



Tarwin Lower Primary School



2027

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Educating the Whole Child

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Principal's Welcome

Tarwin Lower Primary School is situated in the beautiful coastal township of Tarwin Lower and its tranquil setting is surrounded by gumtrees and an abundance of local wildlife.

Our school prides itself on low class numbers which maximises student opportunities and enhances our ability to focus on each individual student at their point of need. Our students consistently achieve strong numeracy and literacy results and in many cases are exceeding state averages.

At Tarwin Lower Primary School, we believe in a holistic approach with a strong focus on wellbeing. This provides an environment where students develop the capacity to thrive, contribute and respond positively to challenges and opportunities of life. With the support of our dedicated Wellbeing Leader, School Chaplain, and supporting programs we provide an environment where students are able to succeed. We are confident to say that our ongoing commitment in instilling our school values of **Kindness**, **Cooperation**, **Resilience**, and **Respect** have enabled us to develop well rounded citizens that represent our school with pride. This focus on wellbeing has resulted in data stating that on average, we have lower cases of bullying, and a higher sense of confidence, feeling included, safe and connected to school than other similar schools in our area and places us well above the state average.

'Small School, Big Opportunities' typifies what we offer here at this small school and we take great pride in being able to provide the same opportunities and programs that many larger schools offer.

These include:

- ICT with one to one ratio of devices to students and connections to The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and eSmart Schools.
- Auslan has been a fantastic addition to the school with all P-6 students participating in weekly sessions to practise their skills
- Large grounds, great facilities and an excellent range of sporting equipment
- Arts program This includes visual arts and music
- Kitchen Garden which builds community relationships with Landcare, Bunnings, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program and Resource Smart Schools
- Mobile Area Resource Centre (MARC) visiting library provides opportunities for students to borrow library books

Don't just take our word for it, please contact the school to arrange a tour as we'd love to showcase what we have to offer at this wonderful school.

Principal

Jennifer Cox





Small School - BIG Opportunities

We operate three classrooms with small class sizes which benefits all students;

Personal Relationships

A small school does not inhibit personal interaction, rather it encourages it. We have strong support from parents and community members. All school staff, parents and students know each other well, leading to a strong sense of identification and belonging.

Students

Students are the centre of the school. The low pupil-teacher ratios allow for individualised instruction and more attention given to students. Morale and leadership among students tends to be higher in small schools as there are fewer students to be leaders. Hence, students are generally exposed to more opportunity to develop leadership skills in a greater diversity of situations. Often, literally everyone must participate in order to make a project a success. This promotes among students a sense of belonging, of pride in their community, their school and themselves. As a result, students are likely to have better attitudes toward school, each other and are less likely to create discipline problems.

Teachers

Our teachers know their students as individuals and are familiar with the family backgrounds from which they come. This enables teachers to make special provisions for individual needs and talents. Students in small schools also interact more frequently and informally with the teachers. Teachers have high expectations from their students because they know them well and care about what happens to them. Teachers have regular contact with parents and understand them as an important element in student success.



Curriculum and Instruction

Tarwin Lower Primary School is learner-centred and has a strong emphasis on individualised and small group instruction. Student self-identity, participation, and expression is enhanced.

Our multi-year teaching allows younger students exposure to lessons and expectations of older students. Timetabling is more flexible in our school, allowing classes to take advantage of valuable educational opportunities as they arise. Incursions are easily and regularly integrated to the timetable, reflecting our view that learning does not only occur within the four walls of the classroom.



Key Learning Areas

LITERACY

At Tarwin Lower Primary School, we believe that literacy - the ability to read and write - is essential for future success. Literacy is vital to ensuring your child has the best chance to succeed in their schooling and everyday life. That is why literacy is our priority and fostering a love of literacy is one of our aims. We ensure students receive a minimum of 10 hours of literacy a week.

Literacy is tied to everything we do. It is evolving into much more than the ability to read a newspaper and the latest bestseller. For the teachers and students, it is also about being intellectually, culturally, critically and electronically capable.

Regardless of this shifting definition, literacy is essential to developing a strong sense of well-being and citizenship. Children who have developed strong reading skills perform better in school and have a healthier self-image. They become lifelong learners and are sought-after employees.

