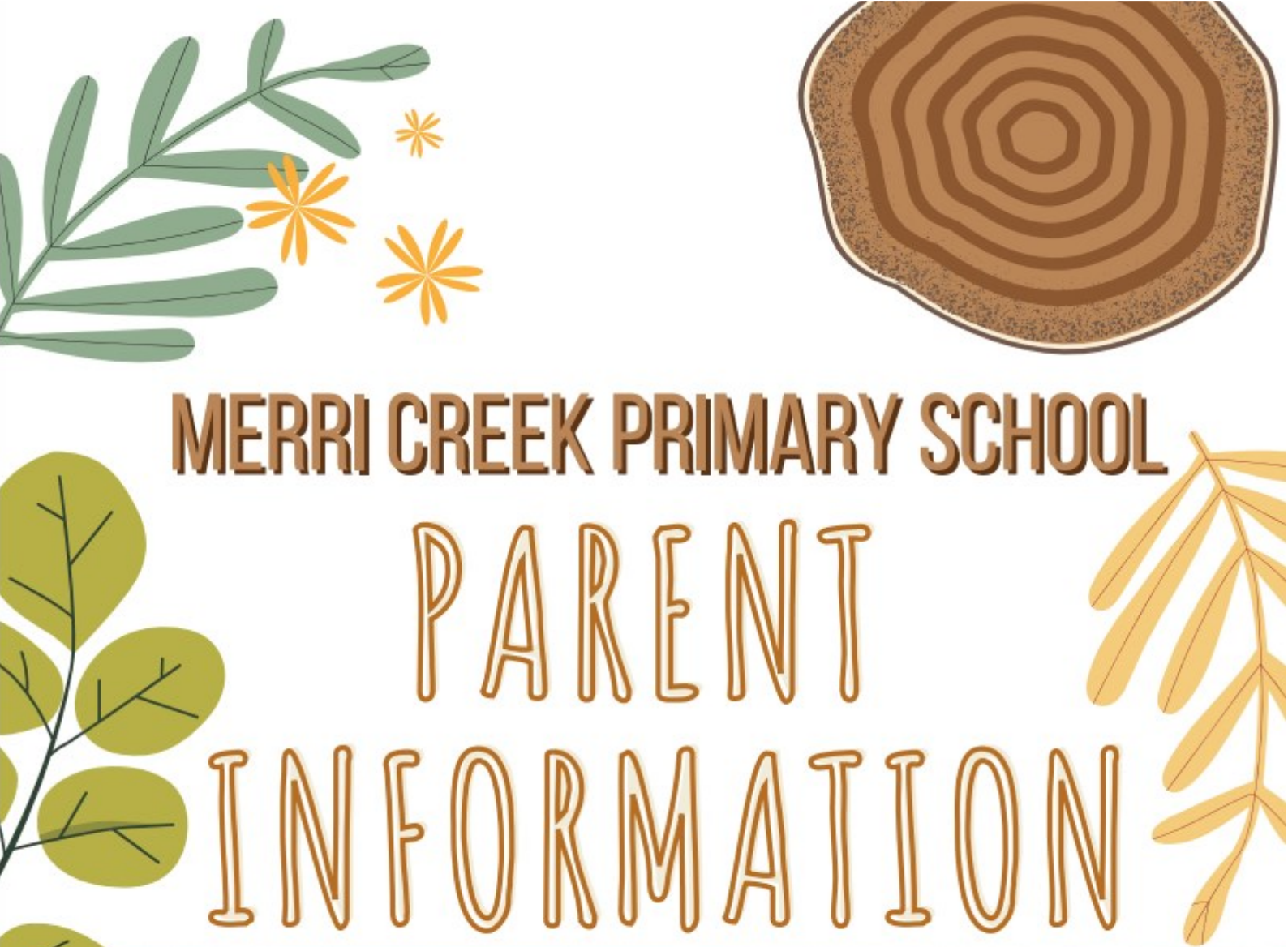




MERRI CREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT INFORMATION

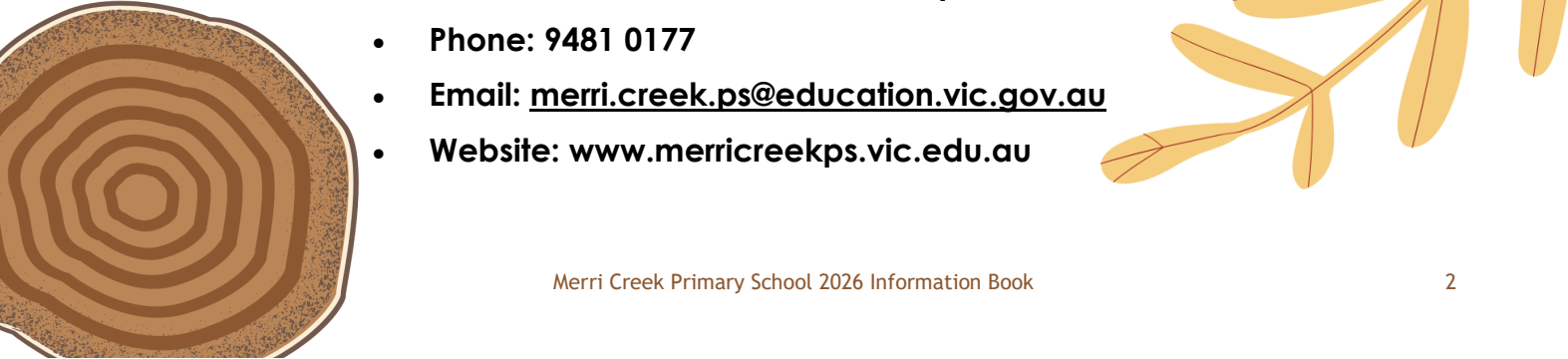




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- **Principal — Kerri Gibson**
 - **Assistant Principal — Vesna Zagorac**
 - **Address: Miller Street, North Fitzroy, VIC 3068**
 - **Phone: 9481 0177**
 - **Email: merri.creek.ps@education.vic.gov.au**
 - **Website: www.merricreekps.vic.edu.au**
- 

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

On behalf of our School Council, staff, children, and families, I warmly welcome you to **Merri Creek Primary School**.

Starting school is an exciting and memorable milestone, not only for your child but for you as parents and carers too. You may find yourself wondering where the time has gone as you prepare for this next big step in your child's learning journey. It's natural to feel a mix of excitement and a touch of nervousness in hoping your child will settle in, make friends, and feel safe and happy.

Every child experiences this transition differently. Some adapt quickly to new teachers, friends, and routines, while others take a little longer to find their rhythm. At Merri Creek, we deeply value the trust you place in us. We are here to support your child, and your family by building a genuine partnership as your child grows and learns.

School is a complex environment, full of energy, curiosity, and connection. It's also a place where children learn to navigate a world filled with different personalities, challenges, and opportunities. Along the way, they will make mistakes, learn from them, and discover their strengths. Learning is not a straight path, and it unfolds uniquely for every child. Trust in our teachers as professionals, stay engaged in open communication, and know that we are always working with you in a solution-focused way to support your child's development.

At Merri Creek, we have **high expectations of our students as learners**. We are committed to developing curious, capable, and motivated learners who take pride in their progress. Our curriculum defines a clear and purposeful learning journey, ensuring that every child is supported to learn key knowledge and skills. We are constantly evaluating what we can do better for our students. Our focus is on effective teaching that benefits all students.

