

Glen Waverley Primary School

Beginning School Information Booklet 2026 Prep Students

Dear Parents,

Progress from home or kindergarten to school, is among the first and most important of social transitions made by young children. Ability to cope with this stage can lay the foundations for success for the early years at school. These are reasons why, at Glen Waverley Primary School, we focus on providing a carefully planned and supportive transition program for our beginning Prep students.

However, the transition period does not end with the first few days at school. It is imperative that parents, teachers and others are aware of the demands, which are likely to be placed on these young children, as we work to create a supportive team for all students and their respective families.

Our school is a place where the parent expects a child will learn. Before children are able to benefit from the teaching the school offers, they need to have reached certain stages of physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. No specific standards are mentioned in this booklet because children develop at different rates and so start school with different levels of skills. We take this into account when planning programs and learning tasks for the Prep children.

At Glen Waverley Primary School our sensitive, caring, interested and informed early year's teachers provide structured and stimulating programs which allow learning to proceed according to each child's individual needs and assist all children to develop an enthusiastic attitude towards learning.

There are many ways parents can ensure that children are prepared for their introduction to school. The following ideas in this booklet are suggestions only, therefore you may find that all or only select items may be relevant to your child's needs.

Welcome to the Glen Waverley Primary School Community and Family!

Frank Catalano
Principal

Glen Waverley Primary School
Beginning School Information Booklet

In the beginning:

- Help your child to understand what they can expect by talking about school in general. In conversation, encourage questions that reflect upon the transition sessions. However, some children will wonder 'Is this all there is?' if their expectations have been built up too much. Conversely, do not use school as a threat; "Wait till you get to school, you won't be able to talk to your teacher like that!" An encouraging and positive approach is advisable. At Glen Waverley Primary School there will be fun times, but children will be expected to become more independent and responsible for their behaviour and their learning as their first-year progresses.

- Kindergarten, crèche, playgroups or playing at home with other children provides opportunities for your child to learn the art of socialising and developing the skills of independent behaviour. It is often a good idea to continue providing these opportunities throughout the holidays and in the early weeks of the new school year by meeting new students and parents. When the weather is fine many parents stay behind for a short time after school and socialise whilst watching their children on the play equipment. We strongly encourage this!

- Do all you can to make sure your child can take care of themselves. Simple skills such as taking their jumpers off and putting them on, picking up their belongings and wiping their nose help them to assimilate in the classroom.

- Clearly label belongings and removable clothing with LARGE PRINT (eg. school bag, clothes, art smock, library bag, reader bag). If your child is unable to recognise their name provide opportunities to help them learn.

- Make sure your child knows exactly where and who will pick them up each day. Please notify the teacher if there is any change to avoid any confusion or uncertainty, as this can cause anxiety and many tears.

- When you bring your child to school and the teacher is commencing the day say goodbye brightly and firmly then go. If you feel emotional keep the tears for when you are away from your child. If you linger over the goodbye and appear hesitant, your child will notice your anxiety.

- If your child starts crying or shows signs of distress take the cue from the teacher. Repeat your assurance and then leave. You can rest assured that the teacher will comfort your child and have them settled very quickly. When we get the opportunity, we will ring you.

A few helpful hints:

- When your child returns home after their day at school don't tell him / her about the wonderful day you had with others (perhaps siblings or friends) as this can cause distress, feelings of being left out and often jealousy.

- Don't expect your child to necessarily run into your arms and tell you all about their wonderful day. Your child may be tired and irritable after a long and active day at school. Allow them time to relax. It may take time for them to discuss the day's events; constant questioning often has a negative response or none at all. We strongly encourage all parents to ask, "What did you **learn** today?" Rather than "What did you **do** today?"

- If your child complains that they have no one to play with or 'things were boring' do not panic. Teachers work very hard during the first weeks of school to establish a trusting bond with the children. They also try many strategies to ensure that children meet new friends and develop friendships. The period of time it takes to settle into the school will vary for each child. If you are concerned, please arrange a time to meet with your child's teacher.

Home and School:

- At Glen Waverley Primary School, we regard the home/school relationship as an integral partnership between the family and school. School should not be a separate part of your child's life, but they should compliment each other. Make yourself known to your child's teacher and share your expectations, concerns and celebrations.

