INFORMATION BOOKLET – 2014

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE ‘

Principal: Brendan Millar
Assistant Principal: Caren Taylor
Business Manager: Chris Rutherford
Prep Team Leader: Libby Buck

Argyle Street, West Footscray, 3012
Telephone: 9687 1535
Fax: 9687 7101

Email: footscray.west.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Footscray West Primary School community.

Whether this is your first ‘starting school’ experience as a parent or not, it is an exciting time of learning for your child. The transition to primary education is also a vitally important time, as your child’s wellbeing is of great importance to us all.

Footscray West is a school with a tradition of being a genuine community – a place we are proud to be associated with. At Footscray West we focus on developing key learning concepts, especially in literacy and numeracy, but we also believe that academic learning needs to be balanced within a community of responsible learners. Our capacity to do the best we can as educators and learners is centred on our Tribes agreements of mutual respect, personal best, attentive listening, the right to participate/the right to pass, appreciations/no put downs. At our school your child will also experience a variety of learning opportunities involving the arts, Italian Language, Physical Education and Information and Communication Technology. There will of course be challenges – all learning should after all build from the known and embrace new experiences.

We encourage parent participation in the knowledge that it assists our school to be an even better learning environment. Perhaps you will be able to become involved in the fabric of our school by assisting in class programs, attending excursions, joining School Council, one of the sub-committees, or Parents and Friends. At times leading up to special events, such as the Art Show or Concert, parent support can make a significant difference in ensuring the success of such occasions. By committing to carefully reading and responding (where required) to the weekly newsletter that is available online every week, you will be aware of what is happening. Demonstrating interest in what is occurring within your child’s class and school will assist them in their transition to school and the important role that school has in their lives.

Through cooperation with each other, we look forward to a successful partnership.

Brendan Millar
PRINCIPAL
TERM DATES

Term 1
Thursday, 30th January (preps to start Friday 31st) to Friday, 4th April

Term 2
Monday, 22nd April to Friday, 27th June

Term 3
Monday, 14th July to Friday, 19th September

Term 4
Monday, 6th October to Thursday, 19th December

FIRST DAY FOR PREPS: FRIDAY, 31ST JANUARY 2014

You will receive a letter towards the end of term 4 of this year, with the name of your child’s class teacher, and a map showing the classroom location. The first day for Preps will be a short day starting at 9:00 am with preps finishing at 12.30 pm. It is important for you to supply a snack and a drink to be eaten at school. Lunch will be eaten at home. After this first day normal school times will apply (9 am–3.30 pm).

Please note that all Wednesdays in February are pupil-free days for Preps. On Wednesdays, each child will be given an appointment time of approximately 1 hour duration to meet with their class teacher and participate in part of the Prep assessment. Parents will be notified of their allocated meeting time when grade placement information is provided. No other prep classes will be held on these days.

PUPIL-FREE DAYS

Pupil-free days for all students in 2014 are as follows

28th & 29th January
Curriculum Planning & Teacher Professional learning (Prior to student commencement)
Report Writing Day – Term 2 (date to be confirmed with School Council)
Teacher Professional Learning – Term 3

SCHOOL HOURS

Normal school hours are 9 am–3.30 pm

Please try to be punctual, as arriving at school after 9 am is disruptive to class activities and may also distress your child when they see that activities have already begun. Teachers are also on duty in the yard from 8.45 am to supervise children before school.

Please make sure that you are waiting outside the classroom at 3.30 pm to pick up your child. The teacher will dismiss your child into your care. If it is not possible for you to personally collect your child, please make arrangements for another adult to be there. On such occasions a note will need to be provided to the classroom teacher to advise who is collecting your child. Children will not be allowed to leave by themselves or with siblings. Once routines are fully established, parents and guardians will be asked to wait in the Prep courtyard. Teachers are also on duty in the yard to supervise children between 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm in the afternoons.
**BELL TIMES:**

9.00 am  School starts  
11.00 am – 11.30 am  Morning recess  
1.30 pm  Lunch is eaten under supervision (for Preps this often begins earlier)  
1.40 pm – 2.30 pm  Lunch break  
3.30 pm  Dismissal

**LATE TO SCHOOL:**
Punctuality and regular attendance are good habits we encourage. Children who arrive at school after 9.00 am must attend the office and receive a late pass to be given to the classroom teacher.

**EARLY PICK UP:**
Parents who need to collect children before 3:30pm need to visit the office and complete an early dismissal slip before collecting the child from class.

