
Prep Parent Handbook



Proud of our kids - part of the community

Information for Prep Parents • Richmond Primary School • 2016

Welcome!



Dear Prep Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Richmond Primary School. It is a big decision to join a new school community but we know you have made an excellent choice.

We hope your family grows to appreciate our school values, spirit and performance as thousands of other children and parents have done for over 140 years.

Richmond Primary School was founded in 1874 on the current site. Our school is renowned for its inclusive culture, supportive learning environment, lively arts programs and experienced teachers.

Our three school values are:

Respect, Responsibility and Resilience

Table of Contents



Joining Our Community	3
Key Dates	4
Preparing For School	6
What To Expect	7
Essential Knowledge (1)	10
Essential Knowledge (2)	12
Essential Knowledge (3)	14
Getting Involved - School Level	16
Getting Involved - Class Level	18
You Will Need	19
School Uniform	20
Fee Payments	21
Health and Safety	23
Required Forms	25

Joining Our Community



Richmond Primary School is an inclusive community with a culture of acceptance and encouragement of both students and adults.

Our school has a committed team of experienced and innovative teachers. We prepare confident, balanced and friendly children.

Our school runs a busy and rich curriculum that covers all major areas of learning. In addition to the traditional areas of curriculum, there is a vibrant arts and language program.

Our Out of School Hours Care facilities provide relaxed, structured and enjoyable activities for your child. This is a popular and well-used facility and can be used on a casual and/or regular basis.

Key Dates

The first day of school for Preps is Monday February 1st. Please note: Preps will attend 4 days per week (Monday - Thursday) from February 1 to February 26. Preps will begin full 5 day attendance from Monday February 29. Each student will be allocated a one-hour individual assessment appointment on one of the Fridays (February 5, 12, 19 or 26). This information will be posted to you at the end of 2015.

Our school day begins at 9 am and ends at 3:30 pm. A staff member will be on yard duty before school from 8:45 am to 9 am and after school from 3:30 to 3:45 pm. Recess runs from 10:40-11:10 am and lunch runs from 12:50-1:50 pm (the first ten minutes is supervised eating). There are two yard duty teachers supervising all students during recess and lunch.

Term One	Jan 27		Staff return
	Jan 29		Grades 1-6 begin
	Feb 1	9 am - 3:30 pm	Preps begin
	Feb 17	6 - 7 pm	Prep Info Night
	Mar 24	9 am - 2:30 pm	Last day

Term Two	April 11 - June 24
Term Three	July 11 - September 16
Term Four	October 3 - December 20

Preparing For School

Below are some recommendations to prepare your child for what will be one of the most important transition stages of his/her life.

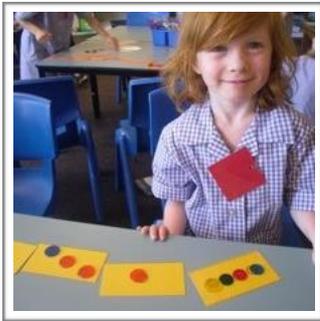
Encourage your child to look forward to school by highlighting positive aspects of their new experience. Try to avoid talking in a way that may make your child apprehensive or let your own anxieties be reflected in your child. Encourage your child to take care of and be responsible for their own belongings. At first children need lots of time to learn to do these things independently; please allow them extra time in the short term as it will be paid back to you in the long term.

Give your child plenty of opportunities to practise independently putting on and taking off their socks and shoes, tying up shoelaces, doing up buttons and zippers, and pulling up their pants. Encourage your child to wear clean clothing and be tidy.

Your child will find school easier if he/she has started to learn to:

- Say their full name and address
- Put their things away after finishing
- Recognise and care for their named belongings
- Go to the toilet and adjust clothing
- Boys should be familiar with the use of urinals
- Flush the toilet after use and wash hands
- Use a tissue or handkerchief properly
- Cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Take off and hang up their school bag and jacket

What To Expect



The First Day

The first day is an important day for your child. Dress them up, brush their hair, take a photo and get ready for a new chapter in your lives.

Children in Prep will commence school on Monday February 1st. On the first day of school, parents are invited to take their child to the Prep Area (Area Four, located above the GP room) at 9 am and to say a quick goodbye. In order to minimise separation anxiety, parents need to leave the classroom by 9:15 am whereupon you may choose to join other parents at a nearby café for morning tea, friendship and support. Teachers will show students where to line up for the next school day.

At the end of the day, the Prep teachers will take their class to the courtyard for students to be picked up. We will wait with your child until you have arrived. Any students remaining unaccompanied at school after 3:45 pm will be taken to Out of Hours School Care.

