



Birregurra Primary School Newsletter

'Living & Learning Together'

Term 1, Week 1 – 28th January 2026

Birregurra Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views are respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments. Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+ and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Child safety is a shared responsibility.

Our Vision

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

Our School Values

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.

From the Principal's Desk



A very warm welcome to all Birregurra Primary School families as we begin the 2026 school year. I hope your summer brought time to relax, enjoy special moments with loved ones, and recharge for the year ahead. It has been a challenging summer for many across south-west Victoria, with fires and recent flooding impacting several local communities. I hope everyone in our school community has remained safe and supported, and if anyone needs assistance, I encourage you to please make contact.

A special welcome to our new students and their families. Today we welcomed our new preps as they began their

primary school journey, and it was lovely to share in the excitement of this milestone with their families. We also extend a warm welcome to Harli in Year 2, Zoe in Year 2 and Noah in Year 3, along with their families. We trust that you will quickly feel at home and become part of the Birregurra PS family. It is an honour to be part of your children's educational journey.

The start of the school year is always a joyful time as students reconnect with friends, settle into new classrooms, get to know their teachers, and dive into the learning experiences planned over the holidays. Thank you to our dedicated teachers for the time and care they have invested in preparing for the year, helping to ensure a calm and positive beginning for all students.

Welcome to Our New & Returning Staff!

We are thrilled to welcome Mr Dom Connor (Grade 6) and Miss Liv Roberts (Education Support) to the Birregurra Primary School team in 2025. We are also thrilled to welcome back Ms Hannah Zappelli (Education Support). Each of these staff bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and valuable skills to our school community. We're excited to have them on board and look forward to the opportunities for growth and collaboration they will bring.

In addition, we will welcome back Alex Emmett to our team. Alex is an occupational therapist who will work with some of our students and staff as part of the school's Mental Health and Wellbeing funding. This funding allows us to provide targeted support for students to enhance their engagement and overall development. Alex will be working on a Thursday in 2026.

Student Attendance



As we begin a new school year, we want to emphasise the importance of consistent attendance in supporting your child's learning and development. Regular school attendance is essential, as missing school (whether through lateness or absence) means missing valuable learning opportunities.

While we understand there are valid reasons for being away, particularly at the moment with the Otway fires, we encourage you to minimise absences and avoid them for trivial reasons. Wherever possible, please schedule appointments outside of school hours. If your child is unwell, it's important for them to stay home to recover.

School Councillors – Rob Lidgerwood (President) Luke Fitzpatrick, Abbey Gannon, Kelly Dodds, Emma Mezzatesta, Emily McDonald, Alistair Burrell, Jaymie Lowe.

As per Department regulations, the school must be informed of your child's whereabouts each day. If your child will be absent, please notify us each morning through one of the following methods:

- **Phone Call:** Contact the school directly by phone.
- **Email:** Send an email to birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au
- **XUNO Message:** This platform is highly effective and convenient for notifying us of absences.

If you know in advance that your child will have an extended absence, such as for ongoing illness or a family holiday, please let us know. This allows teachers to prepare an Absence Learning Plan to support your child's learning while they're away.

Thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring consistent attendance and helping us provide the best educational experience for your child!

XUNO App

XUNO is our school's primary communication platform. New families should have received a welcome email with instructions on how to connect. Please ensure you're connected to XUNO to receive important updates, news, and information. It's also used for booking appointments and completing permission forms. The XUNO Family App is available from the App Store or Google Play. If you encounter any issues connecting, please don't hesitate to contact the school office for assistance.



Please note we will not be using Seesaw in 2026. All communications will be through XUNO.

Staff Wellbeing

At Birregurra Primary School, we prioritise staff work-life balance. Our dedicated staff give their best to ensure students are engaged in learning, safe, and well cared for during school hours. Once the school day ends, they go home to spend time with their families and recharge, so they can continue to provide excellent support for your children.

