



Birregurra Primary School Newsletter

'Living & Learning Together'

Term 1, Week 2 – 2nd February 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 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 LGBTIQ+ 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

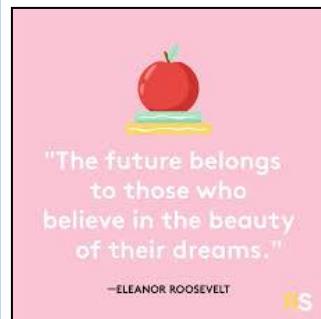
Community - growing positive partnerships between school, home and the broader community

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



Welcome to Week Two! As we move into our first full week of learning, we recognise that the start of the school year may have felt different for families and students, particularly with everything that has been happening in our wider community. It has been encouraging to see students reconnecting with friends, building relationships with their teachers, and settling into their new classrooms. Hearing students share their experiences and seeing their engagement in learning has been a real highlight. Our prep students are finding their feet, supported by the care and leadership of their Year 6 buddies and our dedicated staff.

These early connections are an important part of helping our youngest students feel safe and supported at school.

We are very mindful of the recent Otways fires and are thinking of all members of our school community who may have been impacted. Please know that our thoughts are with you, and support is available if needed.

With some warm days ahead, please remember to send students with hats and drink bottles. All learning spaces are air-conditioned, and we will continue to monitor conditions and adjust outdoor activities as needed to prioritise student wellbeing and safety.

Term One: Learning, Routines and Wellbeing

At B.P.S, we aim to create a culture of care, inclusion, and high-quality teaching, so every student can thrive as a learner and as a valued member of our community. The first weeks of Term One focus on building relationships, exploring positive emotions, and establishing classroom routines to set students up for a successful year.

You can support your child's learning and wellbeing by helping them get organised, maintaining routines around reading and screen time, asking about their day, encouraging curiosity, and balancing activities with play, family time, and rest. Small actions at home make a big difference to their confidence, engagement, and growth.

Welcome BBQ - Wednesday 4th February - 5pm

We warmly invite all Birregurra Primary School families to our annual Welcome BBQ this **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 **today** via email: birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au or phone 5236 2222. We look forward to seeing you there!



INFO SESSIONS

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.

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

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!

Parent Teacher Conversations

As the new school year commences, we see this as a valuable opportunity for teachers to connect with parents and guardians to discuss how students have settled into their new class. These conversations also provide parents with the opportunity to share anything they feel is important for teachers to know, so we can best support each child to achieve their very best in the 2026 school year.

Participation in these parent/teacher conversations is optional and offered as an opportunity for connection and sharing.

Parent/teacher conversations will take place via phone after school on **Tuesday 10th, Wednesday 11th, Tuesday 17th, and Wednesday 18th February**, between 3:30pm and 4:30pm. Teachers will call parents at their designated time. To secure a preferred time, please make a booking through the XUNO platform. Instructions on how to book through XUNO are included in today's newsletter.

2026 Student Leadership Roles

Leadership is a quality that all students at Birregurra Primary School are encouraged and supported to develop. From Prep to Year 6, students take on the role of leaders of their own learning. Through both curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, all students are supported to develop the skills and confidence needed to be leaders, ensuring every child sees themselves as capable of taking on leadership roles.

As part of our extra-curricular program, we offer formalised student leadership positions. In 2026, these roles include School Captains and House Captains (Sladen, Strachan, Skene and Beal), which are open to Grade 6 students as well as Junior School Council (JSC) representatives from Grades 3 to 6, with two representatives from each of Grades 3, 4 and 5 alongside leadership roles such as President, Vice President and Secretary.

Our senior students will soon begin preparing their written applications and will deliver their leadership speeches to the school community on **Thursday 12th February at 2:30pm** in the Multi-Purpose Room. Parents and guardians are warmly invited to attend and listen to the speeches. We look forward to hearing our students speak about their personal qualities and leadership skills and are confident they will all do a wonderful job.

Students interested in Junior School Council positions in Years 3, 4 and 5 will deliver their speeches to their respective classes.

