Bittern PS strives to create a dynamic community partnership fostering lifelong learners enabled by the skills, values and attitudes necessary for success in a changing world.

PREP
PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET
2015 - 2016

Portsmouth Road
BITTERN 3918
Telephone  (03) 59839590
Facsimile  (03) 59838870
GENERAL INFORMATION

BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL NO. 3933
Portsmouth Road
BITTERN    3918

TELEPHONE:   (03) 5983 9590
FACSIMILE:   (03) 5983 8870
E-MAIL:      bittern.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Principal:   Lyn Fyfe
Business Manager:  Sue Beech
WELCOME TO BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Message from the Principal

Bittern Primary School is committed to developing positive relationships with parents, students, teachers and the wider community. We are dedicated to providing our students with educational programs that prepare them for the ever changing future.

Today’s young people will need to become unequivocally international in their outlook, in their concerns, in their lifestyle, in their politics, in their work and employment patterns. The challenge for all of us will be preparing the current generation of students for a world that will be so vastly different to the one we experienced as children. It is both an exciting and frightening prospect all rolled into one!

The challenge for The Bittern Primary School community will be to ensure that our school and its programs remain at the ‘cutting edge’ of education to make sure our children really have a 21st Century advantage.

Students are encouraged to achieve to the best of their abilities and to reach their full potential through a varied curriculum resulting in assessment against the National Standards, Ausvels. Learning areas include:

- Health and Physical Education
- Interpersonal Development
- Personal Learning
- The Arts
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Information and Communications Technology
- Thinking Processes

The staff work as a co-operative team whilst fulfilling their educational responsibilities within the guidelines of the School’s Policy.

Developing positive community relationships is significant to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. Parents, grandparents and other community members are actively encouraged to become involved and participate in a variety of school programs. The school is characterised by a welcoming and friendly atmosphere with high expectations of student learning.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information to Prep parents to assist with a smooth transition for parents, students and teachers into our school. Bittern Primary School is concerned with the total development of children and works to create an atmosphere in which each child’s talent will be nurtured and so that all children will reach their full potential and feel secure in the society in which they live.

Lyn Fyfe
Principal
Supporting your child’s move to school:

Starting school is a major milestone for you and your child and the start of a new phase of life for you both. Innovative programs and activities that are offered in the first years of school aim to make your child’s experience exciting, engaging and successful. You can be confident that high educational standards are maintained at all times at Bittern Primary School, we are dedicated to providing every child the opportunity to thrive, learn, grow and shine.

*Children are born ready and eager to learn. From the time they are born, children want to make sense of the world around them and to find out all about it. They learn and develop more in their first eight years of life than at any other time of their life.*

Positive relationships and experiences in the first eight years are the building blocks that support health, learning, development and wellbeing at school and beyond.

As a parent, you are your child’s first teacher. Throughout the early years of life your child learnt a great deal from you, including the development of their communication and learning skills, and how to understand the world around them. By the time they start school; all children have developed a range of skills that form the basis of positive school experiences.

You have probably been involved in a range of activities in your child’s early years to support their development, such as:

- attending Maternal and Child Health centres so that the nurse could monitor your child’s health, growth and development, and help you to support your child
- joining playgroups to provide your child with opportunities to meet and play with other children, and to learn how to form relationships with others and make friends
- enrolling your child in early childhood education, giving your child vital support for their learning and development.

Most children in Victoria will have attended a kindergarten program in the year before they start primary school. This might have been in a sessional kindergarten or in an integrated service or child care centre; or your child could have attended a family day care program or a play group. Participating in an early childhood service supports and encourages your child’s learning and development by:

- providing an environment to explore, discover and learn about their world
- encouraging their natural curiosity and supporting their learning
- understanding their own emotions and those of others
- helping them to get along with other people
- helping them to establish friendships with children of their own age and relationships with other adults
- learning to share and care for materials and equipment that belong to a group and to themselves.
- encouraging them to take responsibility for their own wellbeing – such as using the toilet on their own and dressing
We know that children’s transition to school is usually more successful when there are strong community relationships and shared information between early childhood services, such as kindergartens and local schools. To help the sharing of information between the key services involved in a child’s life at this time, you and your child’s new school will receive a Transition Learning and Development Statement.

The Statement will be developed by your child’s kindergarten teacher, and it will summarise your child’s learning and development before they start school, as well as his or her strengths and interests.

At Bittern Primary school we have a series of transition mornings where students will participate in transition-to-school activities in term 4 of the year before school, dates to be notified. These programs help you and your child get a better understanding of what school will be like. Most importantly, they allow families to start getting to know school staff, other families and children.

