



JUNIOR LEARNING COMMUNITY



INFORMATION BOOKLET 2024

STAFF



Jessica Kattwinkel
Principal



Kate Leigh
Business Manager



Genevieve Erskine
Prep Teacher



Jaymie Lowe
Grade 1 Teacher



Chloe Riseley
Grade 2 Teacher



Liesel McGregor
Grade 3/4M Teacher



Airlie Birch
Grade 3/4A Teacher



Alison McDonald
Grade 3/4A Teacher



Alistair Burrell
*Grade 5/6 Teacher /
Learning Specialist*



Brendan King
*Health & Wellbeing
Leader / PE*



Donna Williams
5/6 Teacher (Thursdays)



Jack Simpson
Music Teacher



Jo Kara-Cozens
MACC Teacher



Kristin MacKinlay
MARC Teacher



Ann-Maree Convery
Italian Teacher



Hannah Zappelli
*Education Support /
Tutor*



Bree Egan
Education Support

Michaela Sultmann
Education Support



Kirsty Osborne
Education Support



Suzanne Bath
Chaplain

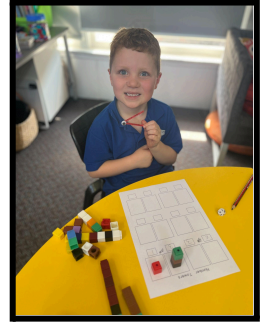
OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our School Motto: 'Living and Learning Together'

Our Vision: *An inclusive community that supports and encourages a love of learning and the skills and mindset to thrive.*

Our Mission: In order to fulfil this vision, we nurture our students to:

- be independent lifelong learners who are well equipped to meet the challenges of an ever changing world
- think and learn through problem solving
- achieve personal success and excellence
- demonstrate ethical, social and environmental responsibility
- be active, happy, engaged and productive citizens.



At Birregurra Primary School we value:

- **Community** - growing positive partnerships between school, home and the broader community
- **Aspire** - setting goals and purposefully working towards their achievement
- **Respect** - for self, others, learning and our environment
- **Excellence** - striving for the highest personal achievement in all aspects of schooling.

We apply these values in our everyday dealings with each other and in the development of our programs and policies.

In our school community these values are demonstrated when:

- learners are at the centre of our teaching and learning
- teaching and learning programs encourage deep understanding and a sense of the importance of learning
- students have the opportunity to learn in a positive, caring environment and are encouraged to become self-motivated, life-long learners
- all students are encouraged to achieve their personal best in all that they do
- members of the school community show great confidence in one another and themselves
- students, teachers and parents feel that they are treated fairly at all times
- students are encouraged to work cooperatively and collaboratively with their peers and other members of the school community, and to be active and responsible citizens.

WHAT IS A JUNIOR LEARNING COMMUNITY?

The Junior Learning Community at Birregurra P.S. consists of children ranging in age from approximately 5 years to 9 years of age. Classes are carefully selected and include a range of personalities, abilities and interests. We proudly place children in multi-age settings because we believe this is more akin to a family setting where children learn from each other in a caring and supportive way. Because children learn at different rates, not every child in Grade One, for example, will have the same teaching focus or be completing the same tasks at the same time.

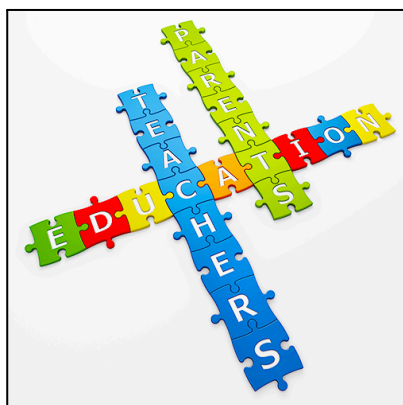
Teachers at Birregurra P.S. address the learning needs of children as unique individuals rather than deliver a predetermined curriculum to any given grade. Your child is always at the centre of the curriculum. Teachers provide learning that is authentic, relevant and engaging. Each student's interests, stage of development and individual learning goals are catered for during inquiry time, literacy, numeracy and specialist programs.

Teachers ensure that each child is working towards a Victorian Curriculum Standard that is developmentally appropriate. The Junior Learning Community includes students in grades Prep, Grade 1 and Grade 2.



HOW DO YOU GET TO KNOW MY CHILD?