All 2026 student leaders will be announced at a special assembly on **Friday 13th February at 3:00pm**, and families are welcome to attend.



Consent Forms

At Birregurra Primary School, we're committed to giving your child a variety of learning experiences and celebrating their achievements along the way. Sometimes, this means we'll need your consent. You'll find a range of forms on XUNO where you can provide (or otherwise) permission for different parts of our school program. We take our duty of care seriously and always aim for the highest standards. Please log in to XUNO and complete the forms as soon as you can. Thanks for your support!



Visitor & Student Sign-In Procedures

All visitors, parent/carer helpers and contractors are required to sign in at the foyer before entering the school and must provide a copy of a current working with children check. Parents picking up children early or dropping students off late are requested to report to the school office to sign children in/out.

School Uniform Order form

You will find attached to this week's newsletter a Uniform Order. If you would like to purchase any uniform, please complete and return to the school office by **Monday 16th February**. Uniforms must be paid for at the time of ordering. Payment can be made via cash, EFTPOS or direct deposit. Please indicate on the order form how you wish to pay. If you have any questions about the uniform, please see Mrs Leigh in the office.

Lunch Orders

Lunch orders for 2026 will commence on **Friday 20th February**. Paper order forms will be sent home on Monday 16th February and **must be returned by Wednesday 9:00 am**. If you are available to join the roster and assist with distributing lunches to classrooms, please let us know by calling 5236 2222 or emailing birregurra.ps@education.vic.gov.au. A huge thank you to Jemma for once again preparing, cooking and coordinating lunch orders, we truly appreciate her time and effort!

Parent Payments 2026

In our school, we are mindful of costs for families and strive to keep fees as low as possible. For 2026, Parent Payment Arrangements will be \$305 per student. This amount covers all necessary items for the year, including exercise books, handwriting books, stationery, paper, whiteboards, art materials, etc., as well as access to a one-to-one digital device. Families are not required to supply any of these items.

Our Parent Payment Arrangements also include our whole school swimming program, Life Education incursions, and online subscriptions. Our ability to offer these additional benefits relies on our strategic use of all funds, including locally raised funds, and also on families fulfilling their curriculum contributions.

We would appreciate if Parent Payments can be made by the end of Term 1. Payments can be made via direct deposit, EFTPOS at the office or via credit card using the XUNO platform. If you wish to set up a payment plan, this can also be arranged by contacting Mrs Leigh in the office.

Annual Privacy Reminder for our School Community

Our school collects and uses student and parent personal information for standard school functions or where permitted by law, as stated in the [Schools' privacy policy](#) and the [Schools' privacy collection notice](#).

Our [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#), describes how we collect and use photographs, video and recordings of students. The policy also explains when parent consent is required and how it can be provided and withdrawn.

We ask parents to also review the guidance we provide on how we use [Google Workspace for Education](#) safely at the school and what parents can do to further protect their child's information. If after reviewing the guidance, you have any questions or concerns regarding your child using Google Workspace for Education, please contact the school.

For more information about privacy, refer to: [Schools' privacy policy: information for parents](#). This information is also available in eleven community languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Gujarati, Mandarin, Somali, Sudanese, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese.

Thanks!

The restored timber gates have now been installed at the front of the school, adding a sense of history and character to the entrance. A big thank you to Rob Lidgerwood for organising and completing this work for us.



Meet our Specialist Team

We are pleased to introduce our specialist teaching team for 2026. Our specialists support a rich and engaging curriculum, working alongside classroom teachers to enhance student learning across the school. The photo and questions shared give a snapshot into who they are and what they are looking forward to this year. We look forward to sharing more of the learning happening in specialist classes throughout the year.



Name and Role: My name is Mrs Abbey Ritchie. I teach Indonesian so the students call me Ibu Ritchie which means Mrs (it also means Mum!)

A Bit About Me: I have a dog named Hank, and I have two boys, one who is starting in Prep this year! We love to go to the beach, potter in the garden, and get crafty. I also really love reading.