The year before school:

- ask your child what they think about school
- encourage your child to ask questions about going to school
- encourage your child to do things on their own, such as dressing, washing their hands, going to the toilet, unwrapping their food, and opening their drink bottle
- talk to friends and other families about what school is like
- attend transition-to-school programs at your child’s new school
- talk to the school about how you can be involved in your child’s life at school
- talk to your child’s early childhood educator about things you can do at home to help your child’s learning and development
- help your child stay healthy – have regular health and dental checks and keep immunisations up to date.

During the summer holidays:

- show your child where the school is and talk about how you will get there
- arrange playtimes with other families whose children will be going to the same school as your child – it helps if your child knows another child at their school
- practise the things your child will need to do to get ready for school (such as, putting things in their bag and remembering to take a hat)
- confirm your before- or after-school care arrangements.
- be positive about starting school and enjoy your child’s excitement

The first day at school:

- lay out your child’s clothes, shoes and socks the night before
- help your child to pack his/her school bag with a snack, drink, lunch and a hat.
- place a change of clothes with a spare pair of underpants in a plastic bag. Let your child know these clothes are in the bag in case of any accident at school
- put sunscreen on your child in the morning if it is needed
- show your child where you will meet him/her at the end of the school day
- talk to your child about what happened at school at the end of the day.
Laying the foundations:

The first challenge at school is for children to socialise and to become engaged behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively. Engagement is a state that remains critical to success throughout schooling. Engagement moves from a minimal level of engagement where children conform, motivated by extrinsic demands, to a higher level of behavioural engagement where their motivation is more intrinsic. The latter includes resilient behaviour that is the capacity to overcome stress and adversity. Resilient children achieve more highly at school and better manage the ups and downs in life. Schools play a significant role in helping children to develop resilience.

Being socially engaged is also critical to the development of cognitive skills. Children build their ability to reason from a context or environment. The environment provides the practices, assumptions and values upon which reasoning is constructed. It follows that if children fail to socialise in a way where they understand the norms and values of a classroom, they will have difficulty understanding the reasoning that flows from those norms and values, and they will be subsequently hindered in their capacity to transfer that skill to more formal applications.

While behaviour is significantly determined by habits, it is also sometimes reactive, being influenced by emotional states and cognitive processes. Emotional engagement may be defined in terms of general wellbeing at school; for example, happiness, safety, calmness and empowerment, as opposed to sadness, worry, helplessness and stress. A key emotional skill that should be developed early and maintained throughout schooling is impulse control. Teachers can help children to develop impulse control by teaching them to recognise the feelings in themselves and others, by implementing behaviour management approaches that encourage children to regulate emotions, and by helping children to reflect on their behaviours.

Another key theme is that knowledge is constructed. We build our brains through experience, both real and perceived. Learning is cumulative, and consequently, the ability to transfer learning is a key skill. Children begin schooling with knowledge and skills. Much of this will be true and accurate, but some of it will not, even though it is believed to be true. One of the fundamental skills successful learners must develop is to reflect on learning, to link new knowledge to existing knowledge, to establish what is true and accurate, important and useful, and to challenge what is untrue and inaccurate. Giving children opportunities to be reflective improves the quality of learning, since learning with understanding is more likely to promote transfer than memory.
To the children:

You are now an important member of our school. We welcome you and hope that you are very happy, make many friends and have a challenging yet enjoyable and fulfilling time.

To the parents:

You have an important place in the Bittern Primary School community. In order to achieve our aims a close working relationship is essential. This relationship can come about through meaningful communications and involvement. If at any stage you have concerns about any aspect of your child’s school life please contact the school and speak to the class teacher or the Principal so that any issues can be resolved quickly. If you have concerns, we are ready to listen.

Talking to your child about school:

“What happened at school?” “Nothing!” Does this sound familiar? You know that your child has had a full and engaging day at school; involved in many activities, experiences and social interactions. Often children feel that their school experiences are not important or interesting. Parents, on the other hand, do genuinely want to know how their school day was. This can result in a sort of cat-and-mouse game; the parent probes, the child evades, the parent asks again, the child evades again, and so on. Usually, it is the parent who gives up first.

Most children can be exhausted after a long day at school and discussing their day is the last thing on their mind. When they get home, they generally need a healthy snack and some ‘tune out’ time before they are ready to share some of their day with you. Listed below are some of the strategies that families can use when asking the “What happened at school?” question.

- Create a family ritual in which everyone shares something about their day at dinner. Start by talking about your day. Make sure that everyone has a chance to talk, but also has the option of ‘passing’ if they don’t feel like contributing.