Part Time

Attending school full time can be tiring. It requires lots of concentration, as there are new relationships to make and new routines to learn. Therefore, Preps are part-time for one month. Preps only attend Monday to Thursday from February 1 to 26.

Individual Assessment Time

Your child will be allocated a one hour assessment time on one Friday during February. This is a chance for teachers to get to know your child one-on-one. It is a time for teachers to see what knowledge your child is bringing to school so we can

begin teaching at their point of need. Parents are not allowed to stay for this time. Your allocated time will be posted home before the end of 2015.

Settling In

Each child is encouraged and assisted to progress at their own pace. When talking to other parents, remember this and consult with the staff if you have any concerns or questions. Our door is always open. Please feel free to make a time to see us. New friendships will be made and will last for six years, or longer. Let the kids make their choices and be interested in their new acquaintances. Play dates are a great way to assist your child to grow new friendships.

Attendance Records

Richmond Primary School uses an online system to record attendance. Teachers update attendance first thing in the morning and again after lunch. Please ensure your child arrives at school before 9am. If you arrive late, or need to leave early, please sign your child in/out at the front office and take the green slip to your class teacher.

Buddy System

Your child will have a Grade 6 'Buddy'. The Buddy will show them around, help them find their feet, and be a friendly face in the playground. We will be eating our recess and lunch with our Buddies for the first two weeks. This is an important stabilising factor for your child. Try and meet the Buddy, and thank them for their help. (Remember that your child will be a Buddy one day too!)

Prep Parent Information Night

The Prep Information Night is a great way to meet other parents and gather further information about our day-to-day routines and what curriculum will be covered at school over the year.

The night will be held on Wednesday February 17 (6-7 pm) to give parents an overview of the programs and curriculum being taught in the school, general 'house-keeping' and some valuable tips. Your attendance is important.

School may have changed since you were at primary school and it will help you to support your child if you understand the learning styles at Richmond Primary School.

Parent Teacher Interviews

This is a great opportunity to discuss your child's development in detail with their teacher. The first interview in March is for teachers to outline specific learning goals for your child and the second interview in Term Three is to report back on student progress and to share new learning goals.

Teacher Contact

All parents are encouraged to talk to teachers about their child. Please note that teachers need to be 100% focussed when in the classroom and therefore cannot give you their full attention between 9 am and 3:30 pm. If you would like to talk in detail, or in private, please arrange a time to meet with the teacher. You can write a note and place it in your child's notices folder to be passed on, email the school or pop in face to face. Please make appointments between 8-8:45 am or 3:45-4:30 pm.

Essential Knowledge (1)



Newsletter

Our school newsletter is sent home each Monday, to the eldest at school, and can also be accessed on the school website (see below). Please read it as often as possible as it contains important notices, dates, reports, articles and issues of interest. Please let the office know if your child has more than one residence and needs a second copy.

Website

Additional information is available on our school's website. Students' work, photos of special events, forms, and class information can all be found at www.richmondps.vic.edu.au.

Sign Mee

Sign Mee is an online system of communication that we use at Richmond Primary School. The site is used for the distribution of information and permission forms for excursions, incursion and other events. Each parent has an individual username and password to access Sign Mee. Notification of new information or permission forms is sent via email and/or SMS (optional).

Assembly

All students meet together on Friday mornings at 9 am. Parents are encouraged to attend when they can, especially if their child is Student of the Week, as they will be celebrated by the other children and staff.

Student of the Week

Richmond Primary School believes in encouraging children and celebrating noteworthy effort and behaviours. One way we do this is by having a 'Student of the Week' award. This is published in the weekly Newsletter and a certificate is awarded at school assembly on the following Friday morning.

Recess, Lunch and Fruit Snack

During roll call each morning, students are allowed to eat a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable for 'Fruit Snack'. Remember to prepare the snack in a way that your child can eat it independently (berries, cut up apple, peeled and cut oranges are all suitable).

Recess is from 10:40-11:10 am and students may eat again at this time. Please pack something small and healthy for them to snack on each day.

Students are supervised between 12:50-1 pm to eat their lunch. Preps are given extra eating time for the first month during recess and lunch. This time is important to the development of the child's social skills and self-reliance, so for this reason we ask parents not to come to school expecting to sit with the children during lunchtime.

