



GORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

OUR FUTURE STARTS HERE



PREP PARENT HANDBOOK

Information for Prep Parents

Gordon Primary School 2017



Letter from the Principal



Dear Parents

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to Gordon Primary School, well known as an outstanding school. Gordon Primary School has established a culture of excellence where the highest standards are expected and maintained.

During 2016, Gordon Primary School, once again, had some of the highest results on the ACARA "My School" website for our local area. Gordon Primary School community is very proud of the school's achievements. We are a quality school, preparing all students for 21st Century Learning.

The School Council at Gordon Primary has continued to provide our school with outstanding facilities and opportunities. In 2015 we installed two new classrooms, resurfaced our inside and outside courts and implemented the new "Beachy's Shed" program, providing technology opportunities for all students. In 2016 school council has been able to install a new soccer pitch for the community.

This has been a continued focus of school council as can be demonstrated by our recent implementation of the Stephanie Alexander kitchen Garden Program, sporting programs, Literacy Pro Reading programs and Indonesian. This year we will continue to look for ways to improve the physical resources of our school to accommodate the needs of the Gordon Primary school community.

I trust that the introduction to school life for you will be a most pleasant one and that it will be followed by a happy and rewarding primary school education for your child.

This information booklet has been produced to help make your association with Gordon Primary School as informed and as interesting as possible and by providing answers to many of the questions you may want to ask. Please feel free, however, to contact the school if you have any queries regarding the school which are not covered in this booklet or in our brochure available from the main office or website.

We believe we have an outstanding Kindergarten to Prep Class Transition program and we welcome parents' input regarding our success in this matter.

I look forward to assisting in your child's primary education.

Yours sincerely

Russel Cowan
Principal

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Letter from Prep Teacher

Dear Families,

Your child's first year at school is an exciting and important time for both you and your child/children.

At Gordon Primary School we are committed to providing a quality education for all children.

We acknowledge that a strong partnership is essential between home and school and we look forward to establishing positive relationships with you and your child/children.

Gordon Primary School aims to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that promotes an enthusiasm for learning and prepares students to become responsible and valued members of society.

At Gordon Primary School we focus on

- Providing excellent teaching and learning experiences for all children in all areas of the curriculum with a strong focus on Literacy and Numeracy.
- Encouraging and supporting innovation and reflection in all curriculum areas.
- Building strong partnerships between school, home and the wider community. We believe communication is a vital aspect of our role (eg. Communication through newsletters, information evenings, parent/teacher interviews and transition programs).
- Recognising and celebrating effort and achievements (eg. Student of the Week awards).
- Promoting a safe and caring environment by promoting the values of respect, honesty and excellence.

I look forward to working with your child/children and the families at Gordon Primary School.

Regards,

Ruby Irvin
2017 Prep Teacher

How to Enrol Your Child

1. Fill out the special admission form that can be downloaded from our website or obtained from the front office.
2. Provide us with proof of the child's age (e.g. Birth Certificate/ Extract of Entry) – this can be photocopied at school.
3. Bring the child's Immunisation Certificate which may be obtained from Moorabool Council Offices.

N.B. Your child must turn at least **5 years old by 30 April** of the year of entry to school.

Once the above enrolment documents are delivered to the school, your child is officially enrolled and booked in for the next school year.

PLEASE ENROL AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE –

Prep enrolments are to be finalised at the middle of August.

The Gordon Primary School "Transition from Kinder" program on page 5 of this booklet, outlines the way the school supports kinder age children to become ready for entrance to school.

The Gordon Primary School "Beginning School" handbook has been provided to assist parents and students with preparations for primary school.

We look forward to seeing you at Gordon Primary School

Russel Cowan
Principal

Ruby Irvin
2017 Prep Teacher

Staff at Gordon Primary School



Russel Cowan
Principal



Gladys Thomas
Teacher



Debbie Lambourn
Teacher



Shana Brooks
Business Manager



Ruby Irvin
Prep Teacher



Lisa Jones
Teacher



Derick Micallef
Teacher



Rod Rantall
Teacher



Kathy Quinlan
Integration Aide



Kath Stasse
Integration Aide



Kim Hounsell Bachelor
Integration Aide

Key Dates

2017 Prep Arrangements

FIRST DAY

All Prep children will commence school:

TUESDAY 2nd FEBRUARY, 2017 (TBC) at 9:00am and will be dismissed at 3:15pm.
(Teachers commence on Monday 30th January, 2017).

Prep children will have a 4 day week at school attending on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday until the first week in March. From then on the children will attend school for the five days with the rest of the school. The four free Wednesdays will be a welcomed rest day for the Prep children. During the dates Jan 30th – Feb 1st the teacher will use this time to assess the children individually as required by the Department of Education. The Prep teacher will arrange a suitable time with parents for these assessments to take place.

