Winters Flat Primary School

Every child needs space

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HANDBOOK

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**SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

**School Administration**
School Council, in consultation with the Principals and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, has a broad range of responsibilities including:

- Establishing the broad direction and vision of the school within the school’s community
- Participating in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan
- Developing, reviewing and updating school policies
- Developing, reviewing and monitoring the Student Engagement Policy and the School Dress Code
- Raising funds for school-related purposes
- Approving the annual budget and monitoring expenditure
- Maintaining the school's grounds and facilities
- Entering into contracts (e.g. cleaning, construction work)
- Reporting annually to the school community and to DEECD
- Generally stimulating interest in the school in the wider community

The Principal, in consultation with the staff, determines the day-to-day organisation.

**School Policies**
School Policies are statements about learning programs, administrative procedures and school/community relationships. These policies express the school community’s beliefs about the aims, methods of implementation and the assessment and evaluation of each area requiring a policy. Policies are developed by sub-committees responsible for an area, and must be approved by School Council before they are published. They are continually reviewed, and if necessary, revised by the sub-committees responsible. These can be found on our school website.

**Staffing and Grade Organisation**
Grades of children are formed very carefully, taking into account a variety of factors, both social and educational. Special information relevant to grade placement, from parents, is always appreciated and this should be directed to your child’s class teacher or the Principal at enrolment.
SCHOOL INFORMATION

Attendance
The Department of Education requires students to be at school every day, unless they are ill, and teachers are required to record the reason for a child’s absence from school. A note, telephone call, or the Winters Flat absence pro-forma is sufficient. If collecting your child from school at any time other than the normal dismissal time, you must come to the office for an early departure slip to take to the class teacher. This procedure must be strictly adhered to, and is in place to protect your child, you, and the school. Please note that unless a request is received in writing, children can only be released to a known adult. Similarly, children cannot leave the school ground at any time without the direct permission of a Principal, and a note is received from a parent. This includes going home for lunch. If your child does arrive home unexpectedly, please notify the school immediately.

Banking
Banking is available to the children through the school and the Commonwealth Bank. Children can open an account at any time. School Bank Day is Tuesday.

Bike Riding/Scooters
Children must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle to and from school. Bikes are stored within the school grounds, and it is recommended that valuable bikes are locked.

Book Club
Scholastic Book Club operates twice per term and offers good quality books at reasonable prices. A parent volunteer collates our orders, which earn bonuses to enable us to purchase other books for our school.

Bus Travellers
Bus travel is available for some children who live out of town. This is co-ordinated through the Bus Co-ordinator at Castlemaine Secondary College (Junior Campus).

Camps
School camps are organised as a part of the school program. Teachers attempt to keep the cost as low as possible, and planning is such that parents are given sufficient time to make financial arrangements. If there are difficulties with the cost of camps, parents are invited to discuss this with either their child’s teacher, or the Principal. We can offer an extended payment plan to ensure camps are paid for prior to the event.

The camping program runs throughout the school, beginning with the Preps staying at school for tea one night, late in the year.

There are also occasionally other camping opportunities for children run by the Department of Education. The school will notify parents of children who may be eligible.

Cobbers
Our buddy program matches our Prep and Grade 1 classes with older “Cobbers’. The big cobbers and little cobbers enjoy getting to know each other and learning from each other.
**Education Maintenance Allowance**

Parents/guardians who hold a current Commonwealth Health Card on the first day of Term 1 and Term 3, are eligible to apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance early in the school year. Late applications are rarely successful. There are 3 Commonwealth Health Cards:

- Pensioner Health Benefits Card
- Health Care Card
- Health Benefits Card

Please note that a Pharmaceutical Benefits Card is not a Commonwealth Health Card. A claim form can be obtained from the school office and needs to be submitted at the beginning of each year. The completed form must be returned personally to the school, and the Office staff, who will lodge the claim on your behalf, must photocopy the Health Card.

**Excursions**

Excursions create the opportunity for teachers to use refreshingly different approaches to learning. These excursions are considered by the staff as being an essential part of the child's learning program. Teachers are aware of the expense of such excursions and always try to keep the cost as low as possible. If there are difficulties with the cost of excursions parents are invited to discuss this with either their child's teacher or a Principal. Children are not permitted to attend an excursion without payment.

All students are required to wear clearly visible school uniform (including hats from September to May), on all excursions. Jackets and ‘hoodies’ must not be worn over the top.