At Birregurra P.S we devote the first few weeks of school to building our classroom community. Together, we explore the 'nuts and bolts' that will make our classroom a ten out of ten-learning environment. Teaching and learning activities focus on 'getting to know' each other (interests, hobbies, strengths, family, favourite books, friends etc). Each grade also develops a class agreement. This agreement sets the tone for classroom behaviour and expectations. All class members have input into the formulation of this agreement and make a commitment to honouring the expectations in it.



We are interested in hearing from you, about your child's interests, your hopes and aspirations for your child this year, and any other information you consider important for the classroom teacher to know. This can be shared in our Parent/Teacher conversations held after school via telephone on **Tuesday and Wednesday in week 3 and 4 (13th, 14th, 20th & 21st of February).**

All children are assessed by teachers at the beginning of the year to identify their initial learning needs in literacy and numeracy. This information is used by classroom teachers to set learning goals and to plan programs that are

developmentally appropriate for each child.

LITERACY

HOW IMPORTANT IS ORAL LANGUAGE FOR MY CHILD'S FUTURE LEARNING?

Oral language (speaking and listening) is crucial to a child's literacy development (reading and writing, including spelling). At Birregurra P.S, we actively encourage interaction among our students and peer learning is seen as an important part of language development. We provide learning experiences that encourage interaction and utilise a range of materials to promote talk. Examples include dramatic play, Lego-building, show and share, sharing books, craft activities etc. Teachers model language that students need to use, ask questions that require extended answers and encourage students to discuss/explain their learning. This takes place via a one to one conversation, small group sharing and whole class share times each day.

Current research indicates that a child's speech and language skills are one of the strongest predictors of literacy ability. Parents can contribute to their child's oral language development by simply talking to and reading with their children.

WHAT READING TAKES PLACE AT BIRREGURRA P.S.?



We learn to read by reading and we further our learning by reading. Children at Birregurra P.S are involved in a wide range of reading activities. They listen to stories to encourage enjoyment and interest, share a range of print materials and engage in daily reading sessions. Students are immersed with good-fit books. Everyday students undertake activities such as read to self, read to partner, listen to reading as well as word work and writing focussing on letter formation and fine motor skills in the early years.

'Big Books' are used as mentor texts to demonstrate reading strategies and the conventions of print. Small group teacher-led reading sessions allow for individual instruction. These planned sessions will involve books or other reading material selected by the teacher to present new learning challenges and to extend children's learning.

Individual Book Boxes will provide a classroom collection of just-right reading materials which children can read on their own. Small group literacy activities/games are used to reinforce appropriate reading strategies or skills.

Dandelion Launchers and Dandelion Readers are a series of synthetic phonic reading books that support our Sounds Write phonics approach. These books are used for individual, group and home reading.

In Grades 1 & 2, take home books will generally be self-selected from a child's individualised book box. These books will be familiar and/or very easy to read. They are to be read for fun and their purpose is to instil reading confidence through easy, fluent reading. Sharing reading at home is a valuable way to develop and encourage reading and a love of literature. Reading can include favourite story/ library books, factual texts, computer research, Pokemon cards, comics, games, newspapers, magazines etc.

It is expected that all children will engage in some reading at home every day.



At Birregurra Primary school, we have a whole school approach to phonics, using the Sounds Write program. Sounds Write provides students with a highly structured instructional approach to teaching children to read and spell. It teaches the essential skills of blending, segmenting and phoneme manipulation. Daily structured 'mini lessons' support students to read and spell words with a focus on letter formation and handwriting.

DO CHILDREN WRITE EVERYDAY?

Children are encouraged to write for real purposes every day. They need explicit instruction in writing, beginning in the early years. Sentences are the building blocks of all writing. Students are formally introduced to the features of different writing styles during investigation times and via teacher-led whole class and small group writing sessions. Children have opportunities to produce cards, letters, notes, recipes, instructions, maps, books etc. Students are explicitly taught the writing process of planning, composing, revising, editing and publishing during timetabled writing sessions. The two most important phases of the writing process are planning and revising. Evidence also shows that grammar is best taught in the context of student writing with this approach embedded in our writing curriculum.

NUMERACY

HOW DO YOU TEACH MATHS AT BIRREGURRA P.S.?