**SCHOOL VISITORS:**
As part of our emergency management protocol, all school visitors need to attend the office and obtain a visitors pass. The pass needs to be worn whilst in the school and returned to the office when leaving.

**SCHOOL FEES**

At this stage the amount payable in fees for 2014 have not been confirmed.  
The fees payable in 2013 were $260.00.

This payment covers school requisites, excursions/incursions, grounds maintenance, and Information Computer Technology levies.

‘School requisites’ refers to all items issued to each student including books, pens, pencils, art/craft, computer materials and other class resources that your child will use throughout the year. Other schools may ask families to purchase a ‘book list’, however at Footscray West Primary School we purchase students’ requisites in bulk, so that parents receive the benefit of discounted prices.

Excursions or incursions are an integral part of your child’s education and support the curriculum; as such we expect all children to participate. A note detailing the upcoming excursion/incursion will be sent home to parents. A signed permission form must be returned by the due date to allow your child to attend off site excursions. This is a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) regulation. Children will not be able to attend any excursion without prior payment.

**PAYMENTS**
Payments can be made online via Bpay, or by cash, cheque or EFTPOS at the office. If money is being sent in with your child, please ensure it is placed in a secure envelope or bag (zip lock bags are great) and includes your child’s name, grade, amount and the what the payment is for. These envelopes are given to the classroom teacher and delivered to the office for processing.
EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (E.M.A)
For those families who are eligible (holders of pension or healthcare cards), the government currently provides an Education Maintenance Allowance to assist in the payment of school fees. Relevant information will be made available early in 2014.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Footscray West Primary School has a compulsory uniform policy. Children must wear their uniform each day. The uniform comprises practical items, ideal for all work or play activities at school. The wearing of uniform reduces unnecessary competition with other students and gives children a sense of identity.

The uniform consists of:
For girls: (optional)
- summer check dress
- green tights

For boys and girls:
- green unisex shorts
- green bomber jacket
- green wide-brimmed hat
- neutral colour or green socks
- gold polo shirts
- green track suit pants
- green rugby top
- cargo pants
- green school bag
- safe play shoes

Items may be purchased from the school or from other retail outlets who supply gold and green uniform items. It is not compulsory to purchase a FWPS school bag, however bags purchased from other sources must be of an appropriate size to accommodate all belongings. Our Uniform Shop is open for sales before school on Monday and after school on Thursday. Outside of these hours you may place and pay for an order which will be filled and sent home with your child when available.

On some occasions children may attend school out of uniform in a casual dress or ‘mufti’ day. On ‘mufti days’ we ask children to bring a gold coin contribution which is donated to either the grade 6 graduation activities or a charity organisation.

UNIFORM ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELLED WITH THE CHILD’S NAME AND GRADE.

TRAVEL TO SCHOOL & SAFETY

Children should travel directly to and from school, and where possible, families should use the school crossings. At peak times there is traffic congestion in both Argyle and Blandford streets and we would encourage families where possible to walk. Parent vehicles must be parked a safe distance from all school crossings and away from yellow lines. Parent parking in the school grounds during normal school hours is prohibited.

FWPS has a bike and scooter policy. Students must apply for a pass in order to ride and leave their bike/scooter at school. Children in grades Prep – 4 must be accompanied by an adult when riding to school, students in grades 5/6 may transit independently.

Students are required to wear a helmet when riding a bike or scooter to school.
**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

It is important that we have precise and up-to-date information in order to contact you in the case of illness or in an emergency. Our first point of call will normally be a parent or guardian; however, if we are not able to reach you we will try an alternative emergency contact. It is therefore necessary for you to nominate someone (often a relative or neighbour) who would be able to care for your child should the need arise. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the school of any changes to your personal details – address, phone or work contact points.

**STUDENT WELLBEING**

The staff at Footscray West Primary School work as a team to address the needs of our children. Children need security and a sense of belonging.

The F.W.P.S. wellbeing policy places a major emphasis on ensuring that all our children have the right to feel safe and secure at school. We stress the need for children to fulfil their responsibility to work, play and contribute to school life. Our policy aims to develop an atmosphere of mutual respect for the rights and feelings of self and others, and to foster cooperation.

Our school endeavours to provide children with the resilience to be successful in a rapidly changing world. To enhance this, we participate in the ‘Tribes’ process which enables us to work as a school community, adhering to a set of agreements. These form the platform upon which all our classroom rules, staff/student behaviour and general interactions are based.

