Exford
Primary School

# Welcome to Exford PS.

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Primary School

# Session 2 - Information for starting school (Preps).

## *Welcome to Exford Primary School.*
## *Thank you for choosing our school for your child or children.*

We look forward to a long and happy partnership with you. At Exford, our philosophy is that the children are at the centre of all our thinking and decision making. With a caring and protective circle of adults (staff and parents) around them, our children thrive, academically and emotionally.

We understand that you are entrusting us with your precious little people and we take the responsibility of sharing in their care very seriously.

We encourage you to speak with your child's classroom teacher or with our Leadership Team if you have any concerns or worries – so that together, we can look after your child at school.

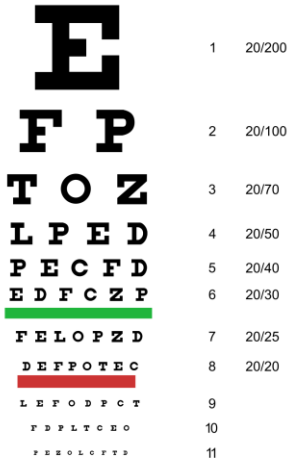
# *Helpful Hints for Starting School at Exford*

If you have any questions or queries, our updated Parent Handbook (this will be posted to Seesaw) has a wealth of information in it. Additional copies can be downloaded from the website (www.exfordps.vic.edu.au) or we are happy to email it to you on request.

Mrs Lisa Humplik, Mrs Kerrie Kelly, Mrs Megan Harper and Ms Bianka Whyte manage our School Office and together we will be working with you throughout the course of your child's education at Exford PS. We know there is a lot of information to take in during Transition, so we will post all documents to the 2025 Prep journal in Seesaw.

Alternatively you're welcome to give Mr Wilson (our Assistant Principal) or Ms Campo a call or email the school on exford.ps@education.vic.gov.au so that we can help.

# 2025 School Nurse Program




Welcome to Ashley Iliopoulos

School Nurse assigned to Exford PS

# The focus of our Prep Transition Program:

As we spoke about last week, our Transition Program visits are designed to provide enough time and experience for the children to feel happy and safe in their new school.
We help them to make friends with other children and to get to know our staff and the school grounds.

- Visit 2 – Wednesday 20 November – 9:15 – 10:45 am
- Visit 3 – Wednesday 4 December – 9:15 – 10:45 am
- Visit 4 – Tuesday 10 December – 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (with their 2025 Prep teachers, wherever possible)

# 2025 Starting School times for Preps

Our Prep children will begin school on Wednesday 5 February 2025 – from 10 am – 2:30 pm. Families are welcome to arrive from 9:30 am to allow for lovely first day family photos!

On Wednesday 5 February 2024, the children will attend school from 10 am – 2:30 pm – drop offs and pick-ups will occur in the Assembly area.

For Thursday 6 and Friday 7 February 2025, the children will attend school from 8:50 am – 2:30 pm – drop offs and pick-ups will occur in the Assembly area. From Monday 10 February, the children will attend full time (8:50 am – 3:30 pm).

(Please note that we will advise our families to changes in our traffic management as the construction comes to an end.)

# School and classroom routines

The first weeks of the school year are devoted to supporting our children to feel comfortable at school and to learn the classroom routines.

We focus on the positive social behaviours of being part of a class, such as:

- Being a good friend
- Using our manners
- Turn taking and joining in
- Listening skills (you will hear lots about the 5 Ls! – Looking, listening, lips closed, legs crossed and learning!)
- Following the classroom routines and programs
- Praising positive behaviours using the language of our school values and rewarding the behaviours with our Gotchas

## At Exford, these qualities are really important:

| Respect | Kindness | Personal Best |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | |

... and it's up to all of us to show them every day in every thing we say and every thing we do!

# School and classroom routines

The first weeks of the school year are devoted to supporting our children to feel comfortable at school and to learn the classroom routines.

We will use visual schedules to help the children learn the routines and you can help by supporting the children's independence.

To support the children's growing independence, we ask you not to:

- Carry your child into school – you are welcome to hold your child's hand and walk them into school
- Carry and unpack their school bag for them, but we'd love you to provide verbal encouragement and praise (e.g. 'Where will you put your Take Home Book so it can be changed today? That's right, that's where it goes!'

