

Westgarth Primary School

School Information Book 2021



SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

School Address	37-45 Brooke Street NORTHCOTE 3070
Postal Address	PO Box 59 NORTHCOTE 3070
Phone Number	(03) 9481 5577
E-mail	westgarth.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Website	www.wgps.vic.edu.au
Principal	Jo Wheeler
Assistant Principals	Carolyn Shiels
Business Manager	Jess Williams
Office Staff	Nella Bordin, Marg Pitcher
Office Hours	8:30am - 4:15pm

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE (OSHC)

Coordinator	Mike Pickard
Phone Number	(03) 9482 3323
Email	asc.westgarth.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Office Hours	Before Care: Monday to Friday 7.30am to 8.45am After Care: Monday to Friday 3.30pm to 5.50pm Curriculum days: 7.30am to 5.50pm

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Appendix 1 – Compass

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2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR / DATES / BELL TIMES

Starting Dates

Prep to Year 6 Students Thursday 28 January 2021

Term Dates

Term 1: Thursday 28 January - Thursday 1 April

Term 2: Monday 19 April - Friday 25 June

Term 3: Monday 12 July - Friday 17 September

Term 4: Monday 4 October - Friday 17 December

School Times

Time	Activity
8.45am	Teachers commence yard duty. Students dropped off prior to 8.45am must be supervised by a parent or must be booked into the OSHC program.
8.58am	Move to class line
9.00am	Start of school day
10.40am – 11.10am	Recess play
12.50pm – 1.00pm	Supervised eating lunch
1.00pm – 1.50pm	Lunchtime play
3.30pm	End of school day
3.45pm	Teachers end yard duty. We encourage all students and families to leave the school grounds at this time. Students not collected by 3.45pm will be taken to the OSHC program.

Important Dates for Term 1 2021

Monday 1 February First Whole School Assembly (weather permitting)

Tuesday 16 February Prep - Year 2 Information Night (TBC)

Friday 26 February Whole School Welcome Picnic (TBC)

First 6 Fridays Prep student testing (Preps not at school)

Monday 8 March Labour Day Public Holiday

Friday 1 April Last day of Term 1

Inclement Weather

If the weather is unsuitable (i.e. too wet, extremely hot or extremely windy) for the students to play outside at recess or lunchtime, students will remain in their classrooms under staff supervision.

PREP CHILDREN STARTING SCHOOL

Prep Starting Time

The first school day in 2021 is Thursday 28 January. Your child will be expected at school between 9.00am and 9.15am on their first day. This arrangement will allow time for you and your child to be greeted at the classroom door by your child's class teacher on this very important occasion – your child's first day at primary school.

The First Six Weeks for Preps

For the first six weeks, Prep students will not attend school on **Fridays**. This arrangement is part of the prep orientation program, assisting them to ease into their new routines and allow them to become familiar with their new environment. On these Fridays, the Prep teachers will arrange to meet their students individually. These sessions are by appointment and all families will be encouraged to book an appointment time. Prep students will begin full time the week beginning Tuesday 9 March 2021.

Preps will be dismissed directly from classrooms.

A Typical Day in a Prep Classroom

A typical day in a Prep classroom begins with all students completing their morning routines, unpacking bags and getting ready for the day. Students will then sit on the floor, in front of their teacher, while the roll is marked and share the morning circle time. At the beginning of the year, students engage in developmental play activities to build their collaborative skills and social connections.

Students spend the mornings participating in a wide-range of literacy activities based on the Little Learners Love Literacy program.

During literacy sessions, parents/carers may be helping in the classroom or listening to students read (from Term 2, onwards). Once a parent/carer has obtained a Working with Children Check card, they may begin to assist in the classroom. The parent/carer helper program begins when Prep students have settled into the classroom routine and are at school **full time**. This is a wonderful way to enhance the partnership between home and school.

Mathematics usually follows recess, where students will be involved in counting and other practical activities, based on current research and best practice. The activities are designed to support and stimulate mathematical processes and build strong foundations.

