
- Chocolate, chips and lollies should be left out of the lunchbox.
- Please include a drink bottle with water and encourage your child to use the drink taps during break times.
- Students do not share food because of food allergies.

Other Items Children Will Require
- Students are required to have a named library bag and art smock. A reader folder will be provided.
- Children will need to wear their sun smart hats outside in Term 1 and Term 4.
**Spare Clothes**

- All kinds of accidents occur at school, from puddles to toileting accidents. **All** children should have a complete set of spare clothes in their bag (including socks).

**Saying Goodbye**

- A short and reassuring goodbye in the line up area encourages independence.
- Always tell your child you are leaving.

**Going Home**

- Establish a place in the yard to meet your child after school. We recommend the undercover area as this is where the teachers will bring the Prep grades.
- Please be on time to collect your child or contact the school if you are delayed.
- If your child attends the Out of School Hours Club (OSH) Club ensure that you have shown them where it is located. The OSH Club staff will collect the children from the classroom initially to establish a routine. If your child is not attending OSH Club on their ‘normal’ day you will need to notify the co-ordinator.

**Notes Between Home and School**

- Ask your child to check for notes in their bag each day.
- The teachers encourage the children to place any notices in their reading folder, which comes home daily. It is a good idea to place any notes for the teacher in this folder and tell your child they need to hand it to the teacher when they arrive in class in the morning.
- School newsletters are regularly emailed to all families.
- Try to create a habit of checking the main prep notice board in the corridor as you pass by. Sometimes general Prep requests or reminder notices are placed there.
- Some reminders and class specific information will be sent to families by a Class Carer. The class carer is a parent of a student in the class who acts as a liaison between the class and parents.
- If you need to speak to your child’s teacher please make an appointment.

**Home Reading Program**

- Early in the year your child’s teacher will tell you about the reading program.
- Establish a quiet time for reading together, maybe as part of the bedtime routine.
- Try to make reading together a pleasurable activity.

**Toileting**

- Please ensure that your child can use the toilet independently. Some boys may need to learn how to use a urinal! Leave a spare pair of underwear in your child’s bag.
Fairfield Primary School  
song  
‘Aspire to Learn’

Aspire to learn  
That’s what we do at school  
At Fairfield Primary School  
Learning is just the beginning  
The work we do is fun  
And we have our playtime in the sun  
At Fairfield Primary School  
We aspire to learn

Aspire to learn  
Endeavour to achieve  
At Fairfield Primary School  
Fairness, Respect and Courage  
Core Values we use each day  
When home time comes  
We just want to stay  
At Fairfield Primary School  
We aspire to learn

And together we’ll build a better future  
We will work and learn together each day

Aspire to learn  
With a little inspiration  
We can build a community of learning  
We can bounce back when we need  
And everyone is a good friend indeed  
At Fairfield Primary School  
We aspire to learn

Oh, oh, at Fairfield Primary School  
We aspire to learn.

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