- Rather than posing a general question, ask about a specific event or class. For example, ‘How was the big assembly?’ or ‘What did your class do in sports today?’ Try to phrase your questions to invite answers that are longer than ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘OK’. Questions that begin with ‘What did you do in ...?’ are often better for this purpose than ones that start ‘How was ...?’ or ‘Did you ...?’

- When your child does respond, give them your full attention. Let them know that you’re listening by asking clarifying questions, such as ‘Do you mean that....?’ or ‘Let me make sure I understand...’

- Keep open channels of communication with your child’s teacher. Teachers who know that you are interested and friendly are usually glad to keep you abreast of what’s going on. You can also grease the wheels of communication by offering to help out in the classroom or on excursions from time to time.

- Respect your child’s privacy, but let them know that you are open whenever they feel like sharing their thoughts. When children don’t feel they are being continually ‘forced’ to talk about their whole day, they will often willingly recall special parts of their day.
DAILY ROUTINES: 
SCHOOL HOURS

School commences at 9.00am  
Morning recess is between 11.00am and 11.30am 
Lunch is eaten in the classrooms between 1.30pm and 1.40pm 
Lunch recess is held between 1.40pm and 2.15pm 
Dismissal is at 3.15pm

On wet days the children do not play outside but have supervised indoor activities in their classrooms. On days of extreme heat the same principle applies.

It is important for children to arrive at school on time in the mornings. It is upsetting to the child and disruptive to the class if your child is late. Children who arrive late must be signed in at the office by their parent and collect a late pass which is given to their teacher.

Children are not supervised before 8:45am or after 3.45pm and for safety reasons, should only be at school between these times.

Prior to school vacations, school will dismiss at 2.30pm, and at 1.30pm on the last school day of the year.

If you wish your child to leave school early (for a dental appointment etc.) it will be necessary, if possible, for you to inform the class teacher (in advance), go to the office to sign your child out and collect an early dismissal authorisation and then collect the child from the classroom. In the interests of safety, we will not send a child home at any time other than dismissal time.

Please note that Foundation students (preps) begin school on Monday, 1st February, 2016. They attend half days for this week (from 9am till 12:30pm) and then full days (9am till 3:15pm) from Monday 8th February, excepting Wednesdays. (Please note that Foundation students are not required at school each Wednesday during the month of February. On these days the Foundation teacher will make an appointment with each student and parents to book an interview time where teachers have the opportunity to spend some quality one on one time with the students. During this time teachers get to know the students better and can assess where the child is at on the learning continuum.)

Foundation students commence full time school as from Monday 29th February, 2016.

TERM DATES 2016

Term 1: 27th January (teachers resume) to 24th March *
Term 2: 11th April to 24th June
Term 3: 11th July to 16th September
Term 4: 3rd October to 20th December

* Each year government schools are provided with four student-free days for professional development, school planning and administration, curriculum development, and student assessment and reporting purposes. The first day of Term 1 is a student-free day in all government schools to allow for appropriate planning to take place for the arrival of students. The remaining three student-free days are determined by each individual school, parents will be notified of these dates through our many communication channels.

The school is closed on all Public Holidays
SOCIAL SKILLS

At the beginning of the school year we conduct a whole school induction program for all students. The three overriding values are that:

1Everyone has the right to feel safe.
2Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.
3Everyone has the right to learn without being disrupted.

During this time teachers and students participate in a variety of lessons and activities aimed at preparing students for school and giving them the skills to be an active contributor to our school community.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Reading Recovery
This year we have been excited about offering the reading recovery program for students in grade 1 who need an extra ‘kick start’ with their Literacy development. Students receive 20 weeks of one-on-one instruction for 30 minutes a day with a specialist teacher trained specifically in the program. Student, teachers and parents of students who have participated in the program are amazed at the progress these students have made with strategies that they are using to improve their reading and writing capacity.

Kitchen Garden
Bittern Primary School was originally selected for the “Go for your Life” Kitchen Garden project with Stephanie Alexander. Stephanie Alexander’s philosophy is that involving children in growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing good food is the most effective way of introducing children to broader food choices now and for the rest of their lives.

All classes have the opportunity twice a term to cook a meal in the kitchen. The kitchen garden program has been established for several years now and is popular with both parents and students. It is a great way for parents to become involved in school activities and the involvement of parents is vital to support this program. The kitchen/garden provides students with the chance to set the table and sit and have a meal and a conversation with the volunteers, something that some students don’t have the opportunity to do at home. The cost of the session is $2.00. The program has been modified to enable all students to participate. The kitchen is organised by a parent volunteer and the garden is tended by members of the Junior School Council.