Our numeracy program assists children to develop an understanding of number and to link maths to real life situations. We emphasise investigation, use concrete materials and a variety of games to reinforce concepts taught. Children are encouraged to articulate their thinking when explaining their findings. To cater for a wide range of ability levels, teachers use open ended tasks or provide different entry points for students working on the same task. Maths lessons are carefully timetabled, and include children working in small groups, with partners, individually or as a class. ICT and iPads may also be used to support learning.



The following are examples of additional opportunities for exploring mathematics within and beyond the classroom setting:

- coin recognition, exchange of money, cash register with numbers etc. in shops
- naming shapes (cylinder, cone, rectangular prism etc.) as children build/construct
- reading analogue and digital time for appointments, performance times etc.
- measuring height of towers, distance travelled by paper planes, width of stage etc.
- mapping pathways, drawing bird's eye view etc.
- cooking, measuring quantities.



In 2024 we will continue to use the 'Essential Assessment' program to support the development of all students in the area of numeracy. Essential Assessment is a leading provider of a unique Victorian Curriculum model that delivers a whole school approach to formative and summative assessment in schools. This program provides a personalised and differentiated online assessment and curriculum model that diagnostically assesses each student and provides them with an aligned curriculum to grow each students' knowledge from their current understanding.

SCIENCE AND INQUIRY



Our Science program is supported by Primary Connections 5Es teaching and learning model and resources. The program and term long units are based on an inquiry-oriented teaching and learning model. Students use their prior knowledge and literacies to develop explanations for their hands-on experiences of scientific phenomena. Students have opportunities to represent and re-represent their developing understanding. They are engaged actively in the learning process. Students develop investigation skills and an understanding of the nature of Science.

Teaching and learning progresses through five phases: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate & Evaluate.

Intertwined within our Science and Inquiry units is STEAM activities. STEAM promotes positive early experiences of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. It provides our students the skills and capabilities they need now and for the future. STEAM touches every aspect of our lives, from our smartphones to the technologies that enable us to explore the world around us and outer space. It also drives innovation in our fast-changing global economy. To succeed in this environment, and for our students to continue to prosper into the future, they need a strong foundation in STEAM.



SPECIALIST PROGRAMS

Students attend specialist classes each week. Specialist subjects include Italian, Art, Library, Music and Physical Education. Engaging in these specialist classes provides a multitude of benefits that contribute to students' overall development. These specialised subjects contribute to a well-rounded educational experience. Exposure to Italian enriches cultural awareness and global perspectives, while Art classes encourage creativity and self-expression. Library sessions not only enhance literacy but also instil effective research skills. Music classes contribute to the development of musical talents and cognitive abilities. Physical Education, exemplified by the Term One program with Mr. King, focuses on athletics training, promoting physical fitness, teamwork, and sportsmanship. This specialised preparation is particularly valuable as students gear up for School House Sports and the interschool Polwarth Sports. The combination of these subjects ensures a holistic education, nurturing skills and values that extend beyond the classroom and into various aspects of students' lives.



DIGITAL LEARNING

DO LOWER PRIMARY CHILDREN USE COMPUTERS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY?



Research has demonstrated that digital technologies can have a positive impact on student engagement, motivation and confidence. At Birregurra P.S we have a focus on technology and using it to support and improve student learning. The introduction of iPads has seen students use a combination of apps across the curriculum to engage, motivate and inspire learning. The portability, flexibility, and natural intuitive interfaces make iPads ideal devices for students of all ages to develop 21st Century skills, such as creativity,

innovation, communication and collaboration.

Virtual conferencing also provides additional learning opportunities to connect with other classrooms and teachers outside of our school. Students supported by teachers can interact and authenticate learning by connecting with experts and specialists, such as the Australian Centre for Moving Image (ACMI), Museum Victoria and Arts Victoria, bringing experts into our classroom.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Respectful Relationships supports schools to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours – and to teach our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. Students are encouraged to develop the following skills and mindset-

- Developing positive and pro-social values and skills
- Developing strategies for coping and bouncing back
- Finding courage in everyday life as well as in difficult circumstances
- Optimist thinking and looking on the bright side
- Amplifying positive emotions and managing negative emotions

- Skills for countering bullying
- Skills and attitudes for being successful.

Respectful Relationships integrates the teaching of these important personal and social skills within all key learning areas. It uses children's literature to teach key wellbeing and resilience concepts. It also incorporates cooperative learning strategies, circle time, educational games, music, drama, art and contemporary culture and technology. Many of the activities also feature critical and creative higher-level thinking.

CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM

The Chaplain's role includes care for members of the school and wider community. Responding to issues and critical incidents as they arise, as well as facilitating proactive relationship building, small group delivery and programs to ensure improved wellbeing outcomes for young people and their communities.



The chaplaincy's role within the school community is to provide the link needed between the physical and psychological wellbeing of the students, parents/caregivers and teaching staff, ensuring that a holistic approach is undertaken as we seek to produce resilient, resourceful, competent and successful individuals. As chaplain, duties may include (but are not limited to):

- Building relationships and being present in the school community
- Pastorally caring for all members of the school community
- Implementation of preventative and proactive programs
- Supporting classroom activities or individual students in class
- Assisting on school excursions or camps if required
- As needed accompany child or parent to mediation and or court appearances
- Liaising with various service providers and local councils
- Home visits if essential to the child's wellbeing
- Offering support at times of significant events
- Intervention and trauma support in crises and emergencies.

Chaplains can deal with a wide range of issues, including:

- behaviour management
- social relationship issues such as anger, peer relationships, loneliness and bullying
- family relationship issues;
- the development of the self - sense of purpose, self-esteem, and mental health
- the involvement of students in the community
- addressing issues of social inclusion and racism.

HOW DOES RESTORATIVE PRACTICE WORK?



Our NEW HABITS are grounded in the principle that when something happens, it harms and damages relationships. We ask a different set of questions: Can you tell me what happened? What were you thinking/feeling at the time? How have you been thinking/feeling since it happened? Who do you think has been affected by your actions? How were they affected? What could you do now to help make things right? How can we prevent this from happening again in the future? What can I do to help you?

Our new habits are restorative. Our new habits are: inclusive, create community, develop problem solving around day to day difficulties, build confidence and embrace the concepts of being SAFE, FAIR and FRIENDLY.

The wellbeing and personal development of every student is a priority of all staff. At Birregurra Primary we:

- Pride ourselves on building connectedness – everyone feeling part of a team, a community
- Explicitly teach social and emotional skills through the ‘Respectful Relationships’ program
- Each class teacher oversees student wellbeing and provides support to students, families and staff. They work one to one with students, as part of small groups, as well as the whole class. They assist children to develop problem solving skills, resolve friendship issues, take responsibility and own behaviour. They work alongside parents with the aim of growing emotionally intelligent children. Referral to Student Support Services is available, as needed (parent consent required)
- Parents are encouraged to contact their class teacher if they have any concerns about their child’s wellbeing.

HOMEWORK

In our Junior Learning Community, homework is primarily based around supporting children's early literacy development. Research shows that reading books aloud with young children contributes to the development of their emergent literacy abilities, which are defined as the foundational skills or knowledge that children develop before learning the more conventional skills of reading and writing. Shared reading experiences are highly beneficial for young people. Benefits of shared reading include facilitating enriched language exposure, fostering the development of listening skills, spelling, reading comprehension and vocabulary. They are also valued as a shared social opportunity between parents and their children to foster positive attitudes toward reading. Our home reading program reflects and reinforces classroom learning programs in a way that

incorporates individual interests. We also encourage children to engage with their families in talking about their friends, experiences and interests at school.

In addition to reading, we encourage incidental real life maths activities. The below table provides a guide for each year level in the Junior Learning Community.

Year Level	Time per night	Regular expectations	Additional expectations
Prep	10 mins	Read decodable reader books with an adult each night.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share a variety of texts together. E.g. Picture storybooks, posters, programs, leaflets. - Practice counting to and back from 10 and learning the numbers before and after a particular number.
1	10 mins	Read take home book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inquiry research as required. - Real life maths. E.g count the number of white cars on a car trip.
	10 mins	Spelling practice – High Frequency Words	
2	15 mins	Read take home book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading, writing or inquiry activity when required. - Real life maths. E.g measuring when cooking, telling the time
	10 mins	Spelling practice – High Frequency Words	

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

During the year, we hold excursions and incursions to enrich your child's education through real life experiences. These activities are designed to stimulate and motivate learning, to provide experiences not readily available, and to help children develop social skills in real life settings.

COPACC PERFORMANCE

A key component of the Arts curriculum is the opportunity to view performing arts. In March, students in the Junior Learning Community will travel to COPACC (Colac Otway Performing Arts & Cultural Centre) via bus to view the live performance of 'Wilbur the Optical Whale'.