Parents often tell me what they want for their child is to be **safe and happy**. We share in this wholeheartedly. Our duty of care ensures that your child is supported and protected each day. Of course, childhood includes its mishaps and tumbles, and sometimes literally. When those moments happen, our teachers are there with care, empathy, and encouragement to help your child learn and grow from every experience. It's important to remember children can't be expected to get everything right and that learning to manage challenges, disagreements, and disappointments is part of learning. Building and developing resilience are lifelong skills that sit at the heart of our work with children.

At Merri Creek Primary, we believe that children learn best when they feel **a strong sense of belonging**. We are a community built on cooperation, collaboration, and connection. Together, we celebrate diversity and individuality, and we work to ensure every child feels valued and free to express who they are. Our goal is to nurture secure, positive, and lasting relationships between teachers, families, and students because when we work together, children truly thrive.

So, on behalf of the entire **Merri Creek Primary School community**, we welcome you to our community.

Kerri Gibson
Principal
Merri Creek Primary School



VISION STATEMENT

'As a school community, we create an environment where students thrive in every way. We support each other as we discover, learn, think, and question. Respecting ourselves and others, we all contribute to our community and the wider world.'

As a community of learners, we support every child to thrive in all areas of the curriculum including academic, social, and emotional learning. The skills required to be numerate, and literate are important to our community and are central to classroom learning. We want students to be active in using the processes of discovery, learning, thinking deeply and questioning rather than being passive receivers of information.

We also want students to be socially capable of building and sustaining relationships, to be emotionally connected, aware and resilient, and to be physically active. Students build an understanding of what it means to be respectful of themselves and their own needs, and to recognise that as unique individuals they are worthy of the respect of others.

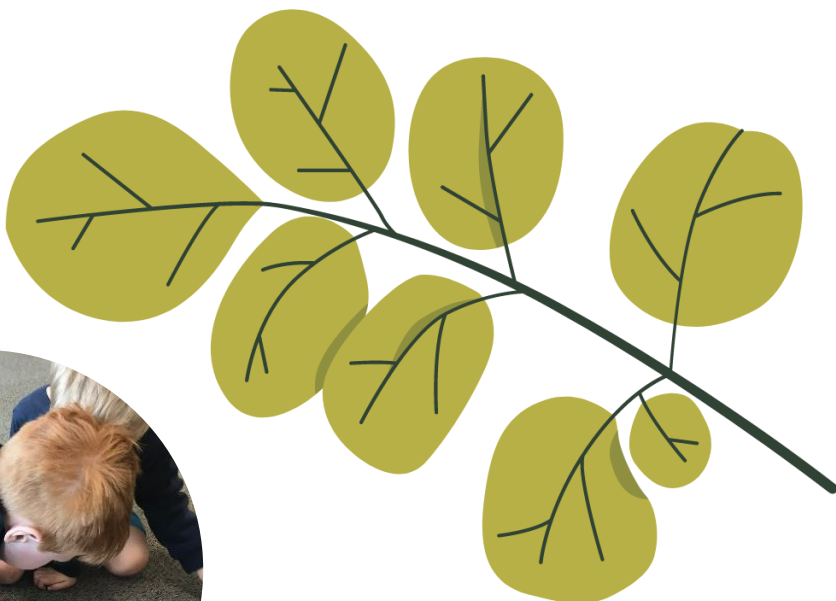
Students delve into the big ideas of science, humanities and health through an inquiry approach. These ideas are explored through English, Mathematics, Technology and Design. The content of the inquiry is selected to build content knowledge and to develop critical and creative thinking through asking questions, designing investigations, interpreting evidence, considering perspectives, forming explanations and arguments, and communicating findings.

VALUES

Our values of **C**reativity, **A**cceptance, **R**esponsibility and **E**ffort (CARE) underpin our work, learning and all relationships in our school community, between parents, staff and students. At Merri Creek Primary School, learning for life is a genuine partnership between staff, students and their families. Students are valued through a weekly school assembly, weekly student performances, a welcome to country and the recitation of our School Declaration written by students and the Education Committee.

Two School Rights:

- Right to learn
- Right to feel safe.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

School Strategic Plan Summary 2025-2029

Our school's Strategic Plan focuses on continuing to strengthen teacher curriculum knowledge, teaching practices, and data literacy to ensure high levels of achievement and growth for every student. We recognise the reciprocal connection between learning and wellbeing as the key drivers of engagement and success.

The science of learning has been a significant influence on our school's direction. A strong content foundation is essential for effective learning; therefore, our teachers are supported to deeply understand the curriculum they teach and to plan for sequenced progressions of knowledge and skills. The implementation of explicit teaching practices, using carefully selected evidence-based programs and data-informed approaches, is continually reviewed and refined to ensure a positive impact on student outcomes.

We have also established a consistent approach to inquiry learning, where the Humanities and Science curriculum provides the framework for planning. This approach ensures that learning builds from one year level to the next, allowing students to deepen their content knowledge through meaningful connections with prior learning.

Teachers are mentored and coached by Learning Specialist Mellane Somers, who supports collaborative team planning and professional growth. Research-based teaching practices are explored and embedded through weekly professional learning in staff meetings, team meetings, and individual coaching sessions, ensuring ongoing implementation, reflection, and evaluation.

We are also introducing High Impact Positive Classroom Management Strategies to promote consistency across the school in expectations, behaviour management, and student leadership development. These strategies strengthen teacher-student relationships, clarify classroom and community expectations, and foster student agency. They also support inclusion and belonging, encourage positive peer relationships, and build coping and resilience skills—all of which enhance student engagement in every aspect of school life.



2026 TERM DATES AND SCHOOL CONTACTS

Term 1 Students commence on **Wednesday 28th January 2026**. Foundation students will attend in the first week, from Wednesday 28th until Friday 30th.
From the second week, beginning Monday 2nd February, they will attend Monday to Thursday, and spend Fridays at home while assessments are being completed, up to and including Friday 6th March. Their first full week at school will commence Tuesday 10th March. (Monday 9th March is a public holiday.)

Teachers commence on Tuesday 27th January
 Term 1 finishes on Thursday 2nd April

Term 2 Monday 20th April – Friday 26th June
Curriculum Day, no classes: Friday 15th May
Reporting to Parents Day, no classes: Tuesday 23rd June

Term 3 Monday 13th July – Friday 18th September
Curriculum Day, no classes: Friday 14th August

Term 4 Monday 5th October – Friday 18th December

SCHOOL CONTACTS for 2026

STAFF

Kerri Gibson – Principal
 Vesna Zagorac – Assistant Principal
 Mellane Somers – Learning Specialist

Teachers:

Trevor Allen	Matt Bliss
Alison Brown	Mick Bullen
Ben Crellin	Marita Davidson, Art
Tim Haines	Tomo Harada
Jamie Harding	Tom Hardisty
Michael Hole	Carmel Hyland, Library
Ruth Jones, Japanese	Eliza Kelly
Chloe Kostas	Ben Kowaluk
Ange Magtanong	Nerissa Mann
Tamara Miller	Lauren Mizener
Paul Moulatlet, Music	Jasmin Povolo
Lauren Todd	

Business Manager:

Admin Manager:

Admin Support:

Out of School Hours Care Coordinator:

OSHC Assistant Coordinator:

After School Music Coordinator

Literacy Support

Integration Aides:

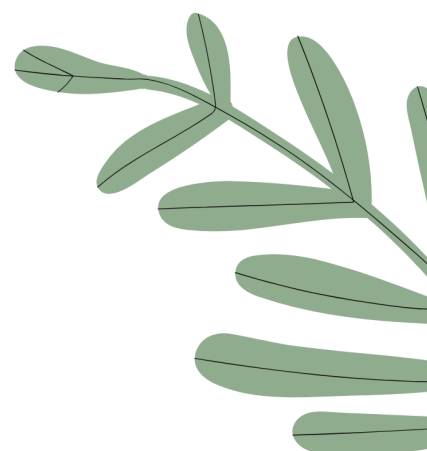
Crossing Supervisor:

Support Staff:

Speech Pathologist

School Councillors – Parents

Stuart Whiley (President) Katherine Gilbert (Vice President) Daniel Nicholson (Treasurer)
 Emily Chauvel Kim Hall Sophie Nicolle David Upton Daniel Wilson-Otto



2026 SCHOOL HOURS

School commences: 9.00am

School ends: 3.30pm

Kerri and Vesna unlock the gates and supervise the students in the playground before school from 8.45am. School staff are rostered to supervise the children during recess, lunch and after school until 3.45pm. If it is raining during recess and lunch times, the children will be supervised in the classrooms. For their safety, students must understand that once they arrive at school for the school day they must not leave without permission. Please note that students (unless supervised by a parent/carer) are not permitted in the playground before 8.45am, as there is not a teacher on duty.