The session before lunch often sees the Prep students visiting one of the specialist classes or visiting the Library or the Computer Lab.

Lunch is eaten inside and then students can go outside to the playground to play.

In the afternoons, students usually spend time exploring elements of their Inquiry unit. The students enjoy working through activities designed to inspire discussion, curiosity and wonder connected to the current Inquiry unit.

At the end of the day, students may share a story before packing up and getting ready to go home.

The timetable differs slightly from day to day depending on specialist classes. Your child's classroom timetable will be forwarded home at the beginning of the school year.

Weekly specialist classes are Physical Education, Music, Spanish and Visual Arts/Spanish. These four classes are taken by specialist teaching staff. Students also attend the library and ICT with their class teacher once each week.

If you have any concerns regarding another student or your child has a concern at school please speak to your child's teacher or the Assistant Principal. **Issues that occur at school are best followed through by the school.**

STARTING SCHOOL ADVICE

General Advice

Starting school is a big change and you can help your child by assisting them to become familiar with a range of situations before they begin school such as: -

- Eating and drinking without help.
- Opening food containers or unwrapping food and disposing of litter.
- Unscrewing drink bottle lids.
- Drinking from different types of taps.
- Using a handkerchief or tissue.
- Recognising own clothing and name.
- Putting on and taking off clothes.
- Taking off shoes and socks and doing up buttons and zips.
- Taking care of own belongings.
- Saying his/her own name, home address, telephone number.
- Explaining that they will be attending the school toilet, getting him or her used to flushing the toilet and washing hands when finished including how to use a urinal.
- Talking about road rules and road safety. Show your child where the pedestrian crossings are situated, taking the most direct route to and from school. It is essential they learn to stop and look for cars and not presume the cars will stop for them.
- Making time to practise walking to and from school, before the school year starts.

Also please encourage your child to: -

- Play with groups of children.
- Use playground equipment safely.
- Stay at a friend's house for a few hours without you.
- Care for and put away play things.
- Take turns and co-operate with others.
- Share belongings.
- Sit and listen to a story.

Together we can provide the support and encouragement needed to make each child's schooling both enjoyable and successful. The transition from home to school for your child can be assisted if you:

- Are positive about school and the teachers.
- Talk about school and the different children and adults they will meet in a positive manner.

Top tips for Parents/Carers

- If possible, make some time to talk to your child both before and after school, giving them your full attention. Ask them to tell you three good things that happened during the day rather than asking 'what did you do today?' This way they learn to focus on positive experiences and will give you more information about their day.
- School children need their sleep so they are ready to learn. Assist them in getting ready by having an early night and a regular bedtime routine.
- Make sure they have eaten a balanced and unhurried breakfast.
- Arrive at school by 8.55am as this will provide your child with a confident start to the day and allow him or her to ease into the school day without rushing, or worrying about being late to morning assembly.
- Do some fun learning activities at home; read books together, count or complete puzzles.
- Do not put a TV or computer in your child's bedroom.
- Limit after-school commitments to allow your child time to rest without being overtired. We would recommend not committing to after-hours activities like swimming lessons until much later in the year as they will be very tired as they settle into the school year.

NB. In 2021, all Prep students will participate in a school swimming program as part of the PE curriculum.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Home Reading

This program enables you and your child to share reading times. Once your child is familiar with the first eight sounds they will begin to take books home to read to an adult. This will happen at the beginning of term two once the phonics based program has covered the sounds required to read the first set of books. Our aim is to make learning to read successful and enjoyable and we believe they need the skills and knowledge of letters, sounds and words before they embark on independent reading. In the meanwhile, continue to read picture story books to your child so they can enjoy quality literature and develop the routine of reading together each day.