Favourite Thing About Teaching: I love seeing students pick up Indonesian words and use them confidently. It's amazing watching them enjoy speaking the language and I can't wait to explore this further in 2026!

Fun Fact: In a past life I played the violin. I can scratch out a tune now, but I need some practice!

Top Tip for Students: Give new words a go, even if you're not sure yet. The more you practise speaking, the easier it becomes, I promise!

Favourite Book/Resource/Activity: I love to use beautiful picture books in my classes (not just Indonesian) –there are too many favourites to choose from! They always spark great conversations.

Looking Forward To: I'm excited to keep building our Indonesian learning journey this year. I'm hoping to host some exciting incursions along the way to enhance our learning. I'm looking forward to getting to know our families even better as the year goes on.



Name and Role: Mrs Donna Williams - Art and senior STEAM

A Bit About Me: I am a mum of two grown up kids and like spending time with family and friends. I love art and craft and enjoy collecting and refurbishing old wares. I like gardening, travel and attending live music events.

Favourite Thing About Teaching: I love art and have enjoyed learning more about it during different courses over the years. It has been wonderful to share art, artists, techniques and materials with our wonderful students. I have loved learning more about STEAM and had a lot of fun, planning and teaching new and different topics.

Fun Fact: I had lots of different jobs when I was younger, including working in other schools as an LSO. I didn't become a teacher until I was 40!

Top Tip for Students: Enjoy the process, be imaginative and don't compare yourself to others. Be proud of your achievements and acknowledge and learn from your challenges.

Favourite Book/Resource/Activity: I love using picture story books with interesting artist illustrations to show students a different way of finding and enjoying art. In STEAM, I love planning hands on challenges using unexpected materials.

Looking Forward To: I'm excited to get to know our new students and to encourage lots of new discoveries and experiences!



Name and Role: Mrs Kelly Rogers, STEAM teacher

A Bit About Me: I love traveling, going on adventures, gardening and my happy place is the beach. I live with my husband, son (aged 2) and 2 dogs.

Favourite Thing About Teaching: Experimenting and exploring new things each week.

Fun Fact: I can juggle.

Top Tip for Students: Things don't always go to plan when you're trying new things or experimenting but that's part of learning!

Favourite Book/Resource/Activity: Getting inspiration from the students interests and ideas.

Looking Forward To: To trying new things and creating some fun memories with our students!



Name and Role: Mr Brendan King – Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader and Physical Education teacher

A Bit About Me: I'm married, live in Torquay and love all things sport and outdoors [camping, surfing, Geelong Cats, walking my dog!]

Favourite Thing About Teaching: I love motivating children to participate in sport, engage in different activities, stretch themselves and develop resilience through physical activity.

Fun Fact: This is a mostly fun fact... I have 4 teenage children!

Top Tip for Students: Don't be afraid to try new activities and remember that if at first you don't succeed... try, try and try again!

Favourite Book/Resource/Activity: I recently purchased pogo sticks and they are a massive hit with the P-2 students!

Looking Forward To: Supporting students to develop new skills and extend themselves physically. I especially love watching new preps develop their confidence and coordination across a school year!

Meet our Education Support Team

Our Education Support staff play a vital role in supporting student learning, wellbeing and inclusion across the school. Working closely with teachers and students, they help ensure every child is supported to engage, learn and succeed.

The photo and questions shared provide a snapshot into the people who contribute so much to our school community each day. We are very grateful for the care, commitment and professionalism they bring to their roles.



Name: Miss Beth Marwood (Classroom Support)

About Me: I love being outdoors, whether it's spending time at the beach, camping or playing sport.

Why I Enjoy My Work: The most rewarding part of my role is seeing students grow and thrive from the beginning of the year to the end.

Fun Fact:

What Helps Students Succeed: Give it a go, you never know what might happen if you don't try.

Favourite Part of the School Day: I love arriving at school in the morning, seeing the smiles on students' faces, and having a chat before the day begins.

Looking Ahead: This year I am excited to be working with the older year levels and experiencing all the fun activities that come with being in grade 6.



