

# Prep Parent Information 2017

## WILLAURA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to Willaura Primary School.

We look forward to getting to know you in the lead up to the 2017 school year.

We thought it would be a good idea to provide you with some useful facts about Willaura Primary School.

If you read this document in conjunction with the Family Information Booklet, it should answer most of your questions and provide you with information to get you started.

Please feel free to contact us with any queries – details on the front cover.

**Tammie Meehan**  
Principal

**Stephanie Schulz**  
Prep Teacher

**Our school values:**

Stay Safe  
Try Your Best  
Act Responsibly  
Respect Others

## Making a start at Willaura Primary School:

- Our school day begins at 9.00am. It is important for your child to be at school on time. It is also important for your child to regularly attend school each day, unless of course they are ill.
- Leaving your child at school can be stressful for both you and your child. If you have any concerns please speak to the teacher. In our experience we have found the following things have helped if children do not want you to leave:
  - Get your child settled by having them put their bag away on their own and take them to the communal carpet area in the classroom
  - Say goodbye and reassure them that you will be there to pick them up at the end of the day
  - If they are upset and holding on to you, ask the teacher to take them to the carpet for you
  - If your child is crying, try to leave quickly and speak to the teacher at the end of the day. Usually children only need 5 minutes to calm down and settle into their day. Please be assured that we will contact you if there are any ongoing concerns.
- Please pick your child up from the classroom at the end of the day. Children who travel on a bus will be shown how to get on the bus safely. The teacher will wait with the children until they are picked up. If you are late, please inform the school so we can take your child to wait at the office.
- **Prep children do not come to school on Wednesdays during Term 1.** On these days it is important for your child to have some rest time. It can be very tiring starting school.
- Children will receive a take home reader on the first day of school. They will be encouraged to read their book at home, and when they arrive at school they will be given the opportunity to practise reading their book again. It is important that their take-home reader is returned to school and changed every day.
- Parent volunteers are a big part of our reading program in listening to children reread their reader and assisting to choose a new one. This program will begin in Week 3 or 4 of Term 1, as we find that children need these weeks to get used to not having their parents in the classroom. Even if your child is comfortable with leaving you, having parents in the room can create anxiety with other children. The teachers will let you know when children are

settled and the Parent Home Reading Program will begin. We LOVE parents, grandparents and friends to listen to reading!

- Children will also receive a booklet of sounds and words to learn. The teacher will check these off, every few weeks, during their allocated reading time. We encourage you to tick the sounds off at home as you practise them, and your child recognises them. You might like to choose a few words and sounds each night to practise reading, and saying, with your child.
- It will be helpful if children can recognise their name and begin to practise writing it before they come to school, using capital and lower case letters correctly. You could also practise alphabet sounds as part of this learning process. Holding a pencil correctly is also very important.
- Each child will receive a diary. We ask that these are returned to school each day, please! This is where you will find any notes from the teacher. Please sign the notes so the teacher knows you have seen them. Parents can also write notes in the diary. We will also ask you to sign up to our Class Dojo program as another way to communicate with each other.
- If your child is absent, the school requires you to write a note to your teacher in the diary or send a message through Class Dojo. In the past, we have found that diaries and reader covers last throughout the year if they are covered in contact.
- Children are not allowed to drink cordial or juice in the classroom, but we encourage them to have a drink bottle filled with water. They will need their water bottle each day as we have regular PE sessions which result in children becoming quite thirsty. Water is also important for their concentration.
- Children can place a lunch order on Thursdays. Orders are handed in to the 'Lunch Order Tub' in the multi-purpose room and taken to the Willaura Bakery on Thursday mornings. On lunch order days, your child will still need to bring a snack for morning recess. It is also important to order sauce with your lunch order if your child wishes to have sauce.
- Each day the Preps have 'fruit time' at 10 o'clock. This is an opportunity for students to have something healthy and regain some energy and focus. Please send along a SMALL piece of fruit each day for your child. We would appreciate if 'messy' fruit (e.g. oranges) could be avoided during this time. In the past many parents have cut their child's piece of fruit (where possible) and this works really well. Students will still have a snack at playtime, so the fruit only needs to be a small piece.

- Please name all your child's belongings (lunchboxes, hats, jumpers etc). It is a good idea to put names on the tags of jumpers but also on the inside pockets. 'Embroidability', in Barkly Street, Ararat, also personally name garments at a minimal cost.
- Children will need to wear their hat each day, from the start of October to the end of April. If a child does not bring their hat they must sit under the shade and miss out on their playtime. This is a rule that the school has in accordance with our 'SunSmart' policy. The school sells bucket hats, with a logo, for \$9 each and without a logo, for \$5 each.
- It is a good idea to keep a spare change of underwear and socks in your child's bag - just in case!
- Children with longer hair are to have it tied back to help ward off head lice. We also discourage children from sharing hats for the same reason.
- Your child will receive a free library bag. If you already have a library bag you are most welcome to use that. Each week, your child will get a new library book to take home. They will need to return it fortnightly so that they can choose a new book from the MARC Van. Please keep little brothers and sisters away from our special books, just in case they rip, or scribble on, pages.
- Children will also need an art smock. If you don't have one already, an old long sleeved shirt is fine.
- We will send home a timetable showing you when the children will be having Art, PE, Music, and Kitchen Garden
- As part of craft activities, we need a variety of construction materials. Please send in any boxes, containers, bottle lids etc.
- One of our students is highly allergic to peanuts. Food with peanuts or peanut butter has been banned from the school, we ask that you remind your child not to share their food. We will also follow this up at school.