Please check that your child can eat all the lunch given to him/her and that they are able to manage all lids, containers and packets by themselves. Teachers do their best to ensure students are eating their food for the day, however, it is ultimately the responsibility of your child to remember to eat their food. Students may keep a water bottle in the classroom. Please make sure the top does not leak. Drinks in glass bottles are not allowed. Lollies / sweets of any kind are discouraged. Sharing food is not allowed, due to the risk of allergies or anaphylaxis.

Please minimise the amount of wrappers in your child's lunch. Re-usable plastic containers are the best option, and buying food in bulk, not individual packets keeps our rubbish levels down.

Lunch Orders

Each Friday the school offers a lunch order service for students. Orders are placed and paid for via an online system. Please see the school website for further information.

Essential Knowledge (2)

Home Reading

The Prep class teachers will explain the Home Reading Program in detail at the Prep Parent Information Night. Readers (leveled books designed to assist young readers) will be sent home in the first few weeks of school. Parents are encouraged to read to/with their child at first until students can read these independently. It is important to talk about the book before and after to encourage emergent comprehension skills.

Homework

Formal homework is not required for Preps. Preps will bring home a reader each day in special navy carry bag. This simple reader book is usually read by/with/to a parent.

Preps will also start bringing home Magic Words (high frequency word cards) to practise from mid Term One. We send these word lists home to support students to develop their reading and writing skills.

Personal Belongings

Children like to bring toys and other personal property to school for special occasions. Sometimes these things can give very young children a feeling of security and although we don't wish to discourage children bringing things to school, we expect that parents will keep a close eye on very precious things and perhaps not allow children to bring them to school.

The Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has asked schools to advise parents that the DEECD is not responsible for the loss of property brought to school by students and property is not insured.

Lost Property

If something belonging to your child is missing, please check in the Prep Area, their personal tub or in the Lost Property by the GP room. Things may go missing for a few days, but if they are named clearly, they always return.

Leaving School Grounds

No student is allowed to leave the school grounds unless we have written permission from the child's parents. If anyone other than the parent/s is to collect the child, a note or phone call to the teacher is required.

If for any reason your child is late, or is being picked up early, please sign in the Late Arrivals & Early Dismissal Book which is located at the General Office and give the green slip to classroom teacher.

Absences

All absences from school must be explained via a note or phone call to the front office. There is a special form on the website if your child is away from school for an extended period of time (e.g. family holiday).

Language Other Than English

Every student is given the opportunity to learn a Language Other Than English (LOTE). The school is currently transitioning from the teaching of Greek to the study of Chinese Mandarin. Preps will be learning Mandarin for the entire year, beginning in Week 2 of Term One.

School Library

The Library at Richmond Primary School is computerised and operates much the same as your local municipal library. On your child's library day he/she has the opportunity to choose and/or change their books. Each child is allowed to borrow up to two books for a period of two weeks. Your class visiting time can be found on your class timetable which is on the school website and on the Prep noticeboard.

House System

All students are placed in one of the four Houses which are named after the streets which border our school (Brighton, Mary, Burgess and Barkly). Encouragement points are given, but never deducted by teachers regardless of subsequent behaviour. The Houses are also used when participating in whole school sport activities, such as the Walkathon. The Walkathon is a great fundraising day where students dress in their House colours to support their team.

Essential Knowledge (3)



The School Play & Whole School Production

The play is put on by the Grade 6s each year, with an incredible level of creative and practical support from the teaching staff. All parents are encouraged to attend, and bring friends/family, as the school has developed a reputation for excellence in performing arts. This play becomes the basis for a Whole School Production where all other grades perform alongside the Grade 6s. The Whole School Production happens in Semester Two. More information will be available closer to the date.

Presentation Night – December

At the end of each year, the whole school gets together to celebrate the achievements of the year, wish the departing students a great future, and present ‘achievement’ medals to students. Please come and support this great tradition as every child from Prep to Grade 6 will be performing.

Walkathon

The Walkathon is held in Semester One each year. It is a fundraiser that requires lots of parents to turn up and supervise. Students come dressed in their house colours and walk around Barkly Gardens to raise money. Your child will give you plenty of advance notice of this one and notes will be sent home detailing further information.

Fundraising Events

Fundraising events are held throughout the year and may include trivia nights, Mother's/Father's Day stalls, auction nights, fêtes, car-boot sales etc. You are encouraged to participate and offer your assistance at some of these events. A fundraising committee manages the events throughout the year.

Information Nights

Information nights are held throughout the year and you are encouraged to attend where you can. The information provided is always of a high quality and valuable to you as a parent.