**Tribes Agreements**

1. Mutual respect
2. Personal best
3. Appreciations/No put downs
4. Attentive listening
5. The right to participate/the right to pass

**Anti-bullying Policy**

Unfortunately ‘bullying’ can occur in schools as it can occur elsewhere. At F.W.P.S. we have a ZERO tolerance for bullying, and we deal with the problem in two ways.

- Firstly, students are taught social skills and how to co operate.
- Secondly, through yard supervision, cares, concerns and compliments, counselling, consequences for bullying and the involvement of parents, we endeavour to follow through on these matters.

**Health & Safety**

- As with all schools, we regularly deal with unwell and injured children. Through our policies and practices we manage issues as they arise in a caring and professional manner with two fully equipped sickbay areas. This may, at times, include making contact with those people families have listed as emergency contact persons.
**IMMUNISATION**

All children enrolling in schools throughout Victoria are required to provide an Immunisation Certificate. These can be obtained from Medicare – Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, by phoning 1800 653 809. Parents wishing to conscientiously object to their child being immunised must obtain a Statutory Declaration to that effect, and should be aware that their child will be required to stay at home in the event of an outbreak of some illnesses.

**ILLNESS**

It is important that your child attends school regularly, but if your child is sick, then home is the best place. When a child is absent for any reason, you will need to write a note to your child’s teacher explaining the reason for the absence. It is required by law, and all such notes are filed at the school. If your child is expected to be absent for a prolonged period, please notify the school by phone and then follow up with a note on the child’s return. In the case of some infectious diseases, a child may be excluded from school. Please check with your medical practitioner for further details.

- Amoebiasis
- Conjunctivitis
- HIB
- Herpes (cold sores)
- Leprosy
- Meningococcal
- Ringworm
- Rubella (German measles)
- SARS
- Trachoma
- VTCE

- Campylobacter
- Diarrhoea
- Hand, Foot & Mouth
- Impetigo
- Measles
- Mumps
- Scabies
- Salmonella/Shigella
- Streptococcal Infection
- Tuberculosis
- Whooping Cough

- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Influenza
- Meningitis (bacterial)
- Poliomyelitis
- Headlice
- Scarlet Fever
- Typhoid Fever
- Worms (intestinal)

If your child requires medication, where possible, try to administer this before or after school. Any medication being administered during school hours requires you to complete a medication authority form, which is available from the office or to download from the school website. Classroom teachers are not responsible for storing or distributing medication which must be stored in sickbay.

**ASTHMA, ALLERGIES & OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

It is important that we are made aware of medical conditions that affect your child, and if and when those conditions, or their management changes (in some cases, additional forms will need to be completed). It is a DEECD requirement that we have an annual written management and student health support plan for children with asthma and anaphylaxis. This information is updated at the beginning of each school year.

**REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Early in term 1 you will have an opportunity to make an appointment to ‘meet the teacher’. Further Parent/Teacher interviews will be conducted after copies of your child’s written report have gone home towards the end of term 2. Learning samples will accompany the written reports and provide further evaluation and samples of students’ work.

You are welcome to meet with your child’s teacher throughout the year to discuss any matters or to raise issues which you think the teacher should be aware of. Teachers need sufficient time to prepare for their students at the commencement and conclusion of the school day, so we do ask that you make an appropriate appointment time to meet with them.
TEACHING, LEARNING & CURRICULUM

In 2014 our students will work in three teams.
The Junior school is comprised of children from Prep and grades 1 and 2.
The Middle school includes students in grades 3 and 4.
The 5/6 team forms the Senior school.

At Footscray West Primary our goal is to provide the best learning opportunities for all.

Our school, in line with Victorian government and independent schools is transitioning to a national curriculum. In Victoria it is referred to as the AusVELS (Australian/Victorian Essential Learning Standards). Foundation level provides the broad curriculum for the first year in primary school. Learners in the first year of schooling are encouraged to develop social skills and make connections between home and school. Through curiosity and encouragement, they take an interest in learning, begin to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills and how to socialise and cooperate in the classroom and playground environments.

Our learning program is designed to enhance individual learning through developmental stages. Initially the children's pre-school experiences will be linked to our program through our Bridging into Prep approach.

Within the first month all children will be provided with a meeting time to engage one on one with their classroom teacher. This assessment takes the form of literacy and numeracy interviews. These are presented in a positive way and assist developing the relationship between the class teacher and your child. This assessment enables your child's teacher to work with your child to develop a strong understanding of their skills at the start of their school life.