A permission note to take part in excursions is sent home. It must be signed and returned to the school, with payment included (unless other arrangements have been made with the school), before the child is allowed to participate. Local excursions, within the confines of Castlemaine, are undertaken without specific permission. Parents sign consent for these local excursions on the student's enrolment form.

**Games**

All children are expected to play co-operatively and safely in the playground during break time. Rough and potentially dangerous games are not permitted. Toys and objects of violence and aggression have no place at school. These will be held by teachers until collected by a parent.

**Head Lice**

Constant vigilance and attention is required by all families to keep head lice infestation to a minimum. Please notify the school in the event of infestation so that other families can be advised to take extra care. Children with live lice will be sent home until parents can provide proof of treatment. Please be aware that multiple treatments are required to eradicate both lice and eggs.

**Healthy Eating**

The school has a healthy eating policy which encourages students to bring fruit, vegetables and water bottles in their lunch boxes every day. Chips, confectionery, fried foods and high sugar drinks such as soft drinks, energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters are excluded from the Lunch Order system and are not to be brought to school by children for eating at play/lunch time. We encourage rubbish-free lunches and snacks and the use of re-usable containers.

At all grade levels, a ‘healthy snack’ break occurs daily. Children are only allowed to eat fruit, vegetables and drink water at this time.

Children eat their lunches in the classrooms under teacher supervision.

The school has an arrangement with the Winters Flat shop for the delivery of lunch orders on Wednesday and Friday. Updated price lists are circulated with Flat Chat.

Orders should be clearly written on a securely sealed, named envelope/paper bag and have correct money.
Homework
It is expected that all children read at home each night. It is great if this time can be a special sharing time with you, where a conversation about the book can occur. Other homework is given depending on the child’s year level. Always feel free to speak with your child’s teacher about Homework.

Houses
All students are members of a house for sports and other activities. The school houses are named after local hills and mountains.
The Houses are: Alexander - Red
 Franklin - Green
 MacKenzie - Blue
 Tarrengower - Yellow

House Captains and Vice-Captains are chosen at the beginning of each year.

Illness, Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Accidents and Emergency Contacts
Home is the place for sick children. At school we provide basic First Aid for minor accidents. Our policy in the event of more serious illness or accidents is to contact the parents immediately, so that they can make arrangements for their child to be collected from the school. All parents, but particularly those who are at work, will need to arrange for at least one emergency contact in case of their child’s illness or accident. In the event of a serious accident, the school may need to ring for medical help: should an ambulance be required the school is not responsible for payment of ambulance transport.

Please ensure that your emergency contact number is kept up to date.

It is essential that the section on Asthma in the School Enrolment Form be accurately completed. Parents must submit an Asthma Management Plan, updated yearly, and completed by a doctor, to assist with the care of students at school. If your child requires medication, including an inhaler, parents must provide this. It is also essential to advise the school if your child is at risk of an anaphylactic reaction. We will then discuss the school’s Management Plan.

Children are not permitted to self-administer medication at school. If medication is required it must be provided, with written instructions, to the school office.

Immunisation/Birth Certificates
The Department of Education requires all Preparatory year children to present both an Immunisation and a Birth Certificate upon enrolment. Immunisation Certificates are available from the place of immunisation.

Interviews
Various opportunities are arranged for parents to talk to teachers. Formal interviews are held at the end of Terms 1 and 3.

Parents are always welcome to discuss their child’s progress, with written reports being issued in July and December, as part of the Reporting Journals.

Please make prior contact to arrange a convenient appointment time.
**Junior School Council**
All classes from Year 1-6 choose their representatives to be on Junior School Council. This group meets to discuss issues that affect the students, and to make decisions on fund-raising. Often they take responsibility for showing visitors around the school, or to their destination.

**Library Borrowing**
Children are encouraged to be regular borrowers of books from the school Library, during their class lesson and at other times when the Library is open. All children are encouraged to use a suitable bag to transport library books. Please remind your children to regularly exchange their Library books.

**Lost Property**
All articles of clothing worn to school must be named. Lost property will be placed on hooks in the small quadrangle, near the side entrance to the main building. At the end of each term unclaimed items will be donated to local charities.

**Money for School Purposes**
When you are required to send money to School, it should be sent in a sealed envelope. Please ensure that your child’s name, grade, and the purpose for the money are all marked clearly on the envelope.