Reading

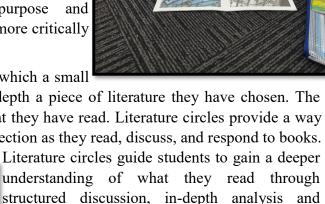
The students in year Prep are taught the letter sounds through the Phonics Plus program. This is a fun and child centred approach to teaching, with actions for each of the 42 letter sounds. The program teaches children the key skills for reading and writing. Students are taught how to blend the sounds together to read and write new words.

Each class conducts reading groups. The reading groups in the junior class focus on developing reading strategies, such as sounding out words and using the pictures. The middle class focuses on reading strategies and comprehension approaches to improve students understanding of the text. These strategies include inference, summarising, author's purpose identifying detail. Students are required to think more critically about the texts they read.

The senior class engage in Literature Circles, in which a small group of students gather together to discuss in-depth a piece of literature they have chosen. The

discussion is guided by students' response to what they have read. Literature circles provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss, and respond to books.





All students in the school are encouraged to read each night. Book Club vouchers are awarded to the student from each class who has read the most throughout each term.

Writing

The whole school follows the **Big Write** and **VCOP** (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation) Program for writing. It is based on the premise that 'if they can't say it, they can't write it'. The learning is scaffolded to allow students to become articulate thinkers and speakers, who will then become articulate writers.

Through games, activities, writing tasks, conversations and discussions, students learn not only where their abilities lie in a fun and engaging way, but also the steps they need to take in order to continue to improve. Students



participate in a whole school writing session fortnightly using a writing prompt given to them the night before for "Talk Homework". Students are encouraged to discuss the topic with their families and develop their vocabulary, ready to use in their writing. Students set personal writing goals which empowers them to take ownership of their own growth in writing.

Our junior school phonics program is taught using Phonics Plus, an engaging resource which teaches students the 42 sounds in English. Students begin to listen for the sounds in words and use their phonemic awareness to improve their spelling and reading. Junior students are also taught 'Tricky Words'; words that appear frequently in texts but may have irregular spelling patterns.

Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening refers to the various formal and informal ways oral language is used to convey and receive meaning. It involves the development and demonstration of knowledge

about the appropriate oral language for particular audiences and occasions, including body language and voice. It also involves the development of active-listening strategies and an understanding of the conventions of different spoken texts.

Speaking and Listening are important skills throughout the entire curriculum. Students are given opportunities to listen to a variety of people both within the classroom and beyond it. Students speak to their peers, the whole school and adults. Being a capable speaker and listener instils valuable confidence in students, leading to greater opportunities in their school life and beyond.



MATHEMATICS

We believe the learning of Mathematics is critical for day to day living. Mathematics introduces students to concepts, skills and thinking strategies that are essential in everyday life and supports learning across the curriculum. It helps students make sense of the numbers, patterns and shapes they see in the world around them offers ways of handling data in an increasingly digital world and makes a crucial contribution to their development as successful learners.



Problem solving is an important aspect to mathematics as it strengthens students' thinking skills. This can be done through deductive reasoning (to work through a problem logically and systematically) or inductive reasoning (a process in which students look for patterns and find generalisations). At other times problem solving requires students to think creatively, divergently, and imaginatively. Students are encouraged to try out different approaches to solve problems.

Students explore and explain their ideas using symbols, diagrams and spoken and written language. Studying mathematics stimulates curiosity, fosters creativity and equips children with the skills they need in life beyond school.

Mathematics is taught for a minimum of 5 hours per week. Lessons are hands on and relevant to real-life, and are differentiated to suit the ability of students. The lessons are explicit and students use a range of concrete materials to assist in their understanding. Students are also enrolled in Mathletics, an interactive website that students can also log into at home.

The mathematics curriculum is organised by the three strands of Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. Problem solving is also an important element to our Mathematics program.

ICT (Information Communication Technology)



Students regularly utilise the laptops, tablets and cameras. Students participate in a weekly ICT lesson to develop their ability to use a range of technologies and programs. In addition to the explicit session, ICT is integrated into the curriculum and used across all classroom subjects. The internet offers huge potential benefits for teaching and learning. It offers wonderful opportunities for students and teachers to contribute to the world community. Students can explore the world online, access rich information resources to support research and

investigations and communicate and collaborate with people all over the world.

The safe use of internet is taught to the students as it is vital knowledge in our modern world. The school is a part of the eSmart initiative; a guiding framework for schools and students to use ICT in a smart, safe and responsible way and to manage cyber safety and wellbeing.



THE ARTS

The Arts includes Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design. The Arts enable students to develop their creative and expressive capacities by learning about the different practices, disciplines and traditions that have shaped the expression of culture locally, nationally and globally. Students are both artist and audience in the Arts. They make and respond and learn to appreciate the specific ways this occurs in different disciplines.