**We are aware that there is a lot of information to take in. If you have any concerns, big or small, please speak to your child's classroom teacher. Parents are always welcome for a chat and we will be more than happy to assist you. If you require more time than usual, please ask for a meeting before or after school; please telephone us on 5354 1401.**

## Curriculum in Prep. . .

Literacy and numeracy form the basis of the Prep curriculum. Students participate in two hours of focussed literacy, and one hour of focussed numeracy most days.

## Literacy Learning in Prep . . .

Our approach to literacy learning is based on the Daily 5, CAFÉ, VCOP, Big Write, and Soundwaves models.



Daily 5 has five component parts, which the children gradually learn about during first term:

- Read to self
- Read to someone
- Listen to reading
- Word work and
- Work on writing.

The CAFÉ strategies are used to focus direct instruction, according to an individual child's learning needs.

CAFÉ is an acronym for

- Comprehension
- Accuracy
- Fluency
- Extending vocabulary.

VCOP is an acronym for

- Vocabulary
- Connectives
- Openers
- Punctuation

VCOP and Big Write are a program we use to develop the writing needs of our students.

The Soundwaves program is a phonic-based spelling program used from P-6.

Children also learn their alphabet sounds and "Magic Words", and develop their skills and understandings through "Kid Writing" and "Sunshine Online".

**Noted Australian children’s author, Mem Fox, is passionate about reading to children. Please take a moment to read and consider her . . .**

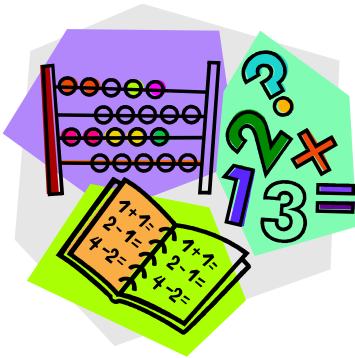
### Ten read-aloud commandments

1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud. From birth!
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read. Or the same story a thousand times!
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don’t be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners
5. Read the stories that your child loves, over and over, and over again, and always read in the same ‘tune’ for each book: i.e. with the same intonations and volume and speed, on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters that start the child’s name and yours, remembering that it’s never work, it’s always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever teach reading, or get tense around books.
- 10. Please read aloud every day because you just adore being with your child, not because it’s the right thing to do.**

### **Things you can do to develop your child’s knowledge about books**

- Read stories aloud to babies, toddlers, pre-schoolers and school-age children. Draw their attention to familiar objects and events on each page.
- Talk about stories and pictures with your child, and encourage them to ask questions
- Answer their questions about pictures, stories and words, and ask them to suggest what might happen next – and then check together
- Help them to connect stories with their own experiences: “There’s a little dog, just like the one we saw the other day. What do you think this little dog will do?”
- Encourage children to develop favourite books that they enjoy re-reading, describing some of the characters and talking about what happened in the story
- Talk about the way a book works – its title, author and illustrator; its front and back covers; and the beginning and end of a story
- Demonstrate for them how “to read a page” – showing them that we read from left to right, and from the top to the bottom of the page in most print texts
- Move your fingers along the line of print so your child can connect the sounds of the words with the look of the words on the page

- Encourage your child to hold a book the right way up, and trace their finger from top-left to bottom-right as they ‘pretend to read’; it is important to value this behaviour, as it helps a young child to see themselves as a reader
- Ask them to ‘call out’ words they know, and join in when delicious words, like “Splash!”, “Swishy, swashy through the long grass” are repeated in the story.



## Numeracy Learning in. . .

Prep maths is very hands on and practical, and emphasises the development of children’s number and place value skills.

The Prep numeracy program focuses on Number, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability:

- Counting, ordering numbers, adding and subtracting, and understanding the relative values of different numbers
- Using different object to measure length and capacity; for example, using rice to fill different containers, or paper clips to measure the length of different objects in the room
- Understanding probability – the chance or likelihood of something happening
- Use of the “Mathletics” programs

### Things you can do to support children’s numeracy from birth:

- Sing and chant number songs and rhymes, and read counting books
- Listen to children and talk about size, shape and the number of things
- Point out numbers in the environment – in magazines, on buses, cars and houses, in the supermarket and when using the internet to buy online
- Explain how numbers help us to locate information, travel to the right destination and to know how many and how much
- Use numeracy for practical purposes yourself, and explain how you’re using numeracy knowledge to buy paint for a fence, build a bookshelf, measure out cooking ingredients, plan a trip or use electronic ways to find information or contact people
- Use the correct language for mathematical ideas – a rectangle is a rectangle, not an oblong; a circle is different spatially from a sphere; a ‘diamond’ is really a rhombus.