- Communication with the school is encouraged both formally and informally. Parents and teachers use many ways to keep in touch and share information. Problems, which are discussed in their infancy, are more easily resolved. Contact with your child's teacher can be made in person, by phone by writing in your child's diary or via email. It is advisable to make an appointment with the teacher to ensure they spend the time you need to discuss the matter.

- Books, books and more books. One of the best ways to encourage the love of reading is to spend ten to fifteen minutes each day reading to and sharing a book with your child. It is beneficial to the future development of literacy skills if children are read to at home, have a variety of reading materials at home and see reading being done by others in the home. You will have the opportunity to share your child's daily take home book and we ask that you promote this as a positive experience. Please ensure that your child returns the book each day.

Physical Development:

The physical skills that children need are of two kinds: those that are desirable for looking after themselves when an adult is not able to help them, and those that enable him/her to join in the learning at school. These important skills include the following:

Eating ~ At school, children may need to –

- Feed themselves
- Unwrap food
- Undo/open their lunchbox
- Remove and replace a lid on a drink container
- Remove and insert a straw in a drink box
- Drink from a straw
- Get a drink from a school tap
- Peel a piece of fruit
- Pack and unpack their school bag

Toileting ~ Children will also need to –

- Go to the toilet by themselves, undo and do zips and buttons, tuck in clothing
- Flush the toilet
- Use a urinal
- Wash their hands
- Manage the taps

Toilet training is usually accomplished over a period of years and most children are competent by the time they start school. However, accidents do happen at this age. Teachers try to prevent these by regular visits to the toilets during the first few weeks of school. A change of clothes for school, placed in the bottom of your child's school bag, is often a good idea especially if you think your child may need them.

Dressing

Sometimes children feel too hot or too cold so they must be able to cope with their school clothes by themselves. Often shoes are removed for some activities especially P.M.P. The best way to help children is to encourage them to dress themselves. Even so, many of them will still have difficulties with shoelaces. Therefore, it is best to keep encouraging and helping them regularly at home.

Nose Blowing

It is important for health that children are aware when their noses need wiping or blowing and that they are able to do so themselves. The care of personal handkerchiefs and the correct disposal of tissues are also important steps to good health and independence.

Early Childhood Development

Social Development

For the new Prep children, school is a place full of children and adults who are mostly bigger than they are and many unknown to them. As the year progresses the children will have opportunities to mix with other children and adults. They develop the skills to help them to cope with the social aspects of life. Our Buddy Program was established to help Preps with this transition.

Social development is one of the key elements which has an influence on a child's success at school. At Glen Waverley Primary School, we promote the building of self confidence and self-esteem in every child coupled with the skills to self-regulate whilst interacting with other children and when learning.

Children learn to relate to adults and other children and come to understand the need for sharing, taking turns and cooperating. Children often work in groups in school to develop these social skills. They need the same skills in the playground. Give your child opportunities to play various games. Discuss the rules in a game and the feelings they may experience when they win or when they lose, promoting strategies of cooperation and resilience.

Emotional Development

It helps if a child can easily separate from the parent. When the parent tells the child that he/she is going to leave them but will be back, and then keeps the promise, the child learns to accept the situation. This prevents the situation where the child, worried that a parent may not come and collect him/her after school, is unable to concentrate on what is happening in school. It helps the child if the parent points out the enjoyable things the child will learn at school. "You will have other children to play with, paint pictures, play games, learn to read and use the computers and iPads." If other members of the family are cheerful, encouraging and excited about the changes ahead then hopefully these feelings will influence the child's transition to school.

At times, as parents and teachers, we can expect a lot from young children. There are many personal skills that also develop over a period of time, beginning in the home and continuing on through life. These include:

- Self control
- Confidence in one's own ability
- Responsibility for actions and belongings
- Independence in day-to-day activities
- Persistence
- Resilience

School and home can work closely together in supporting these areas of development.

Preparing for learning at school

Some ideas to help your child prepare for reading, writing, speaking and listening:

- Encourage talk and involve children in family conversations and discussions ~ expect more than a YES / NO answer. Encourage your child to look at a person's face when they are speaking, focussing on the habit of waiting their turn to answer or waiting to speak when the other person has stopped. Dress ups, play and role plays and singing provide great opportunities to practise speaking and listening skills too!
- Draw your child's attention to signs, advertisements, number plates and writing on packets.
- Read to your child (when they are read to, they become aware that meaning can be obtained from print and reading can be a useful and pleasurable activity)
- There are rules about print (eg. you read the print not the pictures, we start at the top of the page, we read from left to right). Give your child the opportunity to hold the book and turn the pages.
- Give your child lots of opportunities to write, draw and colour using a variety of tools. Upper- and lower-case letters can be explored.
- Allow your child to see you reading a variety of materials.
- Try retelling a story to develop the notion of sequencing.