Children should arrive at school between 8.45–9.00am to ensure full participation in all programs and to minimise disruptions. Those arriving late are not only missing out on learning themselves, but interfere with the learning opportunities of other children. In particular, late arrivals in the lower years are missing essential literacy skills activities.

If your child is absent from school, you are legally required to inform the school of your child's absence, either on the day of, or prior to, the absence. Wherever possible, parents/carers should add attendance notes directly on Compass. If you are unable to do so, you may phone our absence line and leave a message, or send an email to the office: merri.creek.ps@education.vic.gov.au, listing the dates absent and the reason why. It is a legal requirement that children regularly attend school. It is essential for their learning that they are only absent when sick. Student learning usually occurs in building blocks where skills and knowledge are revised and added to. Regular absence creates gaps in their learning and causes problems in the later years of their primary schooling.

We ask you not to be in discussion with your child's teacher during class time, as they should be giving their undivided attention to the children, especially when parents arrive with their children just after 9.00am when the teacher is establishing the learning culture for the day.

Prior to the commencement of the day, class teachers need to set up the class for the morning's lessons, so it is important that if you bring your child into class to put their reader and lunch away, you respect this work place for teachers and do not allow your school age or younger children to play inside. Parents are welcome to have discussions with each other under the beautiful trees in the yard.

At the end of the school day any students who haven't been collected by 3.45pm will be directed to the school office.

From 3.45pm the playground is used by the Out of School Hours Care Program (OSHC). Parents and children who aren't involved in the OSHC program are asked to leave the playground by this time.



SCHOOL ROUTINE AND ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

Art Festival

Students participate in a myriad of art, craft and design activities. Displays throughout the school showcase students' creativity and artistic skills. A component of the Visual Arts program is our Art Festival, which is held every second year. The Art Festival provides a context for students to engage in a program of creating and making and to share this experience with the community.

Assembly

Whole-school assemblies are held on Wednesday mornings at 9am and are hosted by the students. The focus of the assembly is to feature student music performances. Parents, pre-school children and friends are most welcome to attend.

Attendance

School attendance is intrinsic to educational opportunity. Students enrolled at this school are expected to attend on a full-time basis. The school acknowledges that consistent attendance depends on pro-active cooperation between the school, parent and student.

Regular and punctual attendance is expected for all school days, including assemblies. Students who are late will be marked absent on the roll and are to report to the school office to have their arrival and an explanation recorded.

Parents of students who are absent without explanation will be sent an SMS informing parents that their child is absent without explanation and requesting that an explanation be placed in Compass or to contact the school if required.

Bike Riding

Please ensure that bikes and scooters are dismounted before entering the school grounds, to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Please note that the Department of Education insurance policies do not cover personal accident insurance or ambulance cover for students, or private property brought to school by students, staff or visitors.

Classes

Merri Creek Primary School students are divided into distinct level areas:

Foundation	– Foundation Learning Community
Year 1	– Junior Learning Community
Year 2	– Junior Learning Community
Year 3	– Middle Learning Community
Year 4	– Middle Learning Community
Year 5	– Senior Learning Community
Year 6	– Senior Learning Community



Class Parent Representatives

Class parent representatives (CPRs) play an important role in facilitating the building of our school community culture, starting from the ground up at class level. Other key aspects of the role include communication between school and parents, parents and school, support for the teacher and class activities.

ROLE OF THE PARENT REPRESENTATIVE

The role of the Parent Representative can include, but is not limited to the following:

- ♦ To welcome new parents and assist them in getting to know each other
- ♦ To organise a class contact list for families who would like to share their contact details

- ◆ To make parents feel part of the school community
- ◆ To provide opportunities for parents to feel that they are valued members of the community and welcome to be involved in any way they are able e.g., informal social gatherings such as a coffee morning at a local coffee shop or a weekend play date in a local park
- ◆ Encourage parents to be involved in school life, e.g., helping with the fete, fundraising activities or Working Bees.

Communication

Compass is a web-based platform designed for schools, which is the main avenue of communication between the school and families. Compass works on all modern browsers on any device. Additionally, there are apps for iPhone and Android devices which have reduced functions.

There is one login per family, which can be used on multiple devices. Please contact the office if you need to reset your password.

Compass is currently used to record attendance, receive permission and payment for excursions, book parent/teacher conferences, distribute the newsletter, send notifications, payment of family contributions, and for the distribution of school reports.

Seesaw is an online platform we use to share individual student learning portfolios with families. This is aligned to learning goals and reporting outcomes. Every parent will receive an invitation by email with instructions for actioning the set up. Seesaw is private and parents will only see their child(ren)s learning.

Seesaw is used to regularly communicate wellbeing themes for a year level so that parents are kept informed and can support at home.

Curriculum

Merri Creek Primary School offers a comprehensive curriculum for all students. Students engage in learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum through classroom and specialist programs. The Victorian Curriculum is the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum for Victorian schools. It provides prescribed content and achievement standards, which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents. There are eleven achievement levels within the Victorian Curriculum. Students in the primary years of schooling usually operate within the first eight. The Victorian Curriculum is a developmental curriculum which recognises that students develop their understanding with individual levels of readiness.

For information on the Victorian Curriculum please visit this website:

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx>



Integrated Inquiry

Students learn by building a body of knowledge that is sequenced from year to year, building on from what is already known. Inquiry learning at Merri Creek Primary is a way for students to engage in a knowledge base curriculum centered on the Humanities and Sciences.

These curriculum areas provide the themes for the inquiries. The content of History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics, Physical, Earth, Chemical and Biological Science is explored through the process based subject areas of the curriculum including English, Mathematics, Technology, Design, The Arts, Science Inquiry and Physical Education. When exploring the themes of the inquiry students engage in learning about and employing a range of learning dispositions. These are the capabilities as outlined in the curriculum including personal and social capability, critical and creative thinking, ethical capability and intercultural capability.

Teaching Approaches

Explicit Teaching usually involves the whole class and the teacher, such as reading an enlarged text. The focus is on skills that are beyond the level of the children. The knowledge is shared through describing, explaining, modelling and demonstrating the use of strategies. It is interactive with the children participating. The teacher makes learning explicit within the context of a shared activity. Key features are 'thinking out loud' and sharing both teacher knowledge and the collective knowledge of the group to learn from each other.

Guided practice is based on the belief that the optimal learning for students occurs when they are assisted by a teacher and guided using a skill. Guided practice allows students to practise and consolidate effective strategies. This usually occurs in small groups where all children need the same skill development. This is targeted teaching at the point of need for a group of students. It focuses on understanding what the child/ren know and works to extend them in a particular area collectively or individually to the next step of understanding or competency.