Curriculum Evenings

These evenings are designed for parents to hear about learning and teaching strategies used in schools today and how you can support your child in a modern teaching environment.

Getting Involved

- School Level



Some of your most important lifelong friends may be fellow school parents. All parents are encouraged to get involved in some way in the school. Some people have more time than others but get involved where you can. There are a variety of options available for parents to help. If your kids see you involved, they will feel positive about the school and its place in their lives.

Class Representatives

At least one parent from each grade will be asked to be the Class Representative. The Class Reps are the liaison between teachers and parents and are vital to the effective running of the school. Please support the Class Reps wherever possible. Feel free to ask them any questions as they are typically experienced Richmond Primary School parents. They may occasionally email or call you to see if you can help with something. It is important to realise that it is okay to say no, if asked to help.

Fundraising Committee

New members are keenly sought for this Committee. This is a body, which provides invaluable support for the school through such things as the involvement of parents in school activities and fundraising activities.

School Council

The School Council of Richmond Primary School consists of six parents, three teachers and two co-opted persons, plus the Principal. The School Community nominates the parent representatives, and if there are more nominations than positions, then an election is held.

A new School Council is elected each year in March. It makes policy decisions and ensures the school is compliant with government guidelines.

Student Representative Council Events

The SRC organises student-orientated activities such as Social Service fundraising, discos and dress-up days. From time to time your child may choose to participate in a charity fundraiser and will therefore be asked for a 'gold coin donation' on the day of the event.

Getting Involved

- Class Level

Help in the Classroom

Parent involvement in the classroom is rewarding, provides an insight into your child's learning, and also provides very valuable assistance for the teachers.

There are many areas in which you can participate:

- Reading
- PMP (Perceptual Motor Program)
- Help with excursions
- Repair of material and equipment
- Library
- Help preparing for and supervising events
- Swimming

Talk to the Prep teachers to discover how you can participate and what the time commitment might be.

All parent helpers are required to have a 'Working with Children Check' (WWCC) and forms are available at your local post office. It is recommended that you apply for this over the summer holidays if you would like to start helping in Term Two as they can take a little while to be processed. Please provide the Office with a copy once you have a WWCC as we keep this information on file.

You Will Need

Uniform

Your child will need a uniform. Please see the section under ‘School Uniform’ for details. Remember, all belongings must be named! Unfortunately, unnamed lost items will never be found and it can be expensive to buy the same uniform over and over.

Shoes

All footwear must have ‘closed toes’, meaning no open toed sandals etc. This is for the safety of our children. Shoes with velcro are highly recommended for Prep students as they are still learning how to tie laces.

Choose shoes that are sturdy - as they get some pretty energetic treatment; comfortable - as they only come off for PMP; and practical - as they are used during physical education and other playground activities.

Bag

Your child will need a practical bag for carrying their lunch, a jumper, hat, some books and any other items they will want to bring. It is useful to have a zipper pocket for forms and money etc. Many parents choose to buy the Richmond Primary bag from our uniform supplier which is designed to be practical. Remember to write a name your bag or hang a distinctive tag to help identify it from the other bags.

Lunch Box

Your child’s lunch box needs to fit a small lunch, a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable and also a light snack for the morning recess. It is important that students can independently open and close their containers. Remember to pack a small water bottle that will not leak, especially in the warmer months.

Stationery

These items are not required, as all pencils, paper and books are provided by the school.

School Uniform



Richmond Primary has a compulsory school uniform. All children are required to wear the uniform. There is a summer option and winter option, these can be mixed and matched according to your taste.

How to Purchase

Uniforms can be purchased online at www.psw.com.au or by visiting the store at PSW Quality Apparel, 12 Strathalbyn Street, East Kew 3102 (near the corner of Harp Road and High Street). They can be contacted by phone on (03) 9819 7809.

Information, opening times and a price list are all available on the website.

Fee Payments

Annual Parent Contribution

Parents are asked to make a small financial contribution at the start of each year. This is used to fund teaching materials, ground maintenance and computing. If you are finding it difficult to make the payment, please contact the Principal to confidentially discuss payment options.

As you will discover, the school and staff do an incredible job with the resources they are given. The State Government provides our school with two sources of funding. The first is a quarterly grant which pays for our operating costs (telephone, electricity, gas, postage, fire services etc.) and the other is a student allowance which varies depending upon the child's grade level.

This allowance does not adequately cover your child's educational expenses. Therefore each year parents are asked to make a contribution towards educational expenses, grounds maintenance, and computing facilities.