Name: Ms Bree Egan (Classroom Support)

About Me: I've been at Birregurra P.S for 5 years in my role as an ES. I am a Mum of 5 Children ranging from 17 to 2 years old.

Why I Enjoy My Work: The most rewarding part of my job is supporting students and watching them grow and develop confidence while building strong connections with them.

Fun Fact: I have 6 sisters and 2 brothers!

What Helps Students Succeed: Lots of encouragement and patience.

Favourite Part of the School Day: My favourite part of a school day is when students achieve a goal, they have been working so hard on, and we get to celebrate together.

Looking Ahead: I am looking forward to celebrating more success with the students.



Name: Mrs Kate Leigh (Business Manager - also part time IT Specialist, Cleaner, Maintenance, Personal Assistant, Nurse, Finder of things!)

About Me: Outside of work I love spending time with my family and friends, heading away camping, and reading.

Why I Enjoy My Work: I really enjoy being part of a school community and supporting everyone. Helping things run smoothly behind the scenes and knowing it makes a difference for staff, students and families. My role is very rewarding.

Fun Fact: I read over 100 books last year! I also don't like coffee!!

What Helps Students Succeed: Making sure they put their name on their lunch order form!!

Favourite Part of the School Day: I love the atmosphere in the mornings when the school comes alive and those little moments of connection with students and families that remind me why school communities are so special.

Looking Ahead: I am excited to get to know our new families and continuing to watch our school grow and thrive.



Name: Ms Hannah Zappelli (Classroom Support)

About Me: I am currently in my last year of a Bachelor of Education Primary. When I'm not busy studying, then I am busy being a Mum of 4 and looking after our 2 sausage dogs.

Why I Enjoy My Work: I believe we are all forever learners and when we work together as a team there is so much knowledge we can share to learn and grow together.

Fun Fact: I have a large teaspoon collection from around the globe that my Mum started for me as a baby.

What Helps Students Succeed: Encouraging children to see mistakes as part of learning helps them feel safe, build confidence, and take positive learning risks.

Favourite Part of the School Day: Watching students strengthen connections with their peers in the school yard.

Looking Ahead: I am so excited to be back at Birre and really look forward to spending time with Grade 2/3.



Name: Miss Olivia Roberts (Classroom Support)

About Me: I'm the eldest of three siblings and live on a cattle farm about 15 minutes from Birre, along with my two cats! I love playing netball for the Colac Tigers on Saturdays and am also lucky enough to be a part of various rep teams. In my spare time I love singing, playing guitar, reading, and spending time with friends. I'm also really passionate about travelling, and I'll be heading overseas in June 2026 to do Camp America!

Why I Enjoy My Work: What I find most rewarding is building genuine connections with students and being someone they trust. Helping them understand things in a way that works for them and seeing them progress in their own time is what makes the role so meaningful for me.

Fun Fact: I went to Birre Primary school and graduated in 2019! I was in Strachan house (the best house) ❤️❤️❤️

What Helps Students Succeed: I've personally learnt that students don't need to get everything right straight away, and that it's completely normal to find things challenging. What matters most is giving things a go and asking for help when they need it.

Favourite Part of the School Day: My favourite part of the day is helping students stay active and engaged. I also enjoy recess and lunchtime, as they're great opportunities to encourage movement and connect with students in a relaxed setting.

Looking Ahead: I'm looking forward to getting to know the students and being someone who can support them day-to-day! I'm also excited to work with the teachers, and to contribute to a positive and productive classroom environment.