Independent practice is an individualised practice that supports the explicit teaching undertaken during the whole-group focus or the guided focus. It is when children practise or apply their learning. The child takes the knowledge, process and skill and uses this independently to complete learning tasks, demonstrating that they can transfer this understanding to another context. This is often used to assess the child's capacity to move to new steps of learning.

Department of Education (DE) website

Parents play a vital role in supporting children throughout their education. To be fully informed about the stages of education and the choices available, visit the DE website which is located at <https://www.vic.gov.au/school>.

Digital Technologies

Our vision for learning with Digital Technologies

Technologies feature in almost all aspects of existence and are continually being remade as we evolve. If we want our students to be at the forefront of this endeavour in the future, we need to be equipping them with the knowledge, skills and dispositions that come with the Digital Technologies curriculum. Our focus with Digital Technologies is on preparing students for a world where technology is used to solve the big problems of the world (**thrive in every way**).

Our goal is to prepare young learners to become computational thinkers who understand how today's digital tools can help solve tomorrow's problems. Creativity, reasoning and critical thinking are highlighted as ways of organising a problem and technology is used to support the process (**discover, learn, think and question**).

We aim to continually be envisioning the potential for Digital Technology across all learning areas and to facilitate learning across and between these disciplines, so that we can provide students with opportunities to integrate technology with real world skills and human ideas. These skills will be needed to solve current and future challenges (**contribute to our community and wider world**).

We want students to engage positively, know their online world and to choose consciously, exercising rights and responsibilities as a digital citizen, and respecting the rights of others (**respecting ourselves and others**).

The focus is on using technologies to innovate and create and secondly to understand that the power of technology is driven by human ideas with the purpose of creating positive change/solutions. Key to this at a primary school level is the development of core computational thinking skills. This involves generalizing and transferring this problem-solving process to a wide variety of problems. Our focus is to have students thinking about

problems in a way that allows computers to solve them. Computational thinking is something people do, not computers. It includes logical thinking and the ability to recognise patterns, think with algorithms, decompose a problem, and abstract a problem. At Foundation to Year 2 we focus on limited screen time (learning skills without computers) and representing numbers and text as symbols. As an example, a past project involved the Foundation students teaming up with their Year 5/6 buddies to design and build a programmable robot using recycled materials. The students made their own coding language to program their robots. Along the way, the children learned about algorithms, sequencing code, patterns and using loops. It was a fully collaborative project that allowed the Foundation students to experience many stages in realising their vision, from the research and ideas phase, the design phase to the building phase. Throughout the entire project, the students needed to solve problems and use skills across many disciplines.

Students can create a range of digital solutions through guided play and learning, such as using robotic toys to navigate a map, recording science data with software applications, or creating short films.

Emergency Information Details

When you enrol your child at Merri Creek Primary School, details such as address, phone numbers and emergency contacts are required and need to be kept current.

Where special medication is required it is essential that details of those requirements be provided and are signed in at the school office.

Anaphylaxis

Students who are at risk of anaphylaxis (severe allergies) must have an Anaphylaxis Action Plan (updated annually). The school will prepare an Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan annually (or when changes to child's management are required). Parents will be given two copies of the plan, one for them to sign and return to the school, the other for their records.

Parents are required to provide:

- ◆ a completed colour copy of an ASCIA plan to the school office, including an up to date photo of student and doctor's signature
- ◆ student's EpiPen® and any other medication with an expiry date beyond July of the following year.

Please refer to the Anaphylaxis Policy on the school website.

Asthma

All students who have asthma must have an Asthma Action Plan developed with their doctor and submitted to the school (updated annually).

Parents are required to provide:

- ◆ a completed colour copy of an Asthma Plan, including an up-to-date photo of student and doctor's signature
- ◆ personal spacer (small if possible, as it will need to be taken on excursions)
- ◆ Ventolin with an expiry date beyond July of the following year.

Please refer to the Asthma Policy on the school website.



Excursions, In-House Events, Camps and Tours

Excursions and in-house events are an important component of the school's educational programs. These events support and extend student learning. The Arts (Performing and Visual) and Language programs may also arrange excursions or in house events relevant to their learning programs. Students will not be taken outside the school without written parental consent with the exception of local walking excursions.

Students in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 participate in the school's camping program. Parents are notified in advance of camp dates and will be provided with detailed information pertaining to venue, camp activities and cost. All camps are in dormitory accommodation. Transport is in coaches with seat belts.

Extreme Weather

On wet or hot days (over 35°C) or extreme weather days, the students remain indoors during break times and participate in activities under the supervision of class teachers.

First Aid

Students report firstly to the teacher on duty (unless an emergency). The yard duty teacher will send the injured child to be attended to in the First Aid room. All head injuries are reported directly to parents by phone/text.

MEDICATION – We are not permitted to keep a supply of medications, painkillers included, for our students and staff are not allowed to administer medications without written authorisation from parents.

If it is necessary for students, otherwise fit enough to attend school, to have medication it will only be administered with written parental authorisation and supply of the medication with clear dosage instructions. Forms are available for you to fill in at the office.

Fundraising

Our school usually has two major fundraising events each year. The first event is the Merri Marathon which is a fitness and fundraising triumph. Students are sponsored to run to Sumner Park where they run laps of the park. The focus of the day is fitness, with the flow on being learning activities and fundraising.

The second is the Merry Merri Fete. This is an amazing community event which, while providing much needed funds for the school, is an opportunity for families of different year levels to get to know one another. This is conducted in combination with our Auction.

Head Lice

Regular checks should be made of your child's hair, particularly if they appear to have an itchy scalp. Head lice show **no particular bias to whose head** they are attracted. Having head lice is no indication of lack of cleanliness and should not have any social stigma attached.

Under legislation, exclusion of children suffering from head lice is required until appropriate treatment has commenced.

Home Learning

At Merri Creek Primary School, we believe that learning takes place in many settings, including home and school, and through many and various activities. Our Home Learning Policy encourages activities which are realistic and achievable in the home setting and do not unduly interfere with a home-school balance.

Purpose of Home Learning:

- ◆ Fosters curiosity and love of inquiry and learning
- ◆ Reaffirms the role of parents and caregivers as partners in education
- ◆ Develops long term habits of learning and time management
- ◆ Allows for practice and consolidation of work done in class
- ◆ Allows for the practice of research skills and the presentation of this information
- ◆ Affords the extra time students need to comprehend some subject matter.



Early Years (Foundation–Year 4) Home Learning will consist mainly of:

- ◆ Reading aloud the home reading book daily to an adult. Daily reading practice times must be signed by parents in the Reading Log
- ◆ Practising Maths concepts
- ◆ Occasional other activities as may be set by the teacher.

The maximum time spent on Home Learning should be 20 minutes per day for Foundation–Year 2 and 30 minutes per day for Years 3–4.

Middle Years (Years 5–6) Home Learning will consist mainly of:

- ◆ Daily reading of an appropriate text for at least 20 minutes. This daily reading may be done individually or as a shared activity with an adult. Daily reading practice times must be documented and signed by parents in the student's diary. Time should also be taken to listen to your child read out loud. This helps build confidence in delivery and allows dialogue regarding textual features and to share a common enjoyment of books
- ◆ Practising Maths concepts, e.g., times tables
- ◆ Further weekly home learning tasks may be set by the teacher.

The maximum time spent on Home Learning should be 45 minutes per day for Years 5–6.

InitialLit Program Years F–2

The InitialLit program in Years Foundation to 2 ensures a consistent and systematic instruction in foundational reading and spelling learning. InitialLit is an evidence-based, whole-class literacy program (reading and spelling) providing all children with essential core knowledge and strong foundations to become successful readers and writers. This is a synthetic phonics approach delivered alongside a rich literature and vocabulary component. Teacher professional learning is provided and monitored through an observation process to ensure consistency of delivery. All children receive a robust reading program that is consistent across classes and builds on skills from year to year.