2017 TERM DATES

Term 1: 30th January (school teachers start) – 31st March

Term 2: 18th April – 30th June

Term 3: 17th July – 22nd September

Term 4: 9th October – 22nd December

Our school day begins at 9 am and ends at 3:15 pm.

Transition from Kindergarten

At Gordon Primary School, we have developed a comprehensive Kinder to Prep transition program which has been very well received by parents and teachers and is of excellent benefit to the children.

- 1. March** Kindergarten teachers are invited to visit new Prep classes/consult with teachers re. Settling in of individual students from last year.
- 2. March** Prep Information Booklet and Brochures available.
New enrolments taken for 2017.
- 3. April/May** Principal seeks to visit the local Kindergartens.
- 4. May** Prep Teacher seeks to visit kindergartens.
- 5. May** Parents advised about transition mornings.
- 6. Term 4** Half day transition and a full day orientation to take place.
Half day - 22nd November. Full day - 8th December.
- 7. Term 4** Information Afternoon for Parents / meet the teachers,
Questions and Answers - 30th November.
- 8. Term 4** Meeting with Kindergarten teachers to discuss the individual needs of students enrolled at Gordon Primary School and classes for the new school year. Any new enrolments with disabilities – applications for assistance are written.

New parents will be notified of dates and times.

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*

First Day Procedures and Arrangements

To make each student's introduction to school life enjoyable and rewarding, we ask that you read the following information carefully:

- Please accompany your child to the Prep classroom to meet the classroom teacher.
- Your child may be issued with a NAME BADGE for easy identification, which should be worn each day for the first week.
- Children should say good-bye to their parents and are escorted in and shown their own named bag box for bags, coats, etc. They are helped by buddies.
- Parents may accompany children to the classroom for a very short period of time. (Approximately 5 minutes).
- Parents are invited to stay for a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits in the staffroom (coffee, tea, tissues – however the mood takes you).

You can help your child cope with change:

A. Saying Goodbye

- Establish arrival routines – lining up with their own grade, greeting the teacher.
- Tell your child when you will be back – e.g. "I'll be back at 3:15 at home time".

- Say good-bye, with a kiss, hug or wave, then leave. Be firm and friendly!
- Parents are expected to move away from classrooms, so that children can line up with their grade independently, as well as carry their own belongings into the classroom.

B. When you return

- Maintain a predictable pick-up schedule.
- Try to avoid asking your child "Did you miss me?"
- Share your child's enthusiasm and re-telling of their school experiences, positively.
- Establish good-bye routines with teacher and classmates. "We'll see you tomorrow morning" – then leave with your child.
- If your child is using After School Care, **please** make sure they know and the teacher is informed.

****Children who are confident and secure in the knowledge that they are unconditionally loved and accepted at home, and who are self-controlled, are better able to face any uncertainties of starting school.*

Play

The Prep students do not have their own separate play areas, but are under constant supervision by a teacher on Yard Duty, while at play.

Lunch Arrangements

The daily procedure is for all students to eat their lunches under teacher supervision.

You will need to ensure that your child brings a prepared lunch to school **DAILY**, commencing on the first day. Gordon Primary School does not have canteen facilities, but does have a pie warmer to heat up pies, pasties, leftovers in foil, etc. Please ensure that lunches are clearly labelled with your child's name. Lunches can also be ordered from the Gordon Shop and these will be delivered to the students.

Play/Lunch Arrangements

At 10am your child is permitted to eat a piece of fruit and may drink water at any time of day, however most children are hungry by Morning Recess (11:00am) and enjoy a *small* snack e.g. sultanas, cheese stick, piece of fruit and biscuits.

Make sure your child knows the difference between play lunch and lunch by wrapping them separately.

Other points to remember about lunch:

- Your child's lunch should be in a clearly named lunch box
- Drinks must be in a clearly named unbreakable container
- Do not give your child too much lunch
- Clear wrap/plastic film is often difficult for children to undo. Also snack packs can be difficult to open.
- Explain and practise at home before starting school, an order of eating, e.g. start with the sandwiches, then the sweeter items, followed by fruit. Practise opening packets and wrappers.

Dismissal/Going Home

All parents are requested to wait in the designated area. Teachers will escort each class to the door to meet the parents. Please leave doorways and walkways clear for easy dismissal and ensure your children exit via the front gate **and cross at the school crossing.**

The First Weeks at School

Dismissal

It is very important that your child is collected by a parent or by a person known by the Classroom Teacher/Principal to represent the parents. Please inform your child's teacher and your child, who will be collecting them. The school must be notified in writing or by telephone **in advance**, if a person other than the parent is collecting your child.

Early Dismissal/Late Arrival

If an occasion occurs when you want to take your child earlier than normal time, or if they arrive at school after normal commencement times, you are required to notify the Principal/Class Teacher – an Early Leavers and Late book must be filled out in the office prior to collecting your child.

Attendance Records

Gordon 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. Staff supervise the yard from 8:45am and will remain at the gate after school until 3:30pm.