# Early Days of Schooling

- Focus on helping students:
  - Feel settled and safe at school
  - Happy and excited to be coming to school
  - Prep teachers are an amazing breed and we have the best ones!
- Prep is different in the first term
  - Routines to transition from Kindergarten to School
  - Setting students up for success!
  - Independence and confidence in themselves as big school kids
  - PLEASE **DON'T** DO IT FOR THEM!! The goal is for the children to grow in independence with our support
  - Please let your child carry and unpack their own bags in the mornings

# Getting ready for school.

**We ask you to practise these activities with your Prep children to help them get ready for school.**

<u>You can start practising now!</u>

- Practise opening lunch box and packaged food
- Undoing / doing up drink bottle lid independently
- Packing and unpacking school bag independently
- Putting on and taking off socks and shoes independently
- Putting on and taking off jackets and windcheaters independently
- Have a special writing book with some coloured pencils – practise writing their name
- Play counting games – count collections of items up to 10 (encouraging one to one correspondence).

# The First Day

Starting school is exciting, but it can be a worrying time too (for the child and for the family).

<u>You can help by:</u>

- Talking about what to expect
- Discuss dropping off in the morning and picking up at home time (on the oval)
- Discuss similarities and differences between school, kindergarten and home
- Speak positively about school
- Remind your child to talk to their teacher about any worries
- Leaving your child promptly when it is time to leave and reassuring them that you will be back to collect them at home time

# The First Day …continued

We aim for the first day to be as enjoyable as possible for everyone

<u>The first day of school will:</u>

- Start at 10 am – families are welcome to share in this very special day
- Begin with play-based activities
- Set up eating, learning and playing routines (what the bells mean and safe play areas
- Tour of the school with the children
- Going to the toilet at school…frequently!

# Morning Routine

**<u>Start as you mean to go on!</u>**

Morning separation anxiety is very easily supported by clear and consistent routines and expectations (of the children and their families!)

- Children will <u>always</u> settle, despite any tears as you leave
- Morning departures need to calm and prompt – 'I can't wait to hear about everything you've been doing today – I love you and I will see you this afternoon' – kiss and hug and leave … and this may be tougher on you than it is on your child, especially if they become upset.

# Tears

There may be tears for some children, even if they have been so excited about coming to school. Who's feeling a bit teary themselves thinking about this little one, who is clearly watching his mum or dad leave?

When it is time for you to leave, there may be tears.  We ask that you make goodbyes 'short and sweet' – the longer they go on, the harder it gets.

## Our Promise - we will always comfort your child until they settle

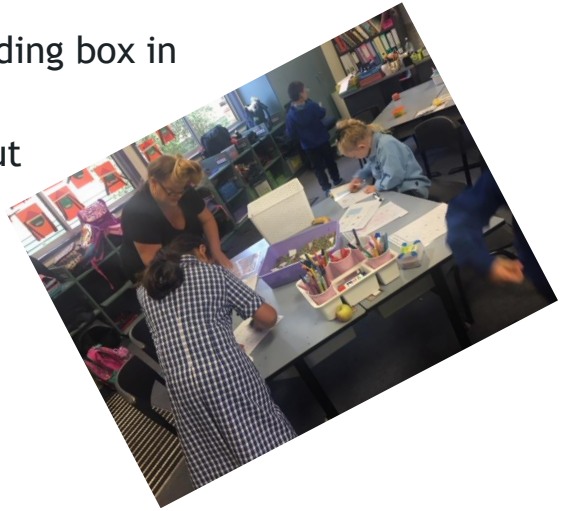
We'll then give you a call to reassure you and post a photo of your child feeling better to Seesaw so that you will feel comforted, too.

# Mornings

**So start as you mean to go on!**

8:50 am – Usually Mr Wilson or I will open the gates - cheerful music plays as a signal for children to go to their classrooms  or to meet in the Assembly area on Monday and Friday mornings.

- Children carry their own bags into the classroom
- Children unpack their own bags (water bottle and fruit on tables, reading box in the right place etc)
- Choose an activity to engage with (there will be play activities laid out for the children)
- Prompt goodbyes (the more you linger, the more reluctant little ones can be to let you go)



# Classroom days

The children will spend most of their learning time in their classroom.