Developing reading skills and an interest in books is vital and assists each student's learning in all areas of the curriculum. Parents/Carers have an essential role to play in assisting students to develop reading skills. Home reading books are sent home at a level that students can read independently. They are designed to have text they can decode and which is predictable and repetitive to build confidence and fluency. If your child is already reading when they start school the teachers will organise an individualise program for them to continue their learning.

Parent/Carer Helpers

Parents/Carers are vital contributors to the development of a positive, active school community, those who are willing to assist the school in any way are encouraged to contact their child's teacher. There are many opportunities to volunteer at school – reading with students, sharing skills and expertise relevant to our Inquiry units, fundraising events, Parents and Friends Association, School Council or one of its sub-committees, Kitchen Garden Program and Swimming Program.

Parents/Carers have the opportunity to participate in school excursions assisting staff in the supervision and care of all students. Teachers will discuss the excursion details and expectations with parent helpers before the excursion.

All parent/carer helpers must have a Working with Children Check card, which is registered with the School Office.

Student Welfare & Support

Our motto at Westgarth Primary School is SAFE, FAIR AND FRIENDLY.

The welfare and care of all of the students at W.P.S. is an important part of our work each and every day. We assist students to sort out problems in the playground, meet with parents/carers regarding the welfare or learning needs of their child and work collaboratively to support them. We regularly collect information from and about students in the classroom so that teachers develop a deeper understanding of the social, emotional and academic needs of each student. We also organise extra-curricular activities to promote a wide range of skills and interests.

'Be You' is a framework for schools, focusing on children's mental health and wellbeing. It has 4 components - Positive School Community, Social and Emotional Learning, Working with

Parents/Carers and Helping Children with Mental Health Difficulties. We have a 'Be You' Action Team, comprising of representatives from leadership, staff and parents, which will drive the initiative within our school.

Other programs that promote our school values include our Buddy program, Junior School Council, and our weekly whole-school assembly. eSmart is a new program focused on safe use of technology and cyber bullying. Our Student Engagement and Inclusion policy promotes practices that engage students and provides an environment of safety and inclusion. A copy is available on the school website. We are also a member of the Safe Schools Collialition.

We also have a DET psychologist, speech pathologist and social worker, who regularly visit our school to work with students, our school first aider who manages the First Aid Room, and a number of Education Support staff who work with individual students throughout the school. We also promote open and frank discussions with parents/carers so we can ensure individual student needs are met.

Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)

The school's Student Welfare Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the program for students with disabilities and organising program support groups. These groups, comprising school staff, paraprofessionals and the parents/carers of students involved in the PSD Program, monitor the student's progress, develop Educational Learning Plans and identify the resources required to support the implementation of the learning plan.

Values

We encourage students to "Be Their Best" at all times so that high, yet realistic, expectations are encouraged from an early age.

Westgarth Primary School values are **respect, integrity, excellence, working together and responsibility**. Our Quality Beginnings program at the start of each school year helps to establish a respectful, safe and effective social and learning environment in each classroom across the school. Each class develops a classroom mission statement, which includes the rights and responsibilities for all class members. All students are involved in regular classroom meetings, in which students are encouraged to acknowledge behaviours they have observed which match our school values, as well as raising any concerns they might have and making suggestions about their schooling.

As part of student engagement at Westgarth Primary a Buddy Program operates across all year levels. Prep students are generally buddies with Grade 5 or 6 students. Students in Grades 3-6 are inducted regarding the responsibilities of being a buddy and every few weeks the buddy grades get together for an activity. This is a highly popular and successful program, with younger students forging relationships with older students and older buddies willing to adopt the dual role of buddy and mentor.

Later in the year, all students participate in a Transition program, the aim of which is to prepare each individual for their move to the next year level. Students will experience meeting new teachers and learning in new classroom environments.

COMMUNICATION

School News

School news is published monthly via Compass. It contains school news, details of special activities, important dates and events.

Daily News

The end of each school day if there are any relevant events, notifications or dates this information is also published on Compass.

When something important needs to be communicated a Compass notification will be sent from the Principal or office administration staff.