## Discoveries Learning in Prep . . .

Our Discoveries program within Prep is designed to create learning opportunities through the investigation of each student's interests and needs. This personalized and unique approach gives students the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, with the support of teachers who facilitate deeper thinking and connections to the curriculum.

Our Discoveries sessions encourage students to:

- try new activities
- socialise with various members of Prep/One and the wider Willaura Primary School community
- develop fine and gross motor skills
- develop a wide range of social and emotional skills, such as problem solving capabilities, sharing resources, conflict resolution, team work, decision making and resilience building
- expand on concepts and challenge their understanding as to how and why things are done
- work collaboratively with others and teach their peers

## Emotional Learning and Social Skills in Prep. . .

We believe that children need personal, relationship and learning skills to enjoy and succeed in school.

Social and emotional learning are explicitly taught in Prep. As a school community, we have a strong commitment to the development of every child's capacity to being caring, kind and thoughtful of others. The "Bounce Back" program forms the basis of our classroom instruction, and School Wide Positive Behaviours focus on respect, underpins all that we do every day.

Personal skills include the ability to look after yourself and your belongings, manage your time and get tasks done, and understand that particular rules and routines apply in each situation.

Relationship skills include being able to join in games, take turns, make and maintain friendships, and learn how to talk with less familiar adults.

Learning skills include being able to keep going with a task, knowing how to ask and answer questions, how to listen to and follow instructions, and having a positive disposition or attitude towards learning new things.

### Things you can do to help your child learn about feelings:

- Show your child how you manage, talk about and cope with your own feelings
- Listen to your child's feelings and accept them
- Give your child words to describe strong feelings, such as anger or sadness, and explain that we all feel like that sometimes
- Help them talk about what happened, and where the feelings come from
- Provide a calming activity when they are upset or overexcited; eg, a walk outside, building with blocks – something they like to do but is not competitive or exciting

- Always make up with your child after any quarrels or disagreements



### Things you can do to support your child's friendship skills:

- Treat your child and other children in a respectful way
- Discuss how other people feel and help your child to talk about their own feelings
- Talk about how we can understand and enjoy the differences between us
- Give your child ideas about how to join in – usually it helps for them to talk about the game that is being played, rather than about themselves; for example, to say, “I could be a mummy on the train”, rather than “Can I play?”
- Teach your child to stop, wait and listen, and then offer to join in with whatever the other children are playing, rather than trying to change the game
- Help your child to predict what others may say or do, and to ‘prepare’ a response
- Invite children over to play, so they can get to know each other better – one child at a time works best at the start. When there are brothers and sisters, it's often wise to invite a friend for them too, so that the school-starter gets time with their new playmate
- Help children to change their behaviour if it gets in the way of making friends; for example, some children may be too boisterous and push in, so they get rejected; others may hang back and not reach out to other children
- Encourage your child to broaden their friendship group by inviting others to play sometimes, even when they have one special friend. This helps if there is a break in the main friendship because families move, the friend is ill, or friends grow apart.

## Having a ‘Growth Mind Set’ at Willaura Primary School . . .

### What is a ‘Growth Mindset’?

People with a Growth Mindset believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This attitude creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. **Children who demonstrate a Growth Mindset** are enthusiastic, hard-working, persistent learners. They take charge of their own success, and recognise that making mistakes is an essential part of the learning process. At Willaura Primary School it is quite common to hear comments from children along the lines, “Mistakes are good, because you learn from them”, and “This is really stretching my brain!”

As parents, you can nurture a Growth Mindset in your child, just as our teachers do, by praising them for their persistence and strategies (rather than for their intelligence or talent), by telling success stories that emphasize hard work and love of learning, and by teaching them about the brain as a ‘learning machine’ that never gives up, loves being stretched, and recognizes and makes the most of every learning opportunity. Together, we can teach our children the joy of learning by expressing positive views of challenges, effort and mistakes.



Things you can do to support your child's positive learning disposition and Growth Mindset:

- Offer challenging but manageable tasks with adequate support
  - Do some tasks with your child; children love doing things with parents and as a family
  - Encourage children to think positively; eg "I am learning to . . . ", instead of "I can't . . ."
  - Make sure your child knows that making mistakes is a good way to learn
  - Encourage children to 'have another go' if they don't succeed the first time, letting them know you believe in them
- Talk about the importance of trying and persistence, not just doing well or winning
  - Allow sufficient time for a child to finish making something, or arrange to come back to it tomorrow
  - Sit with a restless child to offer the sense that you're 'with them'
  - Provide specific, positive feedback, such as "I really like the way you concentrated when you were digging that hole; it was just right for the plant". Praise such as "Good boy / girl", doesn't tell the child what they've done right, or how they are improving
  - Make sure that when you ask a child to wait, you give them the turn you promised; this keeps faith with them and shows them how cooperation works
  - Talk about what your child has learned and what they can do now, that they couldn't when they were younger.

**Willaura Primary School's Specialist Programs:**

- **MUSIC & VISUAL ARTS**
  - **STEPHANIE ALEXANDER'S KITCHEN PROGRAM**
    - **HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

**We look forward to a wonderful year of learning with your child in 2017.**