- 8:50 am – meet in the Assembly area (Mondays and Fridays) or go straight to their classrooms (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) to get ready for a 9 am start
- 9 – 11 am – Learning block
- 11 – 11:30 am – morning Recess break (the children will eat their snacks in the classroom before going outside)
- 11:30 am – 1:30 pm – Learning block
- 1:30 – 2:30 pm – Lunch break (the children will eat their lunches in the classroom before going outside)
- 2:30 – 3:30 – afternoon learning block
- 3:30 pm – Dismissal (from the Assembly area)

# Classroom days

The children will spend most of their learning time in their classroom.

- Every day has a focus on Literacy and Numeracy as the major part of their learning
- We start each day with Literacy – your child needs to arrive on time every day so that they don't miss on the start of their core learning or interrupt other children's learning
- Much learning will take place through stories, songs, games and through the use of materials, such as counters, mini-whiteboards and play materials.
- The children will be asked to bring items to school to share and talk about
- The children will meet their Year 5-6 Buddies and will spend time sharing learning tasks and stories with them.

# Specialist classes

We have four Specialist classes

- The Arts
- French
- Physical Education
- Science

All other curriculum areas are covered through the classroom Project Based Learning units (e.g. History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship)

# 2025 Preps – Literacy and Numeracy starting school assessments :

Each year before the children start school, they spend an hour with their teacher and complete the two learning assessments. This provides the teachers with a clear understanding of your child's learning needs and starting points, to guide the classroom planning.

We will give you the link to our Xuno app to book in for your child's teacher to do the Literacy and Numeracy assessment tasks with your child on one of the four assessment days next year – the teachers will have an hour with each child from Thursday 30 and Friday 31 January, Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 February.

**Xuno link and code to be provided.**

# Prep Assessments

- **We will ask you to book a time via Xuno (please record it in your calendar so you don't miss the appointment)**
  - (Please note that if you miss your time, the teachers won't have time until after all the children have had their appointments to book you another time slot – which is usually after the children have started school)
- There will be a page in Seesaw which will have the booking information
- We will do learning assessment tasks in English and Mathematics
- These learning tasks form the basis of the teacher's development of a learning plan for each child
- There is no 'expected' level

# Classroom Helpers

Aim: To contribute to the growth, achievement and well-being of our students and to further develop strong home-school relationships

Parent Helpers require a ‘Working with children check’ (you can apply for this for free)

- Small group work to support:
  - Reading, Writing, Spelling and Mathematics
- Working with individuals
- Listen to students read
- Resource preparations
- Special events and activities

# Events through the year

**Special Events**

During the year, we will have some special activities and events for the children. We will take them on excursions and have visiting performances to the school. We have Sports Day activities and other special days, such as Book Week Celebrations, 50 and 100 Days of School Celebration, Harmony Day, Naidoc week etc.

When we take the children on an excursion, we will call for Parent Helpers to accompany us, the more eyes the better, especially for that first experience! (Please note that younger brothers and sisters are not able to attend with the Parent Helper.

# Prep Camp

**What is it?**

This experience will involve students coming to school in their pyjamas with a backpack of items they need to get dressed and clean their teeth. Students will then participate in a range of activities throughout the school day with their peers.

**Why are we doing it?**

To prepare students for the concept of Camp and build their independence in a supportive and collaborative environment.

# Special Events …

… we do love a dress-up day!

# Reminders - can you please …

- Organise your child's Summer Uniform
- Complete and return the 2025 'About My Prep Child form – please return it next session
- Provide us with any specialist reports and assessments
- Don't forget to provide us with a copy of your child's Kinder to School Transition report

# Questions?

At Exford, we firmly believe there's no such thing as a silly question – only one you (and probably others) would love to know more about … so feel free to ask at our Transition sessions.

# Starting school

Starting school for the first time is an exciting and potentially anxious time in your child's life (and therefore yours, too) and we work closely with our families to provide as much support as we can to ensure for a happy, settled and successful transition to Exford PS. Communication is the key and we are always available for a conversation about how we can best support your child, at transition time and at any time during their school life.

On behalf of the wonderful children, staff and community of Exford Primary School, we welcome your family to our school!

I hope you enjoy your time with us at Exford Primary School.