The outcomes in terms of sustainability, awareness, life skills and community connectedness are many and varied for all of the students involved in the program.

Languages
In 2016 Foundation students will be introduced to a second language. At Bittern Primary School we offer Bahasa Indonesia to the students in their second semester of Foundation.
Better Buddies

Through the Better Buddies program, children in their first year and last year of primary school buddy up and learn the values: caring for others, friendliness, respect, valuing difference, including others and responsibility. All children in the school learn these values through formal and informal activities. Better Buddies enables younger children to feel safe and cared for while older children feel valued and respected. Students in Foundation and Year 6 meet formally for a buddy session for 1 hour per fortnight. Next year’s grade 6 students will be visiting with the kindergarten students to participate in activities as a ‘get to know you’ program. The visiting program will commence in November 2015.

Walk to School

To promote a healthy lifestyle the Bittern community have made a commitment to walking to school on the last Friday of the month. Teachers, parents and students meet at the Bittern station at 8.30 am and walk as a collective to school. We are gradually building more passengers on the walking school bus. On arrival at school the students are provided with fruit and yoghurt and the coffee van is available for parents, a great way to catch up with other parents.

PARENT ASSISTANCE WELCOME

The Foundation Classroom (Preps)

The Foundation classroom is an exciting and stimulating place where your child will be challenged and supported. Teachers aim to create a safe and happy environment in which children are valued, praised and encouraged to have a go. Classrooms are designed to welcome your child, spark their imagination and arouse their thinking. They feature colourful displays of children’s learning materials and artwork, books, computers, construction materials and art supplies.

How to help your child in the classroom:

- Share with your child good stories and memories of your own school days
- Be positive about school, teachers and learning
- Talk with your child about the kinds of activities they will take part in during the school day
- Talk about friendships and how to be a good friend
- Take your child to your local library and choose books together
- Talk about letters, words and numbers your child sees when shopping, on television, in books and on computer screens
- Encourage your child’s curiosity by asking questions and encouraging questions in return
- Introduce yourself to the families of other children.

Throughout your child’s days at Bittern Primary School there will be numerous ways and opportunities for you to assist, not only the school as a whole, as well as in your own child’s classroom activities.

Within your child’s classroom, excursions and various other activities may see teachers requesting parental assistance. If you are able to help, the school would be glad of your involvement in some of all of these areas.

If you have an interest in gardening you are more than welcome to help us to keep our grounds tidy. Other opportunities include some of our lunchtime club activities, for example Lego club and the cooking club.
BOOKLIST

The government provides basic funding direct to the school and the community is asked to complement this funding, in support of the provision of a higher quality program. A booklist is distributed to all parents towards the end of the year. The associated costs include each student's personal books and requisites, supplies for general classroom use, duplicating and printing costs, paper, art and craft supplies, class texts, reading materials, and a portion of the costs associated with our Computer Budget. This charge also covers Mathletics and a visit from the Life Education van. In the year 2015 the total was $360 (which includes $100 voluntary contribution). This is the cost for the WHOLE year however this does not include excursion, camps or sporting costs.

STAFFING

Our school is allocated a budget according to the number of students enrolled. Programs, which support the classroom, include Science, Art, Physical Education, Indonesian and Information Technology.

Our policy is to provide the best possible programs and grade structure for the children.

PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS/REPORTS

Information sessions and interviews are planned each year, so that parents are well informed of their child's progress.

Interviews for Foundation children are conducted during the month of February. An interview time will be arranged for your child at the commencement of the school year.

Progress reports interviews are held mid year and written reports are issued mid year and at the end of the year.

Interview times are made through a free on line process where parents can choose a time that is appropriate to their needs.

The teaching staff continually evaluates the children's progress and if problems do become apparent, parents are made aware of the situation. This applies not only to academic subjects, but also to all aspects of the social and physical wellbeing of the children.

ABSENCES

Please encourage regular attendance, but remember that a sick child should be kept at home.

If your child is absent from school, please send written notification to school when your child returns.

Absences can also be reported through the Tiqbiz app on your phone.
SCHOOL UNIFORM

The school uniform for Bittern Primary School is compulsory. The supply of the uniform has been outsourced to a uniform company: Belezta Pty Ltd., at the Somerville Store in the shopping centre. If you have any questions please contact either the uniform shop (phone: 5977 5277) or the school office.