Late Arrival/Early Leaving

If your child is late for school you must enter via the administration office and enter the arrival on the Compass Kiosk. Your child will take the printed slip to the teacher. If your child is departing school early, a pass must be printed from the Compass Kiosk for their teacher. If you wish to drop off/collect your child from class, you will also need to sign in to enter past the office.

Library

All year levels attend the library on a weekly basis. Library lessons comprise of orientation to library organisation, exploration of the books in the nonfiction, fiction and picture book collections, development of research skills and literature appreciation. Books may be borrowed from the library during the weekly library period. The library is also open for the children at other designated times during the week.

Book bags, clearly labelled with a recognition symbol and your child's name, are a good idea to help our students keep track of their library book and keep them clean and dry.

Parents are always welcome to help with book covering and shelving in the library. The library also has a range of books on parenting available for parents to borrow.

Lost Property

Please ensure that your child's clothing and belongings are clearly labelled so that they can easily be returned. (Please check labels regularly if using a permanent marker as this tends to fade over time.)

'Lost items' are placed on our lost property clothing rack and parents may check this at any time.

Meals, including lunch orders

It is essential for students' wellbeing that they have eaten an adequate breakfast before attending school. Children should bring with them a fruit or vegetable snack to eat in class at 10am, a morning 'play lunch' and a nutritious lunch which contains fruit. Drinks may be brought to school, as long as they are **not in glass containers**. We encourage children to drink water. Chewing gum is not allowed at school. We also discourage children from eating lollies during school hours. We encourage parents to provide lunch in compartmentalised boxes so a minimal amount of packaging makes its way to school.

Sandwiches can be ordered from Twice Shy Café, using the QKR! App. See the back of this booklet for QKR! App Instructions. Orders for lunches need to be in before 9.00am.

Children will not be permitted to leave the school during lunch without an authorising note from a parent.

Newsletter

Merri Creek Primary School's newsletter is available through Compass fortnightly on Friday. The newsletter is an important avenue of communication between the school and the parents.

Out of School Hours Care Programs

Merri Creek Primary School Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) is a not-for-profit service, operated by School Council. We have a strong focus on social and emotional learning in a relaxed, fun and safe environment. We are rated *Exceeding National Quality Standards* by the Department of Education.

Merri Creek OSHC operates **Before Care, After Care and Curriculum Day programs** for families who need care for their children at these times.

Before Care operates from **7.30am to 8.45am** with spaces available for up to 45 children. Breakfast is offered between 7.30am and 8.15am, with cereals, toast and spreads, yoghurt, and fresh fruit available each morning.

After Care operates from **3.30pm to 6.00pm** (with last pick up at 5.50pm) with spaces available for up to 160 children. A healthy afternoon snack is available each day, consisting of fresh fruit and vegetable platters, as well as our "Daily Special", such as fried rice, pasta, beans and pizza. Children with dietary allergies are catered for accordingly.

Kathy Marshall is the Service's coordinator, and Eaden Hardy-Munro is the assistant coordinator. We have qualified and enthusiastic staff with a range of diverse interests and skills that they bring to the service.

Our program is designed to engage all age groups, with planned craft activities, sports, games, imaginative experiences, as well as free play. We run a variety of clubs that draw on the children's interests and scaffold their learning throughout the term.

To ensure a place it is essential to enrol and make a booking. We accept regular and casual bookings. We recommend that all families enrol, in the event that care is required in an emergency. Legally, we can only accept children at the service if they are enrolled.

Enrolment is via Smart Central: <https://www.smartcentral.net/v2/session/login>, and takes three days to process.

Parent Participation

Merri Creek Primary School welcomes parental assistance in many areas across the school including classroom learning programs and excursions. As part of DE Policy parents must

undergo a Working with Children Check prior to being involved in activities. Please do not hesitate to offer your valuable assistance. Parents may also wish to become involved in the School Council, be a Class Parent Rep or join a subcommittee of School Council.

Permission for regular activities

Each year parents are asked to give permission for the following: local walking excursions, internet usage, permission to use photos internally (e.g., newsletter) and externally (e.g., in advertising material).

These will be available on Compass. Please complete these online forms ASAP after they appear on your Compass news feed.

Property Damage and Medical Expenses

- ◆ Students and parents/carers are responsible for a student's personal item/property, including if it is lost, stolen or damaged at school
- ◆ Claims for the reimbursement of the cost of a personal item/property brought to school will not be paid by the school and are not covered by school insurance
- ◆ Parents/carers will only be liable for costs incurred by a student damaging school property in certain circumstances (for example, when the student was acting as an agent of the parent)
- ◆ Parents/carers are responsible for all medical expenses, including ambulance costs if they are incurred by a student at school. Although the school does attempt to contact parents, the school may not contact parents if, in the principal's opinion, an ambulance is required without delay. We encourage parents/carers to have up-to-date ambulance cover for their child
- ◆ Parents/carers are liable for student medical expenses, including ambulance costs, unless the injury or medical incident resulted from a negligent act or omission on behalf of the Department.

Reports/Interviews

Written reports are issued mid-year and end of year. Formal parent-teacher interviews are held during the year. Additional parent-teacher interviews can be initiated either by the teacher or parent on request. If you have any queries or concerns about your child's academic, social, emotional or physical progress, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher for an appointment. Reporting to parents for 2026 is a student-free day on Tuesday June 23rd.

School Council

The School Council is the body responsible to the community, Department of Education and State Government for the general direction and conduct of the school. It is through the Council that the local community can participate in decision making at the school level.

Merri Creek Primary School is governed by an elected School Council, consisting of parents and school staff. The main responsibilities of the School Council are to review and update policies, participate in the development and monitoring of the school's strategic plan and oversee budget expenditure.

School Council meets regularly and is open to all Merri Creek Primary School parents. Meeting dates are listed in the newsletter. The nature of the meetings precludes students accompanying parents. At times there may be closed sessions due to confidential issues being discussed.

Suggestions, requests and questions to School Council are always welcome.

School Council subcommittees are made up of members of the school community and at least one School Council member. They report to the School Council. Merri Creek Primary

School Council has five subcommittees that non-School Council members are welcome to attend to support school planning and projects: Buildings and Grounds, Community Relations/Fundraising, Education, Finance, and OSHC.

School Parent Payments for Books and Materials/School Voluntary Contributions

Each year School Council carefully plans the financing of the school and its educational programs.

A notice outlining the 2026 parent contributions has been included in your Transition Welcome Pack and provided on Compass.

School Nursing Service

In the first year of primary school, the Department of Human Services offers a free health assessment to all children.

Assessments are performed only with parental permission and involve a vision screening test and a hearing test. If you or your child's teacher has specific concerns, the nurse will undertake further assessments and provide you with assessment results, information and advice. Where appropriate, students and their families are referred to a health professional or agency for further assessment and advice. Follow up of children referred onto other health professionals occurs in the following year.

We regard this service very highly and it has revealed previously unknown health problems with some of our children in the past. You are urged to take advantage of the service when it is offered.

Teachers and parents of students in years other than Foundation may refer students to this service for hearing and eye checks.

Sport

Merri Creek Primary School places emphasis on participation, cooperation, enthusiasm and positive encouragement of others through team games. We believe that "doing your best" is more important than winning. Merri Creek Primary School is part of the Carlton District Primary School Sports Association. Students in Years 5 and 6 participate in the summer basketball, bat tennis, newcombe and cricket interschool Gala Day competition, and in the winter basketball, netball, t-ball and soccer interschool Gala Day competition. Year 5 and 6 students are selected to compete in the district swimming, cross country and athletics competitions each year.