**Newsletters & Notices**
Each Tuesday, the school produces Flat Chat, a newsletter that includes notices of events, important dates, children’s work and other items of general interest. Extra copies are available for dual parent households. If you would like to receive Flat Chat by email, rather than hard copy, ensure that the section on our enrolment form is completed. Please display an interest in your child’s schooling by being seen reading and referring to “Flat Chat”.
From time to time additional notices are sent home with the oldest child, or with all children who are involved in a particular activity or event. Flat Chat is also available on our website – [www.winters-flat-ps.vic.edu.au](http://www.winters-flat-ps.vic.edu.au)

**Out-of-School-Hours Care**
Out of School Hours Care provides friendly, flexible and affordable after-school (3.30pm to 6.00pm), vacation and pupil-free day care. This service operates from their own building on our school site. For bookings phone: 5445 8300.

**Parent/School Partnership**
Parent participation is valued and encouraged. It is widely acknowledged that children benefit when their parents are engaged positively with school and their learning.

There are a variety of ways in which this can take place and we appreciate them all. Some of the common ways of assisting at school include listening to reading, typing stories, accompanying excursions, helping in the garden or the kitchen, conducting activities with small groups of children, helping with special lunches, teaching a small group of children a leisure activity, and a variety of fundraising and social activities. If you wish to become involved in any area, please contact the school. Your child will take great pleasure in seeing you at school actively involved in her/his education.
Parents, Carers and Friends Club
We are supported by our PCF club. This club's purposes include supporting families, providing a forum for discussion, fundraising and social activities for Parents, Carers and Friends of our school. Meetings are advertised in “Flat Chat”.

Play Areas
There is a most positive playground culture with all the children at the school playing well together and being encouraged to mix freely in our wonderfully expansive grounds. A special area has been developed and set aside for exclusive use by the younger children. Older children are mostly restricted from playing in this area. It would be appreciated if parents would encourage their children not to walk through the car-park, as a safety precaution.

Children are permitted to make use of the riding/running track with rip-stiks, scooters and bikes. They must wear a safety helmet with any equipment they ride.

Problems at school
If your child is experiencing any problems at school the matter should first be discussed with their class teacher. Please be aware that teachers are very busy people and will not always have much time before or after school. It is best to make an appointment so that matters can be given the time they require. Protocols for parent/teacher contact are outlined in our Parent/Teacher Communication Policy.

Punctuality
Please ensure your child is at school at least ten minutes before the start of the first session of the day. It is very disruptive for everyone and impacts on the whole class when children are late. A “Late” Pass must be collected from the school office for each late arrival.

Religious Education
Religious Education is provided for students in Years Prep - 4 as a weekly half-hour lesson. The Approved Course is taught by local, authorised Religious Education Teachers, and co-ordinated by the Castlemaine Ministers’ Fraternal. There is an additional cost of around $6.00 per year, to cover the cost of printed materials provided by the R.E. teachers.

Your child will attend Religious Education lessons if you do not indicate otherwise, at the beginning of each school year.

Reporting to Parents
Reporting Journals are an excellent record of your child’s work throughout the year. They are sent home at the end of each term and must be returned at the start of the following term. These Journals are an excellent opportunity for you to discuss progress with your child. Written reports are included at the end of Terms 2 and 4, and national testing results (NAPLAN) for Year 3 and 5 students also included in Term 3. Formal Parent/Teacher interviews are held at the end of Terms 1 and 3, but appointments can be made at any time during the year.
School Contributions & Charges
The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has a policy regarding school charges and contributions.
School Councils may request payments from parents for:
- Essential educational items which are required (stationery, text books, Art and Physical Education materials, computers, etc), which will be delivered in the form of a book levy.
- Optional extras offered on a user-pays basis (instrumental music).
- Voluntary financial contributions which parents may be invited to donate (buildings/grounds beautification, additional computers, etc).
- Curriculum levies to assist with payment of materials required to provide school programs, which will be set at the beginning of each school year.
- Camps and excursions will be by a user basis and must be paid before students can attend.
- For students in Grade 5 and 6 there will be an annual charge of $100 to hire a netbook, which is used extensively in class. This may be paid wholly or in four instalments.

Parents who hold a Health Care Card and receive Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will have the option of allocating their payment directly to the school, or signing their cheque over, to assist with the cost of levies and excursions, until money has been expended.