Each team plans together to ensure that there is a comprehensive and consistent approach to learning across the school and at team level. Planning days are provided at the beginning of each term. The specialist timetable is modified to enable this to occur without too much disruption. Our program is supported by a comprehensive approach to assessment which enables the effective monitoring of the progress of all students.

There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy within all teams. A consistent approach to how these curriculum areas are taught is of great importance to us. Literacy and numeracy lessons are taught using the ‘whole-part-whole’ approach. Learning intent is explicitly planned for and stated. Sessions begin with a whole class focus, but allow for students to work on specific tasks or investigations. Sessions conclude with sharing and the opportunity to reflect in order to embed new learning. Even during Prep the students begin to learn to select 'just right' books as the teachers support them to move along the path to becoming independent readers.

A variety of specialist programs support the curriculum. Sessions are provided weekly in Physical Education, Italian Language, Information and Communications Technology and Visual Art. The provision of these specialist classes ensures that all students have access to a broader range of programs.

At Footscray West we encourage all parents to take an active role in their child's learning and provide a range of opportunities for parent involvement. One way you can assist is by becoming a classroom helper. Once the Prep teachers have had the opportunity settle the grade information will be sent home to identify parent interest and availability for a classroom helpers program that will be provided by senior staff. Please note, that in order to minimise distractions to the classrooms, we do not allow pre-schoolers to accompany classroom helpers.
EXCURSIONS & CAMPING

Excursions or visiting groups are planned in order that they relate to a unit of work being undertaken in the grades. We expect all children to attend these experiences as they involve lead-up and follow-up learning, and are integral to your child’s education. At the beginning of the school year, parents are requested to pay a ‘once only’ excursion fee to cover the student’s excursions and incursions for the entire year.

Our outdoor education program caters for all. In December Preps and 1s participate in an after school activity; whilst the Grade 2s have an overnight sleepover at school. A 2 night camping experience is offered for our grade 3/4s, and the Grade 5/6s participate in a 3 or 4 day camping activity. Those children who are not involved in the ‘away from school’ camping program participate in an alternative program during normal school hours on site.

SPECIALIST SUBJECTS

At F.W.P.S. class programs are enhanced by a range of specialist programs.

In 2014 Footscray West Primary School will offer specialist staff in:
- Literacy and Numeracy coaching
- Reading Recovery
- Physical Education
- Art/Craft
- Italian Language
- Information Communication Technology (Computer Lab)

**Literacy Program**
All grades will experience the intensive Literacy Program every school day for two hours. Our aim is to ensure that all our students develop into confident readers and writers. While the foundations are laid in the classroom, parents will play an important role in reinforcing learning at home. This will include hearing students read and helping them to learn words.

**Reading Recovery Program**
This program supports students in Grade 1 who are experiencing difficulty in writing and reading.

**The Arts**
Our art program covers a range of activities including, but not limited to, drawing, painting, paper mache, collage and construction. It also incorporates art appreciation where students learn about famous artists. Although smocks are available we encourage children to bring one from home. A comprehensive Art Show is held during Term 4 during odd numbered years.

**Italian Language**
The Italian program offers students the opportunity to be exposed to the sounds of another language, to begin to make connections between different languages and to reflect on the meaning of words. Through the use of games, drawings, crafts, songs and role plays children are introduced to the multicultural atmosphere of F.W.P.S.
**Library**
The library at F.W.P.S. is used extensively by students and staff. Children have the opportunity to borrow books weekly and to visit during open lunch times. Encourage your child to be responsible for borrowed resources; any loss of books will necessitate payment of a replacement fee.

**Physical Education (P.E.)**
The focus in P.E. is on developing fundamental motor skills in ball-handling, running, jumping, climbing, hopping and skipping, as well as improving personal fitness. An intensive swimming program is also offered. This program caters for children who already participate in an out-of-school swim program as well as those who have no water experience.

**Information Computer Technology (I.C.T.)**
Our Prep children receive hands-on experience with computers during their weekly visits to the computer laboratory

**PREP INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC (PIM)**
FWPS has an outsourced specialist music program run by Soundhouse. Lessons are held in keyboard, drums, guitar and singing & performance, and Soundhouse also offer a unique Prep Introduction to Music program. Enrolments in the Soundhouse program are limited. Applications are taken at the beginning of the year and throughout the year as places become available.