Whole School Assemblies

Whole school assemblies are held on every second Thursday at 2.45pm in the Gordatorium.

Meeting Staff – Involvement in School Programs

During their first weeks, Preps will meet and participate in programs conducted by other staff, e.g. Performing Arts, Library, Art and Physical Education. They will also meet staff on playground supervision. Encourage your child to approach staff to introduce themselves, to tell them their problems, or just to have a chat. Each student in the school is every teacher's responsibility.

Swimming Program

Prep students will participate in the intensive swimming program held for students from years Prep to 6 in December.

Prep/Year 5/6 Buddies

Each Prep student is usually paired with a Year 5 or 6 student to be their buddy. They will assist them with some activities in the classroom and playground, and explain school procedures in the first weeks to help the Prep students settle into school life. Occasional Prep/Year 5 Buddy activities are held at various other times during the year.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings will be held in March by School Staff where the curriculum and teaching strategies are outlined. This is an opportunity to get to know the teacher and discuss your child.

Whole School Programs

The participation of school community members in school activities, such as Classroom Helpers, Information Sessions and Workshops enables everyone to become better informed about curriculum matters (what your child learns and how) and leads to student's learning being more effective when understandings are shared.

Access to Computers

All Prep students will have access to iPads and will learn basic operational skills, use the iPads for specific programs under the supervision of a teacher. The school has a bank of over 40 laptop computers. There is also an Interactive Whiteboard in the Prep classroom.

Wet Day Program

There is provision of under-cover shelter to enable all children to eat play lunch, visit toilets, etc during recess times during wet weather.

When it is too wet, or too hot, for students to play outside at RECESS or LUNCH RECESS, provision is made for them to be supervised in the classroom.

When it is too windy, students are not allowed to play near or under the trees.

Please ensure your child wears appropriate clothing, hats, and shoes on wet days and that they are **clearly named**.

A colouring or puzzle book from home for each child would be a helpful addition for wet days.

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 reading diary to be passed on, email the school or pop in face to face. Please make appointments between 8:30am - 8:45am or 3:45 - 4:30pm.

Essential Knowledge (1)

Newsletter

Our school newsletter is sent home each Thursday on Tiqbiz, email, the website and via hard copy to those who do not have access to internet. Please read it as often as possible as it contains important notices, dates, reports, articles and issues of interest.

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.gordonps.vic.edu.au

Tiqbiz

Is an app that works on iPhone, iPad, android smartphones and computers. Please see the office or your child's teacher for information on how to download this app to your device. This app is used to relay all school events and notices. In addition to this you are able to notify the school of your child's absence.

Student of the Week

Gordon 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 the next school assembly.

Lunch Orders

Each day the school offers a lunch order service for students. Orders are placed and paid for at the Gordon General Store. Lunch will be delivered to your child on the days you place an order.



Essential Knowledge (2)

Home Reading

The Prep class teachers will explain the Home Reading Program in detail at the Prep Parent Information Night. Readers (levelled 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 a special reader 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 at the office. Things may go missing for a few days, but if they are named clearly, they always return.

Language Other Than English

Every student is given the opportunity to learn a Language Other Than English (LOTE). The school learns Indonesian.

School Library / Marc Van

Each child is allowed to borrow up to two books for a period of two weeks. This will be arranged through your child's teacher and does not include take home readers mentioned before.

Essential Knowledge (3)

Whole School Production and Art Showcase

We hold a school production biannually with an art showcase in the alternative year. All parents are encouraged to attend, and bring friends/family, as the school has developed a reputation for excellence in performing arts. 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 each year. It is a fundraiser that requires lots of parents to turn up and supervise. Students walk around the school 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.

School Council

The School Council of Gordon Primary School consists of five parents, two teachers and one co-opted person, 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.

Junior School Council Events

The JSC 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.

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
- Help with excursions
- Repair of material and equipment
- Library
- Help preparing for and supervising events
- Swimming

Talk to the Prep teacher 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 and comfortable - as they get some pretty energetic treatment.

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 Gordon Primary bag from our uniform shop which is designed to be practical. Remember to write a name on 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 as part of the booklist. You are more than welcome to purchase your own booklist, but please see the school to ensure you purchase the correct items. Parents are asked to purchase an art smock and pencil case for their children before they start the school year.

School Uniform

Gordon 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 through the school. Please fill out the uniform order list attached and return it by December 1st. Samples are available for sizing at the front office. We will send out uniform orders throughout the year, giving parents numerous opportunities to purchase required items.



Fee Payments

Annual Parent Contribution

Parents are asked to make a financial contribution at the start of each year. This is used to fund teaching materials. 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.

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

Before and After School Care is available to all children weekdays between the hours of 6:30am – 8:30am and 3.30pm - 6.00pm each day. Please speak to the principal to discuss this further.

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. You may be asked to cover the costs of the excursion.



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.

Sun Smart

Gordon 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. These can be purchased from our uniform shop. 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/infectiousdiseases.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 been 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.





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