The Arts contributes to the development of confident and creative individuals and enriches Australian society. Students express, represent and communicate ideas in contemporary, traditional and emerging arts forms. In Dance, Drama and Music students explore the performing arts whilst in Media Arts, Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design students explore the world of visual representation and expression.

The students are taught to play a variety of musical instruments and develop the confidence to be creative, innovative, thoughtful, skilful and informed musicians. Students also develop skills to listen, improvise, compose, interpret, perform, and respond with intent and purpose. Students learn and practise new songs throughout the year culminating in the end of year Christmas concert.

The visual arts program in the junior classes supports students to make artworks using different materials, techniques and processes to express their ideas, observations and imagination. The students describe the artworks they make and view, and begin to form personal preferences to discuss art.

The visual arts program in the senior classes expands on the above, as students are extended to describe the influence that a variety of artworks and practices places on their art making. They describe how artworks that they make and view can be displayed to express and enhance meaning. Students describe and identify how ideas are expressed in artworks from different contemporary, historical and cultural contexts.





AUSLAN

In 2024 we introduced Auslan (Australian Sign Language) as our language.

Auslan is a beautiful and expressive language used predominantly by the Australian Deaf community. This addition not only enriches students' linguistic abilities but also fosters inclusivity and understanding of diverse cultures within our school community.

Through learning Auslan, students gain a new perspective on communication and develop skills that extend beyond the classroom.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PE in the junior classes of the school focuses on the development of Fundamental Motor Skills that provide the foundation for competent and confident participation in a range of physical activities which include:

- **locomotor and non-locomotor skills** rolling, balancing, sliding, jogging, running, leaping, jumping, hopping, dodging, galloping, skipping, floating and moving the body through water to safety
- **object control skills** bouncing, throwing, catching, kicking, striking.

The students from year three to six focus on games and sports. These address the development of movement skills, concepts and strategies through a variety of games and sports. The games and sports build on learning through active play. Students train for the Athletics Day which occurs in Term 2.

Each year students from Years 1 - 6 receive swimming lessons from accredited swimming instructors at Leongatha SPLASH. Students in years 3-6 are also provided with the opportunity to participate in a school cluster swimming trial during term one.

Students participate in 60 minutes of Physical Education classes per week. Students are also involved in a Whole School Game each week, which aims to get students active, whilst building skills such as teamwork and cooperation across year levels.

GARDENING

Tarwin Lower Primary School is a member of the **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.**

With the support of our school gardener and a teacher, students participate in gardening lessons, to learning skills and building a sense of respect and appreciation for their local environment. Hands on activities help students develop a sense of connectedness and pride.

Students also engage in cooking lessons with the produce they have

Students also engage in cooking lessons with the produce they have grown. They learn valuable life skills about healthy eating, as well as cooperation, team-work and problem solving.





School Information

Uniforms

School uniform is compulsory for all students at Tarwin Lower Primary. Navy and light blue are the school colours. Uniform tops (polo shirts, jackets, windcheaters) can only be purchased from the school office. All other items can be purchased from the school or in department stores. Students must always wear closed toe shoes, as open toe shoes such as thongs or crocs are not permitted. As a Sun Smart school all students must wear a navy blue sun smart hat when outside during Terms 1 and 4.

Please clearly label all articles.

Bus

Eligible students can travel to and from school on the School Bus. The bus picks up from the corner of Inverloch-Venus Bay Road and Tarwin Lower - Meeniyan Road to the corner of Walkerville Road and McBurnie and Boags Road and then into Venus Bay where it picks up in the first and second estates.

Travel on the bus is a privilege and students are expected to travel in a safe and in a well-behaved manner as per the school council's bus safety program.

Lunches

Please provide your child with a nutritious fruit snack, play lunch, lunch and a water bottle. Clearly label lunch boxes, bags and drink bottles with your child's name.

Breakfast

We believe that every student needs the best start to his or her day. Breakfast is free to all students during the week. This includes cereal, fresh fruit, canned fruit and toast. Volunteers run breakfast, and we are always asking for more help. Remember, many hands make light work! All you need is your Working With Children Check (WWCC).



Illness/Absences

Regular attendance at school is of utmost importance, however if your child is ill please phone the school, utilise Compass or write a note informing us. If a student is to leave school early, or arrives after the start of school, the student's parent/guardian is required to sign them in/out at the office and accompany them out of the school grounds.