Winter Uniform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tunic</th>
<th>Summer Uniform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navy blue pants (school approved)</td>
<td>Summer dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale blue polo shirt with logo</td>
<td>Navy blue shorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy blue polo shirt with logo</td>
<td>Pale blue polo shirt with logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunic windcheater with logo</td>
<td>Navy blue polo shirt with logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew neck windcheater with logo</td>
<td>Navy blue slouch hat (logo optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pale blue skivvy (no logo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollen beanie with logo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomber jacket</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School approved navy blue pants include navy blue track pants, cords, drill pants and leggings. Jeans, brand names and fashion wear are excluded.

Bittern Star Shirts

In 2015 Bittern Primary School introduced new t-shirts for all children starting in their first year of Primary school. We will continue this in 2016 and order forms will be provided in your child’s starter pack (available on orientation day in December) for children starting in Foundation year at Bittern in 2016. Please note this item is not available to children in other year levels and is only available through the school. (Not available at Beleza Uniform Shop)

Footwear

No bright colours.
When visible, socks should be navy blue, pale blue or white.
For safety reasons shoes must not have platform soles or open toes.
For PE and PMP suitable sports footwear must be worn.

Individualised Sports Top

These shirts are ideal for PE classes, sports days and interschool events. These are available for order from the school directly. Information will be available from the school office.

General

- Please note hats must shade the face, ears and back of neck. Hats should be plain blue or have the Bittern logo. (Caps are not part of the school uniform.)
- Grade 6 pupils will have the option of a specially printed windcheater and polo shirt.
- Iron on logos are available from the school office for $2.00
- Hats are available from the school office for $15.00
LOST PROPERTY

Lost property is stored in the Sick Room near to the office. Parents and children are advised to check this room if items of clothing have been lost. All garments should be clearly named before they are worn to school.

SCHOOL ACCIDENTS

If a child is ill or is injured at school the child will be taken to the First Aid Room and attended to by a staff member trained in First Aid. If it is necessary, parents will be contacted as soon as possible. In cases of extreme emergency, an ambulance will be called and the parents informed.

It is not the policy of the school to leave sick or injured children at school, as we do not have a nurse to care for them.

Please note that students are not covered by the DEECD for accident insurance.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

We have an Emergency Information sheet for each child. This has an emergency contact telephone number (neighbour, relative, or friend) as well as the home and work number of parents. Relevant addresses, including that of your family doctor are also included.

It is absolutely crucial to the welfare of your child that the school is notified immediately of any change to these addresses or telephone numbers.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Visitors to the school are asked to sign in at the office and collect a slip. This enables us to be aware of who is at the school at certain times. We appreciate your assistance in this matter. No child is to leave the school grounds during school hours for any reason UNLESS signed out by a parent (or authorised person). Always remember to sign children out at recess and lunchtime.

BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL VISITORS PASS

DATE: 23/02/2016
TIME: 10.00
NAME___________________
SIGNATURE____________________
CHILDREN’S ILLNESSES

The school supports the notion that sick children should not be at school.

The best place for a sick child is at home in bed. Infection spreads quickly at school. Furthermore, in compliance with the regulations, pupils with certain infectious diseases are to be excluded from school for set periods of time. In a few cases, the contacts are also to be excluded. You are advised to telephone the school for more details if your child is ill with any of the diseases listed:

INFECTIONIOUS DISEASES: EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOLS

Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Viral Hepatitis, Impetigo (School Sores), Leprosy, Measles, Meningococcal Infection, Mumps, Pediculosis, Whooping Cough, Poliomyelitis, Ringworm, Rubella, Scabies, Streptococcal Infections (including Scarlet Fever), Tuberculosis, Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fever.

The principal is required to exclude children according to the guidelines under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1990. The exclusion table can be found at:


Note that the Regulations require the parent or guardian to inform the principal as soon as practicable if the child is infected with any of the diseases listed in the table or has been in contact with an infected person. It should be noted that in cases of diphtheria, typhoid and paratyphoid fever exclusion and determination of recovery would be matters for the municipal Medical Officer of Health.

"Contact" means child of school age or preschool age living in the same house as the patient, "patient" includes carrier and "school" includes any preschool centre, kindergarten, primary school or secondary school. A patient or contact shall be prevented from attending school unless conditions hereunder prescribed are complied with.

ASTHMATICS

An Asthma Management Plan needs to be completed by parents of asthmatic children. These forms are available from the office. Parents will be reminded at the start of every year.

MEDICINE

Children must bring written authorisation by the parent for any medication to be given to the student at school. Medication must be brought to the office where it will be placed in a secure storage area. No medicine will be given without the written permission of the parent. Permission forms are available at the office.
SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Councils are corporate bodies constituted at Victorian Government schools under legislation. They are representative in nature, with a membership reflecting the educational partnership of student, teacher and home. School Council elections are held each year. Councils have an important obligation to consult with and report to the school community. Government schools in Victoria have the responsibility to develop their own educational programs within Government policies and guidelines. The School Council is the focal point for shared decision making at the school. School Council responsibilities concern: areas such as curriculum, finance, facilities, school community relations and the selection and employment of certain staff.

