

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General questions about Westgarth Primary School

#### What are the bell times?

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

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

#### Do you run 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 Out of School 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 provided with both free and 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 the 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.

#### 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, Spanish Language 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 happens in the Stephanie Alexander Garden Program?**

Students from year 3-5 attend this program each week, the program rotates across a fortnight. One week is spent in the garden and the second week is spent in the kitchen preparing food to share. This program relies on the generosity of volunteers from the community to support the program provided by the two Kitchen Garden Staff.

### **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.

### **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 650 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?**

We currently have 27 classes with a combination of straight grades a 1/2 composite, a 3/4 composite and seven 5/6 composite classes. The classes at prep level are all straight grades with student numbers in the low 20's in each class.

### **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 the 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 program offered?**

Many program are offered to students across the year levels included chess for younger students. We offer a Reaching for the Stars program where older students can engage in Robotics, Dance, Art class which is an after school user pays system. Students in the 5/6 area are involved in arrange 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 five lesson swimming program that is held at the Northcote Aquatic Centre over one week. The students are bused to and from the 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, friendly. This is a great conversation starter with all students when discussing with them an action that man 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 behaviour 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 do 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 the food which is not pre-packaged. All students eat their lunch in their classroom before they go outside to play.

### **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 desktops, ipads and laptops for the year 3-6 students to use at school.

### **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's 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 those days.

### **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.