If your child is ill or injured at school, we will contact you immediately.

Medicine at school

It is essential that parents give complete and accurate information to the school. If your child has a medical history of asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, allergies etc. the school needs to be informed of medication prescribed, especially preventative measures. Asthma and Anaphylaxis require management plans signed by a doctor. **These need to be updated annually**.

All tablets and medicines are to be given to the office with a medication permission note completed and signed by the parent/guardian, as well a letter from the doctor, before any staff member can administer any type of medication, including when on camp.

Lost Property

Lost property is stored in a container in the main school building. Please check the container when you are at the school.

All articles worn or brought to school must be clearly named.

Parent Teacher Student Conferences

These are held during Term 1 and Term 3. Written reports are sent home in Term 2 and Term 4. If you have concerns, please do not wait for an interview, make an appointment with the teacher. We have a strong belief in the importance of parent teacher communication, as it provides an opportunity for the student to reach their full potential both in and outside the classroom. This relationship also helps the student to realise that they have a solid support system that is working together for their benefit.

Newsletters / Compass

Compass is Tarwin Lower Primary School's reporting and home communication system. Through Compass families will be able to receive emails from teachers, regular reporting on your child's progress across a range of curriculum areas, and notes/information about upcoming school events. Through Compass you are also able to log your child's absence if they have to miss school for any reason. All families will be given their own unique Compass login to access their child's information.

Compass also allows families to give permission and pay for camps and excursions. As well as order lunch orders.

The school newsletter will be available fortnightly on a Wednesday on Compass and also on the school website www.tarwinlowerps.vic.edu.au. Paper copies are also sent home.





Excursions and Camps



Our camps and excursions are carefully chosen for their educational value and to the benefit of the students. They are an important part of your child's learning experience. The excursions are prepared for and followed up in the classroom. Permission forms and request for payment are on Compass. Payment and permission are required for your child to attend. The students at Tarwin Lower Primary School attend many excursions, as we believe students learn not just within the four walls of the classroom. Experiences are also an important part of a student's learning and expanding their knowledge of the world around them.

Camp is offered to Years 3 - 6 students. We alternate years we attend camps to ensure students have a wide experience.

Somers Camp (run by the Education Department) is a ten-day camp offered every two years to year 5 and 6 students.

Payments

Payments can be made via one of the following methods:

- Cash/Cheque- Please place money or cheque (payable to Tarwin Lower Primary School) in an envelope labelled with the name of your child and what the money is for. This envelope should be handed into the office or to the class teacher.
- Electronic Funds Transfer Please state your name and reason for payment when making the deposit.

Commonwealth Bank – Tarwin Lower Primary School Council BSB - 063000

Account Number - 14191631

• Excursions, camps and other events can be paid with credit card via Compass





Parental Involvement

At Tarwin Lower Primary School, we have a tradition of parent participation in, and support for, a wide variety of school activities. We, as teachers, believe in sharing the responsibility for your child's continuing education and development, and invite you to become involved in as many aspects of school life as possible. We trust that through your interest and participation that you will come to feel very much a part of our school and its community.

Our school is a Child Safe organisation. Therefore, ALL adults who enter the school (volunteers, tradesman, workers) are subject to the following:

- ♦ Require a Working With Children Check. These are free for volunteers.
- ♦ All adults working/volunteering at the school must first have an induction.

Thank you for understanding our commitment to ensuring we have a safe place for our children to laugh, play and learn.

You can be involved in the following ways;

- School Council (8 meetings per year).
- Excursions when parent helpers are needed.
- Fundraising.
- Volunteering time to work in our garden.
- School Concert/Presentation night set up and pack up, supper etc.
- Kitchen Garden Program planting, weeding, mulching, weekend/holiday watering, cooking with produce etc.
- Helping in the library.
- Serving breakfast.
- Dress-up parades bring a camera!

Parents are also welcome to attend our school assembly, every Friday at 3.00pm. We celebrate achievements, birthdays and award certificates are handed out.

All our staff are approachable and happy to discuss any issues or concerns regarding your child at any stage. Please feel free to make an appointment or telephone the school if there is anything you would like to discuss. Being on the same page with your expectations and experiences ensures that we can work together to support your child in the best possible way.





Enrolment

Our school zone

Our school zone is available <u>on findmyschool.vic.gov.au</u> which hosts the most up-to-date information on school zones in Victoria.