School Apps

The school uses three apps which the school encourages parents/carers to download.

1. **Compass** tracks student attendances, events and consents. The office will provide you with your initial log in details.
2. **Qkr** School payments for OSHC and other extra-curricular payments (Refer page 15)
3. **My Family Lounge** Out of School Hours Child Care Program (OSHC) Enables enrolment and bookings

School Events

Parents/Carers are welcome to attend our whole school assembly on the rear of Brooke St at 9.00am on a Monday morning, weather permitting.

Early in the school year, we invite parents/carers to attend team information nights, school welcome picnic and a range of activities later in the year, such as the Art Show, alternate years Whole School Musical and La Gran Fiesta.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Out of School Hours Child Care Program (OSHC)

An Out of School Hours Child Care Program is managed by the school and operates each day on the Clarke St site from 7:30am - 8:45am and from 3:30pm - 5:50pm. Parents/carers must collect students by 5:50pm. Care is also provided on curriculum days. For further information, please contact the program directly on oshc.westgarth.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au or 9482 3323.

Enrolment is via an on-line portal 'My Family Lounge' accessible via our website wgps.vic.edu.au.

School Attendance and Supervision

School hours are between 9:00am and 3:30pm each day. Please ensure that your child arrives at school by 8:55am each morning.

“BE HERE ON TIME, BE HERE BEFORE NINE”

Parents/Carers should ensure that students are punctual, arriving before by 8.55am to ensure full participation in all programs and minimise disruptions. Those arriving late are not only missing out on learning themselves but interfere with the learning opportunities of other students. In particular, late arrivals are missing essential literacy skill activities. It is also essential for you to encourage good habits, and to avoid embarrassing students who may disrupt learning sessions when they are late. Students arriving at school after 9:00am are required to be signed in at the office by a parent/carer and collect a late pass from the office before going to their classrooms.

Teachers complete yard supervision before school from 8:45am until 9:00am and after school from 3:30pm until 3:45pm. Students are discouraged from attending school before 8:45am in the morning and encouraged to leave the school grounds for home immediately after the 3:30pm bell.

Morning Assembly

Monday morning assembly is held on Brooke St weather permitting. Students line up for assembly in the morning, prior to the bell ringing at 9:00am. Morning assembly is predominately a meeting point where some brief announcements might be made for the week. These announcements usually relate specifically to staff or students, and occasionally to parents/carers in reference to a school event. Parents/Carers are welcome to observe this morning routine, and we encourage you to say goodbye to your child before they line up. This allows students to walk into their classrooms together, ready to begin their school day.

Student Absence - “IT’S NOT OK TO BE AWAY”

We know that when children come to school every day on time they are more likely to be more successful in their learning.

Your support and cooperation is required to ensure that your child regularly attends school, as “IT’S NOT OK TO BE AWAY”.

Student attendance is monitored on a daily basis. We will follow up student attendance to ensure that all students have an acceptable attendance rate.

The school requires parents/carers to inform the school prior to 9am the morning of your child’s absence. You may do this via Compass. If your child is absent without parent/carer contact you will receive an automated text message to alert you to their absence.

Parents/Carers can help by:

- Keeping your child/children at home only because of illness
- Notifying the school if your child cannot attend school
- Being on time – students who regularly arrive late find it hard to start learning and will miss a lot of school
- Not taking your child on holiday during the school term or on special days such as their birthday
- Making sure you know the school's term dates so that your child does not miss the start of term
- Making arrangements for your child to attend school as usual if you are unwell

Speak with a staff member if you are experiencing any difficulties getting your child to come to school.