SWIMMING

In 2024, students in the Junior Learning Community will participate in swimming lessons at Bluewater in Colac. Lessons will take place each Friday afternoon in Term Two for an eight week period. Lessons involve a half hour practical lesson in the pool as well as a water safety lesson, supporting students to develop their knowledge of how to be safe in and around the water.



HOW DO I CHECK MY CHILD'S PROGRESS?

Mornings are busy times for parents, children and teachers as we all prepare for the day ahead, and as such, are suitable for quick necessary exchanges of information.

Should you wish to discuss aspects of your child's progress with the class teacher we would appreciate that you arrange an appointment. In-depth issues require and deserve sufficient time for a considered discussion, so that we can best support your child.

"I'm wondering about ... can you give me some more information please?" "Can I make time with you to discuss ...?"

"Would you be able to clarify ... for me please?"

Please let the teacher know (verbally, via email or Seesaw) that you require a time to discuss your child and we will make ourselves available. No matter is too big or too small for our shared attention!

Contact details for all junior school teachers are as follows:

School phone number: 5236 2222

School email address: birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Prep - Genevieve.Erskine@education.vic.gov.au

Grade 1 - Jaymie.Lowe@education.vic.gov.au

Grade 2 - Chloe.Riseley@education.vic.gov.au

Health & Wellbeing Leader - Brendan.King@education.vic.gov.au

The **Reading Diary** is an important communication tool between home and school, and another way to stay abreast of your child's learning. Please check your child's diary each night and ensure that it is returned to school daily.



Seesaw is a student driven digital portfolio and communication tool. It empowers students of all ages to create, reflect, collaborate and share what they are learning at school.

Weekly updates from classroom teachers are distributed via Seesaw and provide an outline of our learning focus. Families are provided with a link to their child's digital learning folder and access to a communication forum.

Junior Learning Community information evening held early in Term 1 provides families with an overview of our early years' programs and extracurricular events.

Parent – Teacher Phone Conversations are scheduled each term to develop strong home/school relationships. These support the development of learning goals and aspirations.

Formal written reports are sent home at the end of Term 2 and Term 4.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

ASSEMBLY

Whole school assemblies are held every second Friday at 2:45pm.

LUNCH ORDERS

Lunch orders are available on Fridays from the Birregurra General Store. Orders need to be placed by 9AM THURSDAY through the Quick Cliq app.

HEALTHY EATING

- **Tap into water** – have a named bottle of **water** in class
- **Plant fruit and vegetables in their lunchbox** – time is provided mid-morning to eat this
- **Limit occasional foods** – try to avoid packing snacks high in sugar and/or fat
- **Composting** – fruit and vegetable waste is added to our compost which is then used on the school garden

Eating time is supervised by the classroom teacher, and children are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating. We encourage children to bring **nude food** in small containers, rather than using wrappers. This supports our environment and minimises the litter in our school ground.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Children are expected to wear school uniforms at all times. Please make sure all items of clothing and belongings are named.

Broad brimmed or bucket hats are required to be worn outside as dictated by the UV index (usually mid August to end of April) as part of the school's Sun-Smart Policy. It is also recommended that students apply sunscreen before school, and top up sunscreen is available in each classroom throughout the day.

Precious and/or expensive items should not be brought to school. The school and department are not responsible for any personal items that are lost or damaged while at school. Teachers will remind students to leave their treasures at home.

Students are not permitted to wear decorative jewellery to school. Stud earrings and sleepers worn in the ears, and watches, are the only acceptable jewellery. Please note, nail polish is not permitted.

BIKE TRAVEL

Students are encouraged to walk or ride to school each day. If school students choose to ride a scooter or bike to school, they **must** wear a helmet. When in the school grounds, students must walk their scooter/bike to the bike shed where it will be secured until home time.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Preferred means of communication for student absences is via direct communication with the school office: verbal (in person or via phone) or written (via email or XUNO app).

Contact details -

School office: 5236 2222

School email: birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au

FEEDBACK

We appreciate the trust you place in us to work with you in raising your child. Education is our focus and we strive to provide a rich learning environment. ***We are constantly looking for ways to improve and your feedback is encouraged.*** If you have any thoughts or ideas as to how we can improve, please let us know.

Thanks for reading all this information. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to one of us!

Genevieve Erskine, Jaymie Lowe, Chloe Riseley

Junior Teaching Team