You may also choose to contribute $100 to the Building Fund, which is a tax deductible option.

In addition the School Council and Parents' Club are involved in fundraising activities. Please give all these activities your full support, as it is with the money raised that the educational opportunities given to your child will be supported and increased.
School Council is responsible for the expenditure of all locally raised money.

School Crossings
The school has two school crossings controlled by supervisors. These are in Ray Street and Johnstone Street.
The crossings are supervised at the following hours:
** Before School
  - Ray Street - 8.20am - 9.00am
  - Johnstone Street - 8.15am - 9.00am
** After School
  - Both Crossings - 3.15pm - 3.55pm
Children are expected to obey the directions of the crossing supervisor at all times. The School Council, through the Principal and staff, is responsible for the conduct of students on the way to and from school, unless an adult accompanies them.

It is most important children are not encouraged to access cars in the middle of the road, or other inappropriate places. The crossing outside the school is to be used at all times by students and their parents.

Sports Activities
Sporting activities are arranged between local schools or at regional level. Parents will be notified prior to these events and are welcome to attend.

Student Leadership
Our senior students are given opportunities to become strong leaders through becoming role models and support friends with the younger children in the Cobbers program. They may also be voted in as School Captains, House Captains and Vice-captains, or President, Vice-president and Treasurer of Junior School Council.
Student Wellbeing

SAFETY FIRST, RESPECT ALWAYS

Our school has a holistic approach to behaviour management. We combine programs which develop the child’s social and emotional skills, with behaviour management based on Restorative Practices. We are currently implementing the fundamentals of “School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support” The school encourages self-motivation, self-discipline, co-operative attitudes, respect for oneself and for others, personal and group safety and respect for property.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers develop no more than five basic behaviour statements with the children in the grade. Rules and consequences for the yard are whole school ones.

Each year a confidential Safety Survey is conducted with all students. Issues noted in the survey are addressed at whole staff meetings.

School Support Services

School Support Service Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists and Social workers are available to support our students. Please discuss any concerns you have in these areas with your classroom teacher.

Supervision

The school and grounds are under supervision by teachers between the hours of 8.40am and 3.30pm. Unless special arrangements are made, parents should be aware that children in the school grounds outside these hours will not be supervised, and there may be no assistance available in case of accident. At lunch play and during recess, two teachers supervise the yard on a duty roster, to assist children in times of need.

Toys

Teachers discourage expensive toys being brought to school. No responsibility can be taken for such items. Toys, which are potentially dangerous or simulate violence, have no place at school. If it is necessary for a child to have a mobile phone at school, it must be left at the Office during the day. Any equipment, including sports’ equipment, must be named.

Transition

Teachers at the school are involved in Transition Committees with both Pre-schools and Secondary schools. In both cases programs are conducted which aim to minimise the problems of movement to different environments. Parents of children concerned will be informed of transition activities.
**Uniforms and Clothing**

School uniform tops are required at all times. No other top should be worn, except for navy skivvies, etc which may be worn underneath school t-shirts. The Uniform Shop is open on Friday mornings from 8.45am until 10:00am. A price list is available from the Office. Some second-hand uniforms may be available.

Year Six students are able to purchase a special T-shirt. These may be worn as part of school uniform. Physical Education lessons require appropriate clothing and footwear for children to feel comfortable about participating.

**Hats:** The wearing of our school broad-brimmed, or bucket, hat whenever students are outside is compulsory from September 1st until the end of May, as stated in our SunSmart policy. It is not compulsory for students to wear school uniform pants or shorts, but shorts, leggings, long pants, skirts, etc must be navy. Thongs, scuffs, "crocs", etc are permitted. Hair should be tied back for safety and health reasons. Please see Dress Code policy for further information.

Students will also need a Library bag and an art smock/shirt.

**PLEASE NAME EVERYTHING**

The school has a small supply of emergency clothing, which is used in the event of "accidents". If your child has a need to use these clothes please return them to school, freshly laundered, as soon as possible.

Donations of spare clothing are always welcome.

**Website**

Our website is a source of more information about our school. [http://www.winters-flat-ps.vic.edu.au](http://www.winters-flat-ps.vic.edu.au)

**Wet Day Arrangements**

On days of inclement weather children are supervised in their classrooms. At these times the children are involved in passive games. Because of traffic congestion, extra care on wet days is required of parents who pick up children by car.