

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General questions about Westgarth Primary School

#### What are the bell times?

Our school day operates from 9:00am-3:30pm. We operate a six session timetable of 50 minute blocks.

- 9:00am-10:40am                      Class (2 sessions)
- 10:40am-11:10am                    Recess break in playground
- 11.10am-12.50pm                    Class (2 sessions)
- 12:50pm-1:05pm                    Lunch eating in classrooms.
- 1:05pm-1:50pm                      Outside playtime in playground
- 1:50pm-3:30pm                      Class (2 sessions)

#### Do you operate a before and after care service?

Yes, the school provides both before and aftercare and this is a service that the school runs via a school council sub-committee. It known as Outside School hours Care or OSHC. The program opens at 7.30am in our new Clarke Street facility attached to the school gymnasium. Children are provided with breakfast and a range of activities. At 8.45am Prep/1/2 students are escorted across to the Brooke Street playground, 3-6 students move directly into the Clarke Street playground at this time. Likewise, at the end of the school day P/1/2 students are collected directly from their classrooms and escorted over to the service. Students are provided with a snack and a choice of free or structured activities. A further snack is served at 5.15pm. The service closes at 5.50pm. At the start of the prep year students are collected from class early so they are settled at OSHC before other students arrive.

#### How do I know if I am in the Westgarth School Zone?

To see which school zone you reside in, please visit to the Department of Education webpage called [Find my School](#).

#### Does your school have a nurse?

No, our school employs a first aid officer who manages the first aid care in a consistent manner and is supported by the office staff. Any attendance at first aid will generate a Compass notification to parents/carers.

#### What is your homework policy?

All students are required to read on a daily basis, practise the number facts and on some occasions may be asked to complete work unfinished in the classroom. We do not have formal homework requirements. The school website offers a range of open ended homework task which are available to interested students and their families.

### **Are school uniforms compulsory?**

No, school uniforms are parent choice however, we do offer a uniform to interested families. A sun smart hat is the only compulsory uniform requirement. The majority of the P/1/2 students do wear an element of the uniform which is available through an online provider. Year six students have a special year six t-shirt for their final year of primary schooling.

### **Are there camps?**

Yes, the grade 4 student camp is held at CYC Phillip Island in September each year and the grade 6 camp is held at Cave Hill Creek near Beaufort in February.

### **Do you have open plan classrooms?**

Some of our classrooms have doors that open between spaces but they are not open plan. Each class has their own classroom teacher.

### **What specialist programs do you offer?**

All students attend 50 minute sessions of the following; Music, Physical Education and Visual Arts/Spanish.

### **Any other programs?**

All students attend the library and the computer room with their classroom teacher each week. We have recently refurbished a STEM room which creates a facility for wet science activities across the school.

### **What is the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program?**

This is a program offered to students in years 3-5. We rely on both voluntary contributions and parent payments to support this program. Students rotate each fortnight with 100 minutes of cooking or 100 minutes of gardening and harvesting. Students and volunteers then share the food cooked at the end of each session. Please refer to the website for more detailed information.

### **Do you have a buddy program?**

Yes, we have both a formal program where every prep class will be allocated a buddy class and this is generally a year 5 class. We also have a playground buddy program where the P/1/2 students are supported in the playground by older students.

### **What time can my child arrive at school?**

Yard duty teachers are on duty from 8.45am until 9.00am each morning and again in the afternoon from 3.30pm-3.45pm. We ask that outside of these times all students are supervised by an adult or attend the OSHC program.

### **How many students attend Westgarth Primary School?**

We currently have approximately 590 - 600 students enrolled across the two sites. The Brooke Street site houses our P/1/2 students and is their dedicated playground. The Clarke Street site houses our 3-6 students and all the specialist program and OSHC. The school office is situated on our Brooke Street site.

### **What is the grade structure across the school in 2022?**

We currently have 25 classes with a combination of straight grades and a 1/2 composite. The classes at prep level are all straight grades with student numbers in the low 20's in each class. Every year there may be a different combination of composite classes.

### **Can students learn a musical instrument?**

Students in the upper year levels have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument after school on a user pays arrangement with a music tutor. The school offers the use of our classrooms for this program. We currently have guitar and woodwind tutors.

### **Are there any extra curriculum programs offered?**

Many programs are offered to students across the year levels including chess for younger students as a user pays program. We offer a Reaching for the Stars program where older students can engage in Robotics, Dance and Art classes which is an after school user pays system. Students in the 5/6 area are involved in a range of sporting competitions including AFL football, athletics, triathlon, swimming and basketball, soccer, cricket, tee-ball and newcombe.

### **Does the school offer swimming?**

Yes, each year we offer as part of our physical education program a swimming program. The students are bused to and from the nominated swimming centre.

### **How does the school deal with inappropriate student behaviour?**

As a school we recognise that students are still learning to be part of a larger community and will make mistakes. Many students will require additional support to learn to understand that some behaviours are not appropriate. On our school t-shirt we reference our motto, safe, fair and friendly. This is a great conversation starter with all students when discussing with them an action that may not have been appropriate and what is the learning for them in this process. We know that some students have difficulty regulating their emotions and staff are here to support them to manage both their triggers and their reactions. We ask that parents are empathetic to all students as they learn how to behave appropriately towards others in a school setting.

### **What literacy program does the school use in preps?**

As part of our literacy program the prep students use the 'Little Learners Love Literacy Program' which is an explicit phonics based program. Students learn the letter names and the corresponding letter sounds and then move onto blending sounds as they learn to decode when reading. Home readers are sent home in term two and we welcome parent volunteers in the classroom from this time.

### **Does the school have a canteen?**

No, the school does not have a canteen and does not offer lunch orders. All students are required to bring both a snack and lunch from home. We strongly encourage food that is not pre-packaged. All students eat their lunch in their classroom before they go outside to play to ensure we maintain a rubbish free playground.

### **Can I get involved in the school as a parent?**

Yes, we welcome and encourage school involvement from parents and carers in all aspects of the school. We welcome parents/carers to volunteer in classrooms, in the Kitchen Garden, joining School Council or sub-committees, support the swimming program and excursions, joining the Parents and Friends Committee, supporting the annual Grand Fiesta as a volunteer or member of the organising committee, join Dads 'n Such, assist in organising the Trivia and Comedy nights or performing at Westgarth Idol. You may like to become your child's class representative to organise social events such as a play at Johnson Park.

### **Does my child have to have their own computer?**

No, the school provides both desktops and iPads for our prep students and laptops, chrome books and iPads for the year 3-6 students.

### **My child has special needs? Who do I tell?**

The school is here to support all students. Please ring the school office on 9481 5577 and ask to speak with the Assistant Principal to discuss your child needs.

### **What day do the prep students stay at home at the start of the year?**

The preps have Friday at home for the first six weeks until the week beginning the long weekend in March. You will be asked to make an appointment with your child's prep teacher for a 90 minute testing session on one of these Fridays.

### **How are grades formed?**

The school constructs grades each year based on a number of factors; student ability, gender, special needs and the best learning opportunity for all students. We value the professional judgement of our teachers in this process.

### **What is the Kitchen Garden Program?**

This is a program offered to students in years 3-5. We rely on both voluntary donations and school fees to support this program. Students rotate each fortnight with 100 minutes of cooking or 100 minutes of gardening and harvesting. Students and volunteers then share food cooked at the end of the season. Please refer to the website for more detailed information.