Students residing within our school zone are guaranteed a place at our school. Your school zone is determined based on your permanent residential address.

Our school manages enrolments using the <u>Placement Policy</u> to ensure that students have access to their local school. Students may enrol at another school if there are available places.

For more information about our school zone, please contact our school. For answers to frequently asked questions about school zones, visit <u>School zones</u>.

Foundation (Prep) enrolments

All Victorian government primary schools follow the statewide Foundation (Prep) enrolment timeline. The timeline advises families when and how to enrol their child at a Victorian government primary school. For more information about the enrolment timeline, visit: Enrolling in Foundation (Prep).

Our school uses the Department of Education's secure digital enrolment system called <u>VicStudents</u>. This means you can submit your Foundation (Prep) application online and receive updates through the system. If you have any questions about the online enrolment process, please contact our school. Paper enrolment application forms are also available on request.

A copy of your child's birth certificate and immunisation certificate should also be attached when sending in your application. We also require medical information such as Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management Plans. Any Family Court Orders relating to custody or access need to be made available to the school. Copies are kept in the office and are confidential.

If you have any other queries, please contact our school office on 5663 5263.

School Tour

School tours are led by the Principal, visitors will tour the grounds and see our classes in action. The Principal can also discuss any enrolment questions that you might have.





Step into Prep Program



Starting school is a major milestone, it marks the beginning of your child's education, setting strong foundations for life-long learning. Research shows that a positive start to school leads to better learning and wellbeing outcomes for all children. It helps to support your child's continuity of learning and development and assists children to feel secure, confident and connected to new people and places.

At Tarwin Lower Primary School we value the importance of students making a positive start to school and run a comprehensive

transition program aimed at making your child's pathway from pre-school to school a successful and smooth experience.

Our Transition Program develops your child's confidence by providing opportunities to learn about being at school. As it is not a one-off event, you and your child will be able to grow and learn together. You will have many chances to discuss your child's needs and ask questions. It is our intention to build success and to make commencing school both comfortable and enticing. We have designed and embedded many opportunities which aim to support children, families, and early childhood professionals to become familiar with and excited about the transition into primary school.

During Term 4 all children enrolled in Prep will have the opportunity to participate in our **Step into Prep Orientation Program**. These sessions are where your child's Prep journey begins. Orientation is made up of five sessions, each running for nearly 2 hours, and one running for 2 hours. The sessions are specifically designed to be fun and engaging, providing your child with a taste of Prep, and building their understanding of what being at school will entail. During each session, your child will engage in a range of curriculum topics. The children will meet a range of teachers, including specialist teachers, making transitioning into these classes when school begins easier.

STEP INTO PREP SESSIONS FOR 2027 PREP STUDENTS

5 consecutive Tuesdays 9.10am - 11.00am

- Tuesday 10th November
- Tuesday 17th November
- Tuesday 24th November
 Parent information session from 9.10-10am
- Tuesday 1st December
- Tuesday 8th December (statewide transition day)
 9.00-11.30am





Organisation

TERM DATES 2027

Term 1: 28th January – 25th March

Term 2: 12th April – 25th June

Term 3: 12th July – 17th September

Term 4: 4th October – 17th December

SCHOOL HOURS

First bell and morning routine 8.55am

Classes Commence 9.00am – 11.00am

Recess 11.00am – 11.30am

Session two 11.30am - 1.30pm

Lunch (eaten together) 1.30 pm - 1.40 pm

Lunch Time 1.40 pm - 2.20 pm

Session three and dismissal 2.20 pm - 3.20 pm

Please ensure your child arrives to school on time. Lateness is upsetting for your child, their class and the teacher. If lateness is unavoidable, please sign your child in to school in the office on the Compass Kiosk. Lateness is recorded in the school roll.

PREP PARENTS PLEASE NOTE:

Preps will not be required to attend school on Wednesdays until after the Labour Day public holiday on March 9th.

Dates:

Wednesday 3rd February

Wednesday 10th February

Wednesday 17th February

Wednesday 24th February

Wednesday 3rd March

The first week of full attendance will be the week commencing Tuesday 10th March 2027 (the Tuesday after the Labour Day public holiday).

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2027

Labour Day 8th March
Good Friday 26th March
Easter Monday 29th March

ANZAC Day 25th April

King's Birthday 14th June

Melbourne Cup 2nd November



SCHOOL CONTACT

Telephone: 5663 5263

Email: tarwin.lower.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Website: www.tarwinlowerps.vic.edu.au