Bittern Primary School Council meets regularly to discuss various issues concerning the school community. Parents are welcome to attend these meetings as observers. Meetings are held in the staff room at 6pm. Dates for meetings will be set at the start of the school year and advertised via the school website, newsletter and notice board.

COMMUNICATION

Schools are amazingly busy places so communication between school and home is vital. We have many forms of communication including a fortnightly newsletter which can be accessed on line thorough the website, www.bitternps.vic.edu.au e-mail or hardcopy if required and full school assemblies in the same week as the newsletter. This information lets everyone know about school activities and our future plans.

A communication board is at the front of the school with current messages and a free app can be downloaded to your phone where messages can be pushed through similar to an SMS message.

We also make use of class blogs, classroom noticeboards, the school noticeboard on Portsmouth Road entrance and class newsletters.

CELEBRATIONS

Bittern Primary School regularly celebrates the successes of our students. This takes the form of Principal’s Awards, Star achiever awards, Art & Sport awards, assembly items and newsletter articles.

HOMEWORK

Homework in its many forms is encouraged; though it is not always set as a formal exercise. The completion of projects, reading and general schoolwork is left to the individual teacher to arrange. Early in the year each classroom teacher will give parents an opportunity to attend an information afternoon or evening. Matters such as homework and teacher expectations are discussed at this time.
WHOLE SCHOOL EVENTS

As a small school we are fortunate to be able to participate in several whole school events. This year we ventured to ScienceWorks as a whole school and had a great day with students, teachers and parents. Other events include ‘Footy Day’, ‘The Long Lunch Day’, ‘Spring Festival’, ‘Bring a Bloke night’, ‘Mother’s Day’ and ‘The Great Bittern Bake Off’.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL

The school offers both a before and after school care program from 7.00am – 9.00am and 3.15pm – 6.00pm which is run through the OSHCLUB organisation. The program is run by a fully qualified assistant and provides students with a fantastic range of fun and educational activities. Students are also provided with healthy eating options.

HEAD LICE

Head lice are friendly little creatures, which 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.

Regular checks should be made of your child’s hair, particularly if he/she seems to have an itchy scalp.

If lice are found, the child’s hair should be treated. The children should be excluded from school until treatment has been carried out.

Please contact the school, should you become aware of a head lice problem, as we may need to have all children checked to prevent a major outbreak.

SUN SMART

The school community is very conscious of children being exposed to the sun and is taking steps to promote “Sun Smart” behaviour.

Children are encouraged to wear school hats when outside and this is compulsory in Terms 1 and 4. Teachers also wear hats while on Yard Duty Supervision in Terms 1 & 4.

Children without a hat in Term 1 & 4 have a restricted play area in the shade.
SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

The School Dental Service (S.D.S.) is a service for primary school children and is staffed by Dentists, Dental Therapists and Dental Nurses.

Great importance is attached to the prevention of dental disease, through preventive procedures such as fissure sealants, topical fluoride applications and through education and motivation of children, teachers, parents and the community.

Additional dental care provided by S.D.S. includes; examinations, radiographs if necessary, scaling and cleaning, fillings and extractions both on permanent and deciduous teeth where necessary.

For further information contact: School Dental Service, Department of Human Services, Suite 4 50 Thomas Street, Dandenong (P.O. Box 7003) Ph. 1300360054

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE

This annual visit serves two purposes:

a. To: conduct medical examinations on all Prep children (parental approval and pupil medical history is obtained first.)

b. To: conduct follow up examinations on older pupils who have a recorded medical history.

This visit is held at the school in a quiet area. Whenever necessary, the nurse will contact parents to arrange an interview. This service is free.

A complete report on those pupils with medical problems is left at school and class teachers are made aware of any pupil disabilities. This can be helpful to the teacher eg. by placing a hearing or sight impaired child near to the front of the room. The pupil can maximise their learning ability.

STRANGER DANGER

We are constantly reminded of the problem of strangers approaching children, particularly on their way to or from school. The school makes the children aware of this danger and parents should reinforce this with their children.

YARD SUPERVISION

As pupil safety is of the utmost importance, staff (on a rostered basis) supervise the school grounds before school from 8.45am to 9.00am, at recess, lunch periods and from 3.15pm to 3.45pm each day.