The amount is set each year by School Council after the School Budget is finalised for the following year. You will receive a letter explaining the way the school is funded and the cost structure for this year.

Out of Hours School Care

After School Care is available to all children weekdays between the hours of 3.30pm and 6.00pm each day. Afternoon tea and activities are arranged each day.

Before School Care is available weekdays from 7.15 am until 8.45 am. Please register through the OSH Club website.

Vacation Care Program

Richmond Primary School runs a successful Vacation Care Program. Details are available closer to holiday times. Please contact the Out of House School Care team with any questions.

Excursions

Any excursions involving your child require written approval from a parent or guardian. A general approval is obtained for walking excursions within the school neighbourhood, while a notice is emailed/SMSd on SignMee in advance for travel on public transport, buses etc. Copies are available at the front office.

You may be asked to cover the costs of the excursion. An 'Excursion Levy' is charged at the beginning of the year and we strongly suggest you pay for excursions this way. This will alleviate the necessity to pay as you go.

Bringing Money and Notices

We encourage students to be responsible for taking home and returning notices etc. These notices are kept safest in your child's 'notices folder' which will be provided at the beginning of the year. Please encourage your child to take care of this folder as we only provide one.

The school has EFTPOS facilities if required. However, the quickest, easiest and most cost effective method is to pay the Excursion Levy at the start of the year. If you are unable to pay the levy at the beginning of they year, please send money to school in a named envelope as excursion forms arrive.

Health and Safety

Safety

The school makes a practice of teaching habits which ensure the safety and welfare of your child. We feel children are safer if their parents have taught them the following:

- To look both ways before crossing streets and to understand traffic lights and school crossings.
- Not to accept rides from, or talk to strangers. If you wish another parent to pick him/her up from school, you must let your child, and us know who this is.
- Not to leave the school ground without permission or an adult.
- Toys and articles that cause or mimic injury must not be brought to school - guns, arrows, slings, fireworks etc.
- Explain that sticks, stones, sand and tan bark must not be thrown.

Sun Smart

Richmond Primary is a Sun Smart school. All children must have a broad-brimmed hat during Terms One and Four, or they will need to stay in the shaded courtyard. As this is not much fun for the kids or staff, please make sure your child has an approved hat and that they take it/leave it each day. The best place to keep the hat is in their classroom tub so that it does not get left at home.

Health

During the first year at school, childhood infections are common. Infections spread quickly at school. If your child is sick or has been experiencing vomiting/diarrhoea 24 hours prior to school, he/she should be kept at home.

Your child *must* be kept home if he/she is suffering from one of the infectious diseases identified by the Education Department. A separate listing of the relevant diseases is available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/infectiousdisease.s.aspx>. Please call/ask the office if you are unsure.

Head Lice

Head Lice are common to all schools and do not indicate that the child's head is dirty. Checking by the Health Department has ceased so parents need to check *regularly* for head lice. If you find *any* eggs or lice in your child's hair, please treat the lice *immediately* and let your class teacher know so we can inform other class members to be extra vigilant about checking.

Asthma, Allergies and Anaphylaxis

If your child suffers from an allergy, anaphylaxis or asthma; please see the office for the required medical form to complete or check the website. An Action Plan must be filled out by your GP and given to the school along with any necessary medication from day one. The school must have direct access to any medicine your child needs.

Immunisation Details

It is mandatory for all enrolled students to provide the office with a record of their immunisation status certificate. Parents or guardians must provide an immunisation status certificate to the school regardless of whether the child is or is not immunised. The immunisation status certificate can be obtained from the local municipal council, Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or your General Practitioner.

First Aid

Qualified first aid staff will look after children injured at school and all accidents are recorded.

If need be, you will be notified either by phone or letter of any first aid treatment. Please ensure that the school has up-to-date emergency contact telephone numbers at all times, especially after moving house, changing jobs or mobile phones.

Required Forms

You may feel that there are lots of forms to complete when your child starts school. These are a necessary chore and ensure that your child is protected and that staff are enabled to adequately help your child if required.

Enrolment Forms

Most parents will have already completed an official enrolment form for their child. If you have not done so yet, proof of your child's age (birth certificate, baptism certificate, Health Centre Book), as well as an immunisation status certificate must be shown before enrolling.

Combined Consent Forms

You will have be given a combined consent form that covers: local excursions, media releases and use of photographs, phone lists, and lice. Please sign this form promptly as school staff must chase you up if you do not, which is no fun for anyone!

Swimming Program

Your child will have the opportunity to take swimming lessons later in the year. You will need to sign a form and make an additional payment for this program.