**BRINGING THINGS TO SCHOOL**
Children are often eager to bring cherished and/or valuable toys to school. To avoid any unhappiness should items become lost or damaged, we ask that these items be left at home. Clothing and other items found around the school are placed in the lost property box. Please ensure that every item of clothing and your child’s schoolbag is labelled clearly with his/her name, so that lost items can be returned.

**We do not allow:**
- chewing gum
- rollerblades
- glass bottles or containers
- dangerous toys/war toys
- skateboards
- large amounts of money (more than $5)
- thongs or open shoes
- expensive items
- glass bottles or containers

**Canteen**
Children may bring lunch from home or order lunch from the canteen.

As a service to parents our canteen operates from Monday to Friday. Our friendly canteen staff will be happy to assist and support children. Lunch orders should be written on a paper bag with your child’s name, grade, items required and the amount of money enclosed. The paper bag is then placed in the ‘lunch order box’ in the classroom at the start of the day. It will then be taken to the canteen. Lunch orders are delivered to the classroom before eating time.

An updated price list will be provided in the school information package at the beginning of the school year. Any other alterations will be advised through the newsletter throughout the year. A current copy of the canteen list is available on the school website:

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At Footscray West Primary School we urge all parents to take an active role in their child’s learning. We believe in working together to help all children to grow and develop into successful and caring members of the community.

Parents may choose to:
- Be a member of school council
- Join a sub-committee or support group
- Support the reading or maths program
- Be a classroom helper
- Assist classroom and specialist teachers
- Coach a school team
- Support on excursions or camps
- Assist with special events
- Join one of our other parent groups such as Parents & Friends or Connector Bugs.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. This is not only a legal requirement, but vital for informed decision-making. We value and encourage parents to express their interest in being nominated to fill vacancies as parent members of F.W.P.S. School Council as they arise. Parents working as school councillors provide a range of important views and offer valuable skills that contribute to shaping the school’s future. No special qualification or experience is necessary to become a member – just enthusiasm, reliability and the desire to help improve learning outcomes for all students.

A well-functioning school council is necessary for the smooth running of a school. As a parent school councillor, you will have the opportunity to help set the vision and strategic plans for the school. Through membership of sub committees such as; Finance, Facilities, Policy and Planning, Fundraising and Communications, you and your team will contribute to specific school priorities, projects and improvements.

The time commitment for school councillors is 2 hours at a monthly evening meeting, plus attendance at least two sub-committee meeting per month, with follow-up action as required. If you have a specific interest you may join a sub-committee and not be a member of School Council.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS

The function of the Parents and Friends group is to foster goodwill within our school community, involve parents in school life and to help raise money for the school. Parents and Friends have a direct link with the school council and a real capacity to make a difference.

CONNECTOR BUGS

Parents and community members form our Connector Bugs meet every Monday morning at the Emu Corner Garden following assembly. Connector Bugs work together with our students on sustainable practices; including vegetable gardens, tree planting, grounds development and other projects. The views of the Connector Bugs are represented through the Facilities sub-committee of School Council.

CLASSROOM HELPERS:
We provide a range of opportunities for you to become involved in classroom support programs. Class teachers and children appreciate your assistance. We provide a classroom helpers program for parents to enable you to gain insight into how children learn, and how the curriculum is taught. Parents will need to have attended at least an introductory session to be eligible to assist in classrooms.
SCHOOL ASSEMBLY:
A whole school assembly is held Monday mornings from 9:10am in the GAP (Gym and Performance Space). This is an opportunity for information to be communicated to children and parents. Acknowledgements, appreciations, presentations and sports reports are regular items, along with the awarding of Pupil of the Week Certificates. At various times we are entertained by performances. Family members are welcome to attend assembly which generally runs for approximately than 30 minutes.

WORKING BEES:
We appreciate and encourage parent assistance to maintain school buildings and grounds. The Facilities Sub-Committee of School Council holds working bees each term during the year. They are publicised through the weekly newsletter.

NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES
Parents are kept well informed of events in the school. Please read all notices, as often a reply is required. Every Thursday the school newsletter is available online. It is posted on the school website: www.fwps.vic.edu.au You can also download the Tiqbiz application for computers, smart phones and tablets to receive notification of the newsletter or other relevant items being posted online.

BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM
Footscray West Primary School is serviced with before and after school programs provided by RecWest in Essex Street, West Footscray Ph: 9689 1322. The program runs between 7.00am–8.45 am and again between 3.30 pm–6.15 pm Monday to Friday. RecWest also offers a School Holiday Program and caters for school curriculum days as well.

Bookings for the program must be made through RecWest and we advise you to book early.