Reminders

- PREP students do not come to school on Wednesdays throughout February.
- Our Welcome BBQ is this Wednesday @ 5:00pm. We'd love for you to join us!
- Please complete all start of year consent forms via XUNO by **February 28th**. Thanks to those that have already done this!
- Please provide an updated Asthma, Anaphylaxis and/or allergy plans as soon as possible – updated plans are required every twelve months.
- Students and parents moving to cars should use the nature strip or circular footpath to access their cars.
- If you, or your child, are riding scooters or bikes to school, it is a requirement that you all wear helmets. It is important that we model the expected road safety laws and behaviours to our students.
- Classes start at 9am sharp. We would appreciate it if children can arrive at school between 8.40am and 9am. We understand that sometimes things don't always go to plan however late arrivals can disrupt student learning time.
- Students arriving after 9am should report to the office first to sign in as a late arrival.
- Please note that the school yard is not supervised until 8.40am each morning. We ask that students arrive after this time. If a student needs to arrive before this time for some reason, please book them into before school care through TheirCare. Bookings available at <https://theircare.com.au>.
- School finishes for students at 3.15pm. It would be greatly appreciated if you could ensure you are here at this time, if you are picking your child/ren up. Remember, if you are late, give us a call. We are always willing to help. The students will be supervised in the main building until you arrive.

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*.

Have a happy and safe week,

Jess Kattwinkel & team ☺

Dates for the Diary...

Monday 9 th February	- Prep-2 Information Session 6.00pm to 7.00pm
Tuesday 10 th February	- Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Wednesday 11 th February	- No Preps - Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Thursday 12 th February	- Breakfast Club begins 8.15am - Senior Leadership speeches 2:30pm in the Multi-Purpose Room
Friday 13 th February	- Special Assembly - Leadership Presentations 3.00pm
Monday 16 th February	- Gr 3-6 Information Session 6.00pm to 7.00pm
Tuesday 17 th February	- Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Wednesday 18 th February	- No Preps - Parent Teacher Conversations 3.30pm to 4.30pm
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



Birregurra
Primary School

Parent Teacher Conversations

Tuesday 10th February
Wednesday 11th February
Tuesday 17th February
Wednesday 18th February

3.30pm to 4.30pm

Bookings can be made
via XUNO.

Please contact the office
on 5236 2222 if you
have any queries.



Pet Ownership

Pets support mental health by providing companionship, reducing stress and easing feelings of loneliness. Spending time with pets can promote a sense of calm, while caring for them encourages routine, physical activity and connection. Their unconditional presence helps people feel supported, valued and emotionally safe.

The following points are topics discussed in greater detail in the article attached to link provide below. <https://mensline.org.au/mens-mental-health/five-mental-health-benefits-of-pet-ownership/>

- An animal companion helps with mental health
- Pets can help you deal with stress
- There are social and physical health benefits to owning a pet
- Pet ownership encourages self-care
- Talking to pets is ok (and is probably quite healthy)

I have included some photos of our family dog Harley, making himself comfortable in the garden and being a little cheeky at Christmas time with an Elf!

If you would like to share a photo and/or story about your family pet, please email me and I'll include it in our school newsletter!

brendan.king@education.vic.gov.au

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



COMMUNITY - ASPIRE - RESPECT - EXCELLENCE



COMMUNITY - ASPIRE - RESPECT - EXCELLENCE

OCR FM OPEN STUDIO & RECORDING DAY

SATURDAY

14th
FEBRUARY

FROM
10AM TO 1PM

Drop in and check out behind the scenes at the radio station!

Plus take the opportunity to record an announcement for airplay!

Shop 6, Colac Tenpin Bowl Arcade

Email admin@ocrfm.org.au for further details



4-WEEK POP UP BLAST

Sign up to our 4-week action packed program!

With school returning, Cricket Victoria have Pop Up Blast programs starting across town over coming weeks!

Pop Up Blast programs are 3-5 weeks in length and provide a perfect opportunity for participants aged 5-10 to join in the fun following an action packed Ashes and Big Bash summer on TV!

Programs are at a discounted rate compared to regular Cricket Blast program and includes a participant pack.

Pop Up Blast programs within your area include:

Birregurra CC:

<https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/register/8f9d8d>

Colac District CA:

<https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/register/431cbc>



FESTIVAL OF SPORT

at KARDINIA PARK



FREE EVENT

LABOUR DAY LONG WEEKEND
FRIDAY 6TH MARCH
5PM - 8PM

PRESENTED BY



SUPPORTED BY



- 30+ interactive sporting activities
- Experience the thrill of playing on the field at GMHBA Stadium
- Enjoy entertainment and food trucks
- Connect with the local sporting community

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