Collecting Students during School Learning Time (9:00am - 3:30pm)

Students can only be released from school during school hours for medical and dental appointments or in special circumstances and only if a parent/carer or a person authorised by a parent/carer has first visited the school office. A Compass Kiosk must be used at the office and provides an authorisation confirming that the student is to be released from school. *Please note there is an additional Compass Kiosk in the WEB building on Clarke Street for 3 – 6 parents convenience.*

This procedure is necessary for the welfare and safety of the students in our care. Your cooperation with these procedures is essential. Please contact the school if you have any queries regarding these matters. Please also ensure that your personal and emergency contact details are correct and up-to-date.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Uniform

Westgarth Primary School has a uniform that all students are encouraged to wear. Whilst our school uniform is not compulsory, many families prefer the ease that a school uniform brings to their morning routine. Year 5/6 students who participate in inter-school sport are required to wear a school t-shirt. We also encourage all students to wear school uniform when attending excursions and for school photos. Uniforms are available from A-Plus Uniforms. Order forms are available from the school office and on our website via the pathway Parents/Uniform Shop. Alternatively, you can order online directly through A-Plus www.aplusschoolwear.com.au or going directly to the shop, which is located at 133 Bakers Road, Coburg North (ph. 9354 8345).

Hats/Hair

Westgarth Primary School is recognised as a SunSmart school by adhering to the guidelines of the Cancer Council of Victoria. Students are required to wear wide brimmed school hats from 1st September to the 30th April for protection against the sun. Hats in the school colours are available for purchase at the school. Due to OH&S regulations all hair must be tied back during kitchen/garden sessions.

Footwear

It is essential in the interest of student health, welfare and safety that students wear appropriate footwear. Inappropriate footwear (built-up shoes, clogs, thongs, etc.) that restricts participation in school activities is not permitted.

Jewellery

In the interest of student health and safety, the only jewellery to be worn at school is a watch, and stud or sleeper earrings. Religious jewellery may also be worn under the uniform, where this is deemed appropriate by the family.

Lost Property

Please label all of your child's belongings clearly and permanently (including all clothes, lunch boxes, drink bottles and lids). It is recommended that names be printed on the inside band or hem of all clothing items.

Lost property is kept outside the Computer room on Brooke St and outside the Gym in the John Cain building, near the PE office on Clarke St. Clothing that is clearly named is redistributed through the term. Other items are kept until the end of term. If unclaimed, they are then sent to a local charity or recycled for emergency clothing. Dealing with lost property takes up a great deal of staff and student time so please encourage your child to be responsible and check they have all their clothing with them at pickup times.

Play Lunch

Parents/Carers are advised to provide each child with a healthy 'play lunch', that is something suitable to eat and/or drink at the first recess break, e.g. fruit. It should be wrapped separately or in a separate container to lunch items.

Lunch

Students should be provided with a healthy lunch that could include a drink (no glass containers are permitted). Lunch boxes and drink containers should be clearly labelled with the student's name. Staff supervise students eating lunch indoors. Lunch items may include a sandwich, wrap, dips or other food your child enjoys that is suitable for lunch boxes. Although we are not a 'nut free' school, we respectfully request families to avoid sending nuts and peanut butter products to school as we have several anaphylactic students enrolled. Please contact us if you require any further information about anaphylaxis.

Students are encouraged to have a refillable drink bottle (for water) that is clearly named and remains in their classroom.

Valuables

Students are not to bring valuables such as jewellery, card collections (Pokemon/footy cards etc), electronic toys or sentimental toys to school. A student bringing a mobile phone or Apple watch to school will require a letter from their parent explaining the reason that the student requires a phone. There is no need for a student to have a phone on during the school learning day 9:00am - 3:30pm as all communication will be via the school office. The school takes no responsibility for student phones/watches.

Payments

All family payments are via Compass.

We also accept cash and credit card payments through the office.

School fees - Family Payments

There are three components in the Family Payments.

- **Essential Educational** Items which parents/carers are required to pay the school to provide for their child, for example: student consumables - stationery, text books, work books, diaries, cost of curriculum based excursions and in-school activities and the swimming program, which all students are expected to attend.
- **Voluntary Contributions** not otherwise provided through the DET Resource package - Special Projects/Grounds Improvement, Kitchen Garden Implementation & Administration and School First Aid Officer.
- **Donations** to the Tax Deductable Building Fund.