Parents should telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child. This will allow us to make suitable arrangements for supervision and avoid unnecessary worry on the part of the child.
BICYCLES AND SCOOTERS

Children are permitted to ride bicycles and scooters to school. It is the responsibility of parents to see that all bicycles and scooters ridden to school are roadworthy. Bicycles and scooters are stored in a special enclosure during the school day but no responsibility is taken for bicycles and scooters brought to school. Bicycles and scooters are not to be ridden in the school grounds between the hours of 8:45 am and 3:45pm (except for school activities such as Bike Ed). Children arriving and leaving the school via Portsmouth Road must walk their bikes to the Myers Road corner. They must not ride against the oncoming traffic or on the footpath.

CHILDREN MUST WEAR HELMETS

The Road Traffic Authority recommends that children under eight years old do not ride unsupervised to school.

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions and camps form a very important part of a child’s total educational program. They are arranged to enable the children to have first hand contact with a variety of experiences. As with the classroom programs, the camps and excursions are part of a learning sequence, each experience building upon a previous one.

Parent permission is obtained prior to excursions being undertaken out of the immediate area. Parents are responsible for the payment of costs involved eg. transport, admission etc. Children will not be taken on excursions without a consent note. All payments must be made by the due date. Unfortunately no late payments will be accepted.

FIRE DRILL

A fire drill and emergency evacuation is conducted regularly. In cases of emergency, children assemble on the school oval.
- Evacuation procedures are visible in every room

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The school has two supervised crossings and children who walk to and from school should use these crossings (on Frankston/Flinders Road and Myers Road).

Limited parking is available in Portsmouth Road. Parents are asked to refrain from double parking. There are very sound legal and safety reasons for making this request. Similarly, children should not be beckoned across the road in order to save a few seconds.

For the safety of students: Parents are not permitted to park in the school staff car park.
HOUSE SYSTEM

Children in the middle and upper grades are allocated to one of four houses:

- Jackson - Red
- Bradman - Green
- Thorpe - Blue
- Freeman - Gold

School Leaders are elected from the senior grades each year. They carry out various leadership tasks on behalf of their house and for other specific reasons.
School Captains are elected by the Grade 6 children.
The House System operates across the school.

TRANSFERS

If your child or children are leaving the school, a transfer note must be obtained from the school office and taken to the new school.

It helps the office staff, and the class teacher if reasonable notice can be given. This allows teachers to write reports for the new teacher, and collect the child’s belongings.

FRIDAY ASSEMBLY

Every 2nd Friday (Newsletter week) we have a whole school assembly: held in the multi-purpose room, this commences at 3.00pm. All staff and children are expected to be in attendance.
Every other week there are smaller assemblies, one in the senior and one in the junior school. The assemblies all conclude at 3.30pm.
Parents are always welcome.

SOCIAL SERVICE

The school encourages support for a number of selected appeals. Children are given the opportunity to donate small sums of money as part of their training in good citizenship.

BANKING

Pupil banking day is Thursday. Parents will be invited to open an account for their child with the Bendigo Bank.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is conducted in Foundation classes and follows the approved syllabus as laid down by the Council for Christian Education in Schools. A volunteer teacher takes the 30 minute lesson each week. The teacher is approved by the above-mentioned Council. Parents should indicate their preference with regard to R.E. at the time of enrolment.
SCHOOL PHOTOS

School photos are taken annually. Parents are asked to make every effort to ensure that their children are dressed in School Uniform for the photos.

MONEY

All money requested for excursions, incursions, camps, hot dogs etc. must be given to the classroom teacher. A printed school payment envelope will usually be sent home with an excursion notice. Please endeavour to send along the correct money enclosed in the payment envelope or another clearly marked envelope. The envelope should be handed to the class teacher at the start of the school day. Spare payment envelopes are always available from the school office.

EFTPOS

Is available: at the school office.
You can pay curriculum related charges (e.g. school fees, camps and excursions.) with your debit or credit card over the counter.
There is a $10.00 minimum.

Unfortunately we cannot take payments over the telephone.

Payments for school curriculum (e.g. fees, camps and excursions) can be made with Bpay. Please enquire at the office for your Bpay Biller Code. It is available on your family statement.
QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING A SCHOOL - BITTERN PRIMARY SCHOOL ANSWERS YES TO ALL OF THEM

Is there a Foundation Partner (Better Buddies) Program?

Does the school provide a range of individual support programs?

Are Foundation classes kept small?

Is there qualified First Aid staff on duty?

Are Literacy and Numeracy school priorities?

Is this a Sun Smart school?

Is there a Social Skills development program taught at all levels?

Are there leadership opportunities for senior students?

Does every classroom have a bank of computers?

Do all children have Physical Education each week?