We kindly ask for your support in respecting staff work-life balance by avoiding contact through XUNO before 8:00a.m. and after 5:00p.m. and refraining from contacting staff on their private phones.

If an urgent matter arises, please feel free to reach out to me via XUNO message or email at jessica.kattwinkel@education.vic.gov.au. We are always open to concerns and queries and will work together to find the best solution moving forward. Thank you for helping us maintain a healthy balance for our staff!

Updated Asthma, Allergy & Anaphylaxis Plans

Each year we require parents/carers to provide an updated Asthma, Allergy and/or Anaphylaxis plans. The most recent information ensures that we follow plans accordingly. If your child's plan is more than 12 months old, we ask that you please provide an updated plan as soon as possible. We also require an in-date reliever and/or EpiPen/Anapen to be kept at school. If you are unsure of the expiry date of your child's medication, please contact the office. If your child has an Asthma, Allergy and/or Anaphylaxis Plan and you have not notified the school of this, please do so as soon as possible.

Medications

Any medication that your child needs whilst at school needs to be bought to the office by an adult and a Medical Authority form completed. If you have any questions, please see Mrs Leigh in the office.

Assembly

In 2026, assembly will be held on a Friday afternoon on a fortnightly basis during the even weeks of Term 1. Our first assembly will be held on Friday 6th February at 2:45pm in the multi-purpose room. All are welcome to attend.

Welcome BBQ - Wednesday 4th February - 5pm

We warmly invite all Birregurra Primary School families to our annual Welcome BBQ on **Wednesday 4th February** at 5:00p.m. This event is a fantastic opportunity for new families to connect with existing members of our school community in a relaxed and friendly setting. For more details, please refer to the flyer included in this newsletter. To

assist with catering, we kindly ask that you RSVP by **Monday 2nd February** via email: birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au or phone 5236 2222. We look forward to seeing you there!



Parent Information Sessions

At Birregurra Primary School, we believe in keeping families well-informed and value the essential partnership between school and home. To start the year, we've scheduled two Parent Information Sessions. These sessions are designed to give parents an overview of how the learning program is structured and offer practical examples of how you can support your child's learning at home. It's also a wonderful opportunity

to ask any questions you may have.

- P-2 Information Session: Monday, 9th February from 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- 3-6 Information Session: Monday, 16th February from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Both sessions will take place in the Multi-Purpose Room. We look forward to seeing you there!

Student Dress Code Policy

At BPS we believe that a uniform promotes a sense of belonging, equality and school pride. Student equality and safety are the guiding principles of the BPS Student Dress Code. The Student Dress policy and guidelines have been developed to ensure equality among students and that students are dressed appropriately and safely for school activities. I encourage you to take the time to read our Student Dress Code policy available on our school website or by clicking on the following link [BPS student dress code](#).

Named Clothing

Parents are asked to ensure that clothing is clearly named. If you have second hand clothes, please check that the name has been changed. If clothes are correctly named, we have some hope of returning items to the correct owners.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Times

To ensure everyone's safety during drop-off and pick-up times, please keep the following points in mind:

- **Busy Times:** Drop-off and pick-up times are very busy, especially in the back car park. We kindly ask all parents to drop off and pick up their children as promptly as possible to free up parking spaces for other families.
- **Safety First:** If students are being picked up by car, they should remain within the school grounds until their ride arrives. Once leaving the grounds, they should go directly to their designated car. Please remind children to avoid running unsupervised between or behind parked cars, as this poses serious safety risks.
- **Using Designated Paths:** Students and parents moving to cars should use the nature strip or circular footpath to access their vehicles. Crossing through the centre of the car park increases the risk of accidents and should be avoided.
- **Pathway Courtesy:** If you are walking, please avoid standing on the path leading to the back gate. This area serves as the main exit for many students on bikes and scooters and can become congested.
- **Bike & Scooter Safety:** If you or your child ride bikes or scooters to school, helmets are required by law. It's important to model safe and responsible road behaviour for our students.
- **Arrival Time:** Classes begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. Please aim to have children arrive at school between 8:40 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. While we understand that delays happen, late arrivals can disrupt learning time.
- **Late Arrivals:** Students arriving after 9:00 a.m. must report to the office to sign in as late arrivals.
- **Supervision:** Please note that the school yard is supervised from 8:40 a.m. onwards. If your child needs to arrive earlier, please book them into Before-school care available through TheirCare—visit www.theircare.com.au for more information.
- **End of the School Day:** School finishes at 3:15 p.m. We kindly ask parents to ensure they are here on time for pickup. If you're running late, please give us a call. Students will be supervised in the main building until you arrive.
- **Pets:** All dogs must be on a leash and are preferably kept out of the school grounds. If your child would like to bring a pet for a visit, please arrange this with their class teacher in advance.



Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and smooth process during these busy times!

Thanks

My thanks to our staff who have done a fabulous job in preparing for the return of our students. Our work areas are welcoming and ready for some solid learning. Thanks too, to all our parents and carers for ensuring students have returned to school ready to learn.

Wishing everyone a wonderful week. If you have any questions, thoughts or concerns please don't hesitate to contact either myself, the office or your child's teacher. Positive home school partnerships and relationships ensure the best possible outcomes for your children. We value your input and are committed to making our school the best it can be – safe, fair and friendly for everyone.

Kind Regards,

Jess Kattwinkel & team 😊

Dates for the Diary...

Tuesday 27 th January	- Staff Commence, office open! - Curriculum Day – No students at school
Wednesday 28 th January	- First Day of school for all students
Wednesday 4 th February	- No Preps - Welcome BBQ 5.00pm
Thursday 5 th February	- Breakfast Club 8.15am
Friday 6 th February	- Assembly 2.45pm
Monday 9 th February	- Prep-2 Information Session 6.00pm to 7.00pm
Wednesday 11 th February	- No Preps
Thursday 12 th February	- Breakfast Club 8.15am
Friday 13 th February	- Special Assembly – Leadership Presentations 3.00pm
Monday 16 th February	- Gr 3-6 Information Session 6.00pm to 7.00pm
Wednesday 18 th February	- No Preps
Thursday 19 th February	- Breakfast Club 8.15am
Friday 20 th February	- Assembly 2.45pm, Gr 4-5 Class Presentation
Wednesday 25 th February	- No Preps
Thursday 26 th February	- Breakfast Club 8.15am

Wishing the following students
a very
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

January

30th

Oak W



Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader

Hello all and welcome to 2026 at Birre Primary!

I thought I would share a brief overview of my role as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (MHWL). This is a relatively new role in primary schools and supports a whole-school approach to student wellbeing. Developed by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute in partnership with the University of Melbourne, the Mental Health in Primary Schools initiative is now in the final stage of its rollout, having already been introduced in more than 1,000 Victorian schools since its statewide rollout in 2023.

While I do not provide counselling or specialist therapy, my role focuses on promoting positive mental health for all students. This includes supporting staff to deliver evidence-based wellbeing and social-emotional learning in the classroom.

I also help develop clear pathways to support students who may need extra help by working closely with families, school leadership and external services such as Student Support Services.

Overall, my role is about ensuring wellbeing is consistently supported across the school, now and into the future, so every child feels safe, supported and ready to learn.

The Jigsaw info graphic below helps provide clarity around the Mental Health in Primary School. If you would like to know more about role or how I can support your child's wellbeing feel free to drop into the Wellbeing Room at any stage!

Brendan King



2026 WELCOME BBQ

WEDNESDAY
4TH FEBRUARY, 5PM



RSVP MONDAY
2ND FEBRUARY
5236 2222

PLEASE JOIN US TO
WELCOME IN THE
2026 SCHOOL YEAR
AT OUR ANNUAL
WELCOME BBQ!

SAUSAGES, BREAD
& SAUCE PROVIDED
BYO DRINKS