Early preparation for maths occurs when parents or others:

- Help your child count a few objects such as plates on the table, buttons on clothing
- Ask your child to assist with the shopping
  - "Can you put 5 oranges in the bag?"
  - "I wonder how much the oranges weigh?"
  - "We normally buy 5 oranges; however, we have your cousins coming over tomorrow, how many more oranges do you think we will need?"
- Talk to your child about time, eg. "five minutes till bedtime," "four sleeps until you go to the party", "two days until the weekend".
- Let your child find out what he/she can buy with a few coins
- Talk to your child as he/she uses construction toys, eg.
  - "Can you make it bigger?"
  - "Find five blue blocks"
  - "Put a block on top of each carriage"
- Let your child play with water or sand etc. to learn how much will fit into different containers.

Beginning School

As the time draws closer for your child to start school, there are a number of things you can do to help your child settle in more easily. These include:

- Walking or driving with your child to school so that he/she knows the way and is familiar with the route and the school environment
- Pointing out the different play areas
- Talking about how long the school day will be the way child will understand, eg. "It's as long as kindergarten, then you'll have lunch and perhaps some stories and then I'll come and collect you to go home."
- Talking about the difference between fruit time, playtime and lunchtime. Show him/her the food you have packed each morning. Talk about the foods they like to eat and discuss the need for snacks and food that is easily unwrapped and eaten.
  Parents often cut up fruit and place it in a small named container.

Many things have changed in schools since you attended as pupils, so don't be afraid to ask questions. However please remember the teacher's first duty is to the children in the classroom and it is not appropriate to interrupt classes to talk to the teacher or keep the teacher talking at the door as school begins. If you have concerns or questions, it is better to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss things when there are less interruptions.

What your child will need to bring to school

Your child will need the following on the first day:

- School bag named; it also helps to have a familiar tag on the outside of the bag. This helps your child to identify his/her bag.
- Recess snack food wrapped separately from their lunch.
- Fresh fruit or vegetables put in a small container or wrapped up, to be eaten at "Brain Food" time (10 o'clock) each day.
- Drink bottle, **WATER ONLY**. Cordial and soft drinks do not quench the children's thirst particularly in hot weather.
- Broad brimmed or legionnaires hat – see the Glen Waverley Primary Uniform Policy.
- Book supplies purchased through your school account.

Your child will require the following items to be clearly named:

- Art smock – this can be purchased from the uniform shop.
- Library bag – which is supplied with your child's stationary and
- Reader Bag – this can also be purchased from the uniform shop.

Please ensure that all clothing is clearly labelled. It is often difficult for young children to recognise their own clothing, particularly as the items look the same.

Please show your child where the name label is located on each garment.

From a Parent's Point of View:

As a parent you probably have mixed feelings about your child starting school. Until now you have spent a great deal of time with your child and now, he/she doesn't seem to need you as much. Most parents accept the school's growing influence as part of the long process of helping their child move from total dependence to independence.

If your child went to kindergarten you are used to close contact and knowing how your child's day was organised. Your interest and commitment doesn't need to change but as your child grows up, they may tend to start keeping things to themselves a little more. Don't be worried by this, as it is a natural progression towards independence.

It is good to talk to other parents about their feelings and experiences too and of course, take every opportunity to talk to the class teacher. The school newsletter will keep you informed of special events, information regarding the school curriculum and invitations to attend parent information sessions. We also utilise the software package Compass to relay information, approve participation in excursions, incursions, extra-curricular events and notify the school of absences. Our school website also provides information about our school this can be accessed at: www.glenps.vic.edu.au

Most importantly of all, enjoy your child's first year at school just as he/she will enjoy it too. There will be many opportunities to be involved in your child's education and to participate in school activities. Not only does your child need your interest and support, but the school and its teachers do as well. We look forward to developing a strong partnership as we work together and experience the educational journey.

We look forward to working closely with you and your family for many years to come!

Once again, welcome to the Glen Waverley Primary School Community and Family!

Frank Catalano
Principal