Student Placement

Towards the end of each school year, student groupings and teacher placement are considered for the following year. Students are regrouped each year to provide the opportunity for broadening social interaction, developing friendships and learning to get along with others. The school aims to create and develop effective teams of teachers to improve student learning outcomes. Teams are created on this basis, whilst at the same time taking into account the experience of team members and teacher development.

During Term 4, class teachers work with the principal class to begin the process of placing students into prospective classes for the following year, based on learning needs, social and behaviour skills, peers they work well with and gender balance.

School leaders review the prospective classes and any adjustments are made in consultation with class and specialist teachers.

Student Wellbeing

At Merri Creek Primary School, we C.A.R.E. We live our values in all that we do. At the start of each school year, we focus on establishing our learning communities through the 'Start

Up Program' designed by our teachers across the school. It works to *'develop a culture in which each individual feels safe and has a sense of belonging to our school community'*. With an emphasis on our school values and rights we explore what our responsibility is towards our community.

We value creativity and provide opportunities for children to explore their own ideas. We learn about respecting diversity and acceptance of others. In Foundation this is based in the idea of seeking to include others in play and in learning. We learn that we need to take responsibility for our actions and developing an understanding of school expectations. We foster positive relationships with our students, recognising that they learn through mistakes. Our approach is to build social and personal confidence in a safe and supported environment.

We have two school rights: the right to learn and the right to feel safe. There is an emphasis on understanding that with rights we accept personal and collective responsibilities towards them. Our behaviour management approach is based on Professor Ramon Lewis's *'The Developmental Approach to Classroom Behaviour'*. Our focus is to *'establish a positive social and learning environment which fosters respectful relationships between staff and students and peer to peer, and to develop learning growth, resilience, cooperation and a strong sense of personal and collective wellbeing'*.

Our Wellbeing program in Foundation is centred on understanding self and others, the development of positive relationships and solving social problems in constructive ways. Our focus is on building a 'toolkit' of strategies to support our social and emotional health. The 'We Thinkers-Social Explorers' series is followed, as well as 'The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)' program.

Our Assistant Principal, Vesna Zagorac, is responsible for overseeing the wellbeing of students within the school. She works with teachers to identify and support students who may require adjustments or more comprehensive support.

Managing emotions is an important part of the learning journey and children are learning to navigate through their day-to-day experiences. We use various approaches to teach children about emotional literacy, how to identify our emotional state and what tools can be used to help us be calm and responsive to learning and relating to others. One of the approaches we use is the Zones of Regulation. It is a curriculum designed program that helps students identify their feelings and understand their emotional reactions. It encourages self-regulation through strategies that students build, creating a support 'toolkit'.

The four zones are colour coded to represent each emotional state, how your body and mind are feeling. When in Blue Zone your body is running slow, in Green you are good to go, in Yellow you need to slow it down and in Red it's time to stop!

Students then focus on strategies that support either staying in that zone (emotional state) or moving out of it. The focus is on sensory supports such as body movement i.e., running, going for a walk etc., calming techniques i.e., using breathing techniques, listening to music or reading and thinking strategies such as growth mindset, matching the size of the problem to the reaction size etc.

How you can help your child use The Zones of Regulation:

- ✓ Identify your own feelings using Zone's language in front of your child (e.g., "I'm bored, I think I am in Blue Zone")
- ✓ Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (e.g., "I need to take 4 deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone.")
- ✓ Engaging your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. This can be done when they are calmer



- ✓ Teach your child which tools they can use (e.g., "When we are in Green Zone, we are ready for learning, what helps us get ready to learn?")
- ✓ Identify things that help you when you are in a Zone (e.g., "When I am bored, I go for a run to help me regain focus.")
- ✓ Praise/encourage your child to share which Zone they might be in and what things help them when they are feeling bored, frustrated, calm etc.
- ✓ It is important to note that everyone experiences all the Zones.



The ZONES of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE		GREEN ZONE		YELLOW ZONE		RED ZONE	
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly		Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn		Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control		Mad/Angry Mean Terrified Yelling/Hitting Out of Control	



Sun Smart

The school's SunSmart program has been developed to ensure that all students and staff are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultra violet rays of the sun.

All students are required to wear a SunSmart hat during lunchtime and recess breaks, before and after school, when participating in sport and physical education and on school excursions and camps, from the beginning of September to the end of April.

Supervision

We often get questions from parents around how playtimes operate. Playtimes are always busy and like a good decade of music there are always popular new waves that come through. Our school grounds are supervised by school staff from 8.45am until 3.45pm. Outside of these hours, school staff are not available to supervise students. The gates are opened at 8.45am and 3.25pm. Please be mindful of these times, ensuring children are not left unsupervised waiting for the gates to open. Families are encouraged to contact OSHC on 9481 6091 or refer to www.merricreekps.vic.edu.au for more information about the before and after school care facilities available to our school community where care is required outside of school hours.

During playtimes, we do encourage students to choose where they play, rather than having set areas. Different spaces are used for various types of play, with the monkey bars and the basketball court remaining a popular area. The supervision we provide is planned out and considered, taking into consideration how the yard is used by our students.

During recess we have the whole school out together and students navigate the space incredibly well. We have teachers and education staff supervise play and support students as they locate peers they would like to play with or negotiate their way through the complexities of friendship dynamics.

We have two separate lunchtimes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and Fridays. Foundation to Year 2s head out from 12.30 to 1.30pm and the Years 3–6s from 1.30 to 2.30pm. Classroom teachers supervise lunch eating before students enjoy playing outside. Tuesdays we have the whole school out together. This allows students to connect with their

buddies and enjoy the experiences of playing with others. As it can be busy, we open the General-Purpose room (GP room) and the Library for those students who wish to enjoy quieter activities. The GP room is available for quiet play every lunchtime, except on Fridays. In the GP room students come in to play Lego, to play with building blocks, to draw, to chat and to read. The Library is open for some lunchtimes. This space is also a quiet place to read, to draw and to chat with friends. We have teachers rostered on to supervise designated zones, to ensure that there is an adult in different areas of the yard. Teachers wear a fluorescent jacket so that they can be identified easily by children when they are on yard duty. We know that the most popular and favourite part of being at school is playtimes, so we continue to look at ways to provide access to spaces that accommodate the playing needs of our students.

Swimming Program

Swimming is a component of the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Students from Foundation to Year 6 **may** participate in an intensive swimming program based on the Royal Life Saving Society's "Swim and Survive" course.