Is the office staff friendly and helpful?

Is the children’s academic progress closely monitored?

Do you have direct walking access to the Myers Reserve, Bittern Stadium and Bittern Tennis Club?

Are playgrounds maintained to high levels of safety?

Are there separate playgrounds for junior and senior students?

Will all children have access to a computer laboratory?

Are excursions part of the learning program?

Will parents receive two written reports as well as interviews each year?

Do teachers welcome parents in the classroom?

Is the curriculum planned according to the Australian National Standards?

Are excursions part of the learning program?

Can I approach the school at any time with any concerns?

Do there separate playgrounds for junior and senior students?

Is the Principal known for being open and approachable?

Are excursions part of the learning program?

Will all children in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to participate in school camps?

Are excursions part of the learning program?

Is there a fully functioning kitchen with 4 ovens, sinks and workbenches for students to use in cooking classes?

Can children access the Internet?

Is there a hot dog day every Friday?

Can children participate in the Student Representative Council?

Do students have the opportunity to join a student representative council?

Do children have access to ipads and netbooks?

Do all children have access to ipads and netbooks?

Can children access the Internet?

Is children's academic progress closely monitored?

Can children participate in the Student Representative Council?

Will all children have access to a computer laboratory?

Do children have the opportunity to participate in a sport at a district and state level?

Will all children have access to a computer laboratory?

Do you have access to a Psychologist?

Is the wellbeing of children a high priority?

Do senior children have the opportunity to participate in Interschool Sport?

Do students have the opportunity to join a student representative council?

Will all children attend an art lesson in a well-equipped art room each week?

Is the school supported by an active parent community?

Do we have friendly aides available to support the teaching staff?
MORE IDEAS TO ASSIST IN A SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR YOUR CHILD

- Visit the school regularly
- Familiarise your child with the playground and toilets
- Let them wear their uniform
- Use their school bag, lunch box, drink bottle
- Help to prepare lunches (beware of Glad Wrap)
- Dress and undress themselves
- Talk about school in a relaxed, casual tone
- Avoid making it a big deal
- Establish some routines at home eg. Collecting mail, setting table
- Give them practice at following two or three directions at one time
- Over the holidays try to socialise with children who will be in the same class
- Don’t drill them on reading or writing or learning to count
- Encourage them to know their name and address and phone number
- Allow them to speak for themselves (when you are out visiting)
- Do not say you will miss them when they are at school
- Attend all transition programs the school offers
- If you have time ask if you and your child can sit in on a class occasionally
- Become familiar yourself with the school’s philosophy, discipline policy, classroom structure and parent committees
MORE TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING MATHEMATICS AND LITERACY AT HOME

All parents can encourage their children to **EXPLORE, DISCOVER AND CREATE** mathematical situations that will assist them to understand and enjoy today’s mathematical world.

**TOYS AND GAMES**

Give some thought to the educational value of the toys and games you buy. **Jigsaws** are excellent for co-ordination and manipulative skills.

**Construction toys:** ask your child to tell you about the things that they make with Lego or other materials, eg. “I made a tall building (or a long bridge or small car, etc.).” These are the most important concepts for the child to grasp in Mathematics.

**Encourage** your child to talk in sentences when he’s describing what he’s been doing.

**Card games** are most helpful for matching and counting activities, eg. count spots on cards, match cards of same suit or value. Snap and Concentration type games can be played to encourage matching and counting skills.

**Board games** such as Snakes and Ladders, Ludo etc. using a dice or a spinner give enjoyment and practice in Maths. When buying a present: items such as Dot to Dot books, magnets, simple calculators, farm sets etc. provide excellent mathematical material.

**Bath time** provides the opportunity for children to explore the properties of water. Use of various shaped plastic containers will lead the children to discover which container holds more, less, most, least etc.

**Cooking** involves many mathematical concepts, eg. measuring, weighing, counting and comparing volume and is an excellent opportunity to share language and number experiences with your child.

**Shopping** trips give the opportunity for the children to learn about money, weighing of items, size, shape, colour and number.

**Sand pits:** children can fill up various shaped containers. Which hold more or less? What items are heavier or lighter etc?

**Trips to the beach:** many possibilities for counting (families, shells), sorting into groups (shells, stones), making patterns, construction (sandcastles).

**During READING TIME** children come across many fairy stories and nursery rhymes with numbers in them. Even if children cannot yet recognise the numbers, they can be made aware that the pages are numbered. Count the pages and talk about books eg. on which page is your favourite picture? Is the book thick or thin?

**ENCOURAGE, CHALLENGE AND DISCUSS MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS WITH YOUR CHILD**