During the school year Optional Educational Items are offered on a user-pays basis which parents/carers may choose their child to access or participate in, for example, Graduation, Camp, Reaching for the Stars Program. The types of Optional Education Items offered may change from year to year.

School Council reviews the Family Payment charges each year and the school community is informed in late Term 4 of that year of the Family Payment structure for the following year.

A break down of the consumable items in the form of a list is issued in February and parents/carers are able to pay the school directly.

Changes to Family Details

If any information provided to the school changes at any time (e.g. mobile or home telephone number/address/email address/work details), please inform the school immediately so that accurate records are kept up-to-date. This enables contact, either with parents/carers or a nominated friend or family member, in the case of student illness or accidents.

FIRST AID AND STUDENT HEALTH

Accidents and Illnesses

Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if they are unwell, as we do not have the facilities or personnel to cope with sick students. Students should not attend school for **24 hours after vomiting** for their own wellbeing and the risk of spreading illness to others.

School First Aider

Westgarth Primary employs a part-time first aider who supports both classroom teachers and administrative staff to attend to first aid concerns and emergencies.

If your child presents to the First Aid Room and is unwell or distressed, we will contact the parent/carer or first-named emergency contact by telephone so that the student can be collected and taken home. If an ambulance is required, parents/carers will be informed after the ambulance has been requested. It is the family's responsibility to maintain ambulance cover as these costs are **not** covered by the school.

There may be occasions where a student has had contact to the head, either with another student or a ball, in which case the school first aider (or another member of staff) will contact parents/carers as a matter of courtesy, even if the student appears to be suffering no ill-effects of the collision.

All visits to the First Aid Room are documented and parents/carers are notified via Compass.

Yard duty teachers actively supervise the playground, praising students who are playing co-operatively and encouraging all students to find a friend or buddy, as well as resolving any disputes as required. Our motto "Safe, Fair and Friendly" is often used in the playground to encourage a happy, safe and inclusive environment.

Anaphylaxis and Other Medical Conditions

Students with anaphylaxis or other serious health issues will be required to meet with the Assistant Principal, Carolyn Shiels, prior to your child starting school.

At this meeting, an individual action plan will be developed so that vital medical information can be documented, ensuring the health and wellbeing of your child whilst at Westgarth Primary School. Our school first aider may also attend these initial meetings to further discuss any actions required.

Westgarth Primary is **NOT** a nut-free school. However, we do have a number of students who have been diagnosed with life-threatening allergies. As stated previously, we strongly request that students **do not** bring nut-based products to school to support the wellbeing of all of our students.

Medication

Some students attending school require medication to control illnesses.

All medication must be supplied in the original packaging that clearly identifies the medicine,

shows the name of the chemist, the name of the child, the dose to be taken and the time the medication is to be given.

The school medication proforma must be completed before staff can be authorised to administer any medication.

Parents/Carers will be required to sign a short term permission form should their child require medication on a short term basis while at school.

Pedestrian Crossing

Students must use the pedestrian crossings provided. Please insist that your child use these crossings and set a good example yourself by also using them when you cross the roads near the school. Parents/Carers are advised that all road rules need to be observed when dropping off and/or picking up students. Authorities regularly monitor schools and issue fines to those vehicles not complying with the road rules. Students in Grade 3 to 6 may cross independently during school hours, accompanied by two other students.

School Car Park

The car park is for staff cars only during school hours (7:30am - 5:00pm). Students are not permitted in the school car park area at any time.

Remember the car park is for staff and delivery vehicles so please keep access clear and yourself and your child safe by using the pedestrian pathways and gates.

Street Parking

Please observe all street parking signs as council officers regularly patrol the streets surrounding the school.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Westgarth Primary School is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Westgarth Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Westgarth Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Westgarth Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Refer to the school website for more information about the school's Child Safe practices and procedures. <http://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/271/Child-Safe-Standards>