Transition

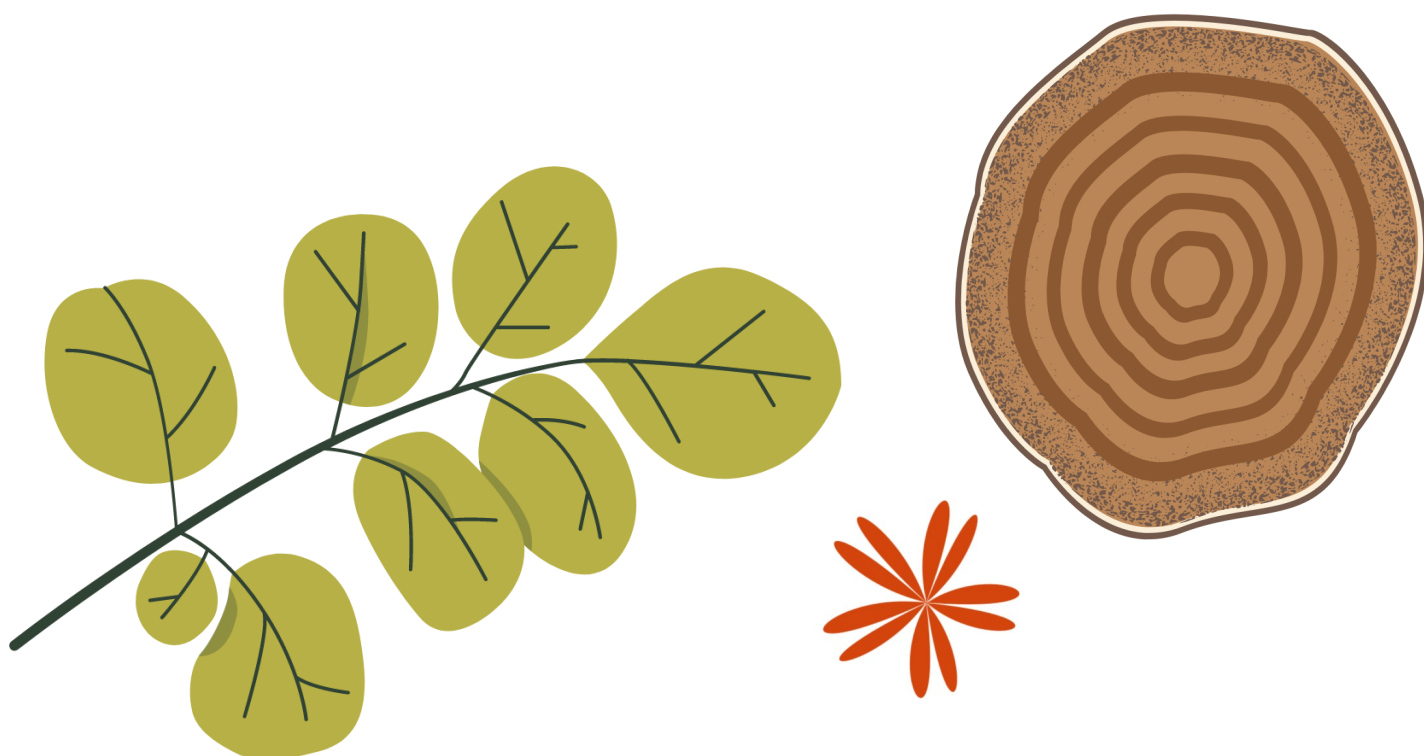
Transition from pre-school to school, from one year level to another and from Year 6 to secondary school needs to be as seamless as possible. At Merri Creek Primary School we provide transition programs at all stages of a child's primary school life.

Visitors

All visitors to the school during school hours, including parents, must sign in and out at the school office via the Compass Kiosk, and wear a visitor badge, for safety and security.

Working with Children Check

Parents wishing to engage in 'child-related work' must complete a Working with Children Check, which consists of a national criminal history check. Any person whose duties usually involve work in a school (e.g., camps, classroom support and excursions) are considered to be engaged in 'child-related work'. The Working with Children Check is free for volunteers. Applications are completed online and then you will need to go to an Australia Post outlet to lodge your application.





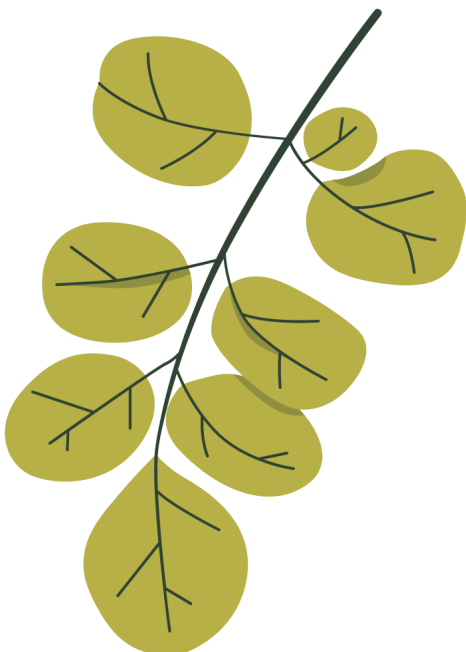
At our Special Assembly each Wednesday, we all recite our School Declaration. You might like to help your child learn the words to this.

Acknowledgement of Country

We, the students of Merri Creek Primary School,
would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the
Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations,
who are the traditional owners of the land on which we stand today.

School Declaration

We at Merri Creek Primary School
are standing with friends for whom we care.
We respect each other's rights and our school rules.
We try our best in all we do.
We care for our school and community.
Australia is our home
and we will do what we can
to make it fair and peaceful for everyone.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do I do with an Event notification?

When you receive an Event notification via Compass, take note of the event details and provide payment and consent promptly.

Where do we park?

Please read the signs carefully as the traffic management police and Yarra Council officers regularly patrol and impose heavy fines for illegal parking. The drop off zone is for drop off with parents **not** leaving their car.

What do I do if my child is absent?

When your child is absent please enter the absence on Compass, either on the day or before the absence. If this isn't possible, contact the school via phone and leave a message on the answering machine. If your child is leaving early or arriving late, the parent will need to log into the Compass Kiosk at the office.

Is there an instrumental music program?

The opportunity exists for children from Years 1 to 6 to learn to play one of a variety of musical instruments in private, after-school lessons. The school employs a coordinator to organise this program and to also select qualified instrumental teachers. Lessons may be taken as an individual or as part of a small group, depending on the instrument chosen. Payment is made at commercial rates, direct to the music teacher. Presently, teachers are available for flute, piano, guitar, recorder, violin, clarinet, saxophone, drums, and voice.

PLEASE NOTE:

- ◆ There are limited spaces to access this program
- ◆ Enrolment forms are completed in Term 4 for the following year.



HATS AND BAGS

Hats are compulsory from September 1st - April 30th
The hat doesn't need to be a MCPS logo hat but it does need to be a SunSmart hat. The items below are available to be purchased from the school office.

PRICE LIST

SCHOOL BAG \$50.00

BLUE OR RED

SLOUCH HAT \$12.00

SMALL/MEDIUM/LARGE/ EX-LARGE

BUCKET HAT \$10.00

SMALL/MEDIUM/LARGE

LEGIONNAIRES \$8.00

ONE SIZE



CHECKLIST BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

- ◆ Log onto Compass and familiarise yourself with the features.

The week before the start of the school year permission needs to be given via Compass (through Course Confirmation) for:

- Acceptable use agreement for internet and digital use
- Local excursions
- Photographing and filming of students, internal
- Photographing and filming of students, external.

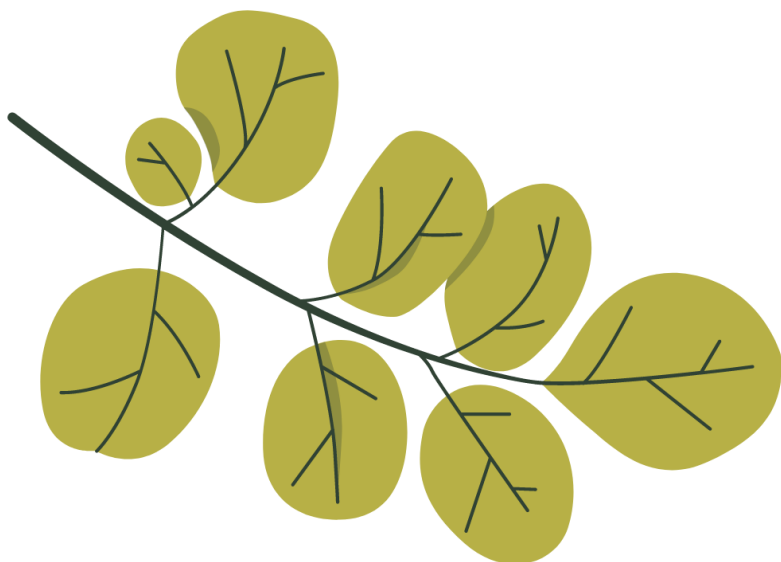
- ◆ Enrol in Out of School Hours Care.

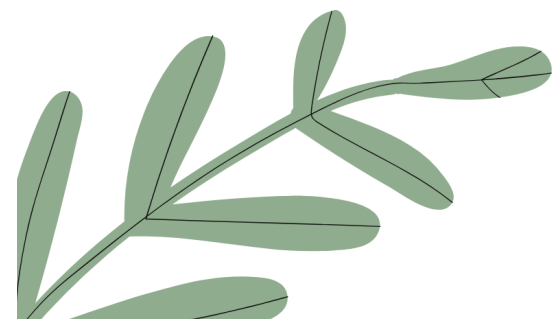
You may not intend to use Out of School Hours Care on a regular basis, however if an unusual situation occurs and there isn't anyone to collect your child, they can be placed into OSHC. Students can only be cared for by OSHC if they are enrolled.

- ◆ Make sure your child has a hat at school every day.
- ◆ Make sure your child has their own drink bottle, labelled with their name.
- ◆ We encourage healthy food, with minimal rubbish, so make sure your child has a lunch box and containers with your child's name on them.
- ◆ Spare Clothes.
- ◆ Appropriate shoes for running around.
- ◆ SunSmart clothes (covering shoulders).
- ◆ No toys or balls or stationery.



MERRI CREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL 1891 – 2026





QKR! INSTRUCTIONS



For quicker, hassle-free school payments, try Qkr! today

Introducing Qkr! (pronounced 'quicker') by MasterCard, the secure and easy way to order and pay for school items from your phone at a time and place that suits you.

With Qkr you can:

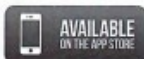
- Pay for school fees, uniforms, excursions and more;
- See your receipts on the app and get them sent by email if required.



Getting started is easy - try it yourself today

Step 1 Download Qkr!

on your Android phone or iPhone. iPad users can download iPhone app



Step 2 Register

Select your Country of Residence as 'Australia' and follow the steps to register

Step 3 Find our school

Our school will appear in 'Nearby Locations' if you're within 10km's of the school, or search for our school by name.

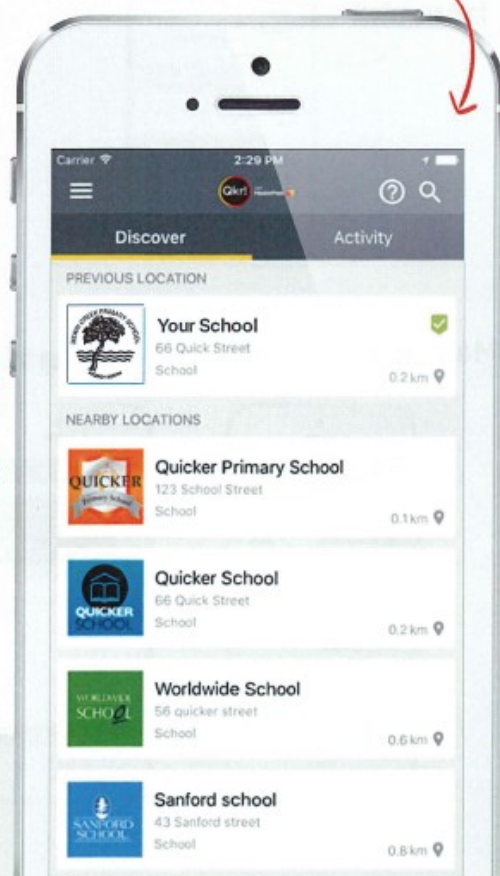
Step 4 Register your children

When first accessing our school you will be prompted to add a student profile for your child. This allows you to make orders and payments for them.

Search for our school name

If you have made a purchase you can select our school from 'Previous Location'

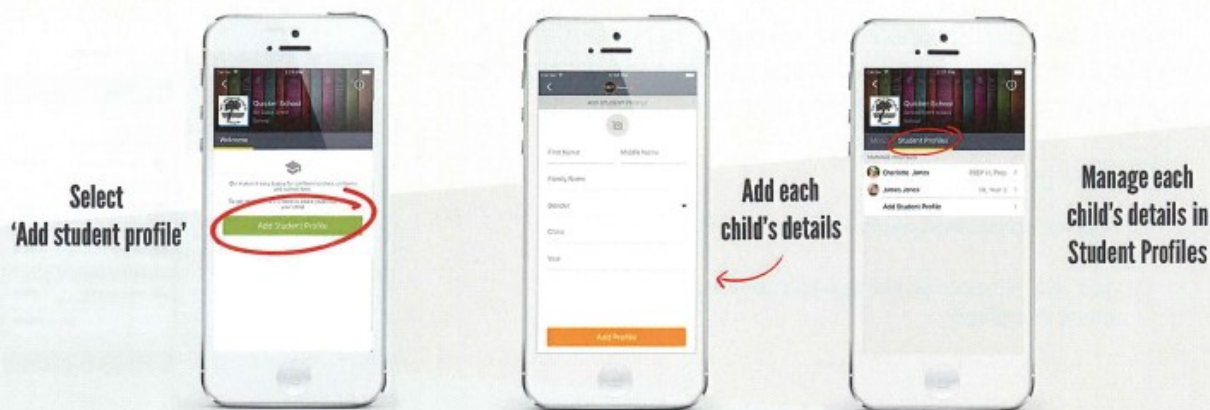
If you're within 10 kms of the school, you can select our school from 'Nearby Locations'



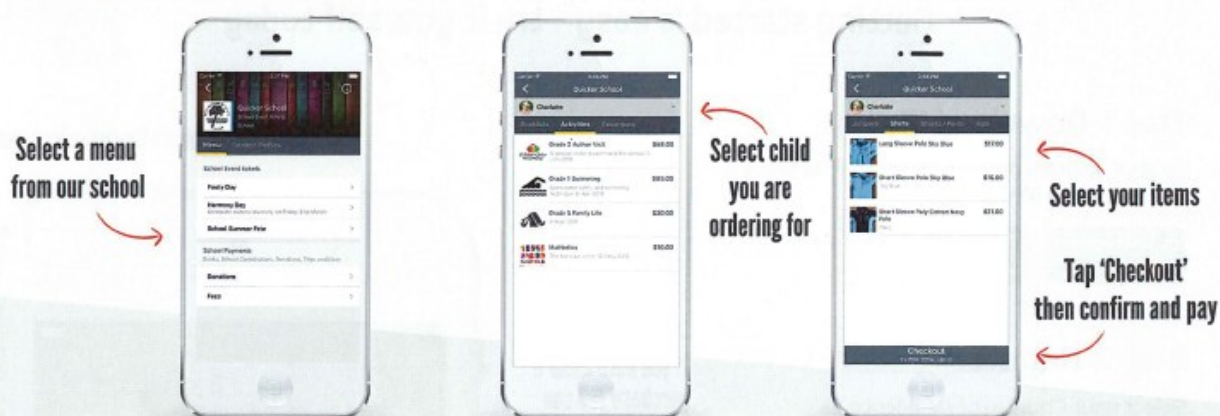
QKR! INSTRUCTIONS, CONTINUED



Add your children's details in Student Profiles



Purchase school items



Making payments

Add up to 5 cards to your wallet



At checkout select which card to pay with.

Pay with any cards accepted by the school.

Once your payment is approved you can continue to the home page, or view your receipt.

