



**PREP HANDBOOK**  
FOR PARENTS



## VISION

At Point Cook College we create tomorrow today through developing students academically, socially and emotionally within a safe, engaging and inclusive learning environment.

## MISSION

Provide opportunities for all members to work collaboratively to access a seamless, personalised and innovative education.

Build a safe and supportive learning environment wherein all members are motivated and challenged to pursue interests and pathways to achieve their full potential.

Encourage connections with the community to promote connected, curious and tolerant global citizens.

## VALUES

We build positive relationships by demonstrating our expected behaviours and values.

At Point Cook College we develop academically, socially and emotionally within a safe, engaging and inclusive learning environment. We build positive relationships by demonstrating our expected behaviours and values:

We are **LEARNERS**

We are **RESPONSIBLE**

We are **RESPECTFUL**

We are **SAFE**

At Point Cook College, we work collaboratively to access a seamless, personalised and innovative education. Within this safe and supportive learning environment, we are motivated and challenged to pursue our interests and pathways to achieve our full potential. We promote the development of connected, curious and tolerant global citizens.



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The Prep year is a special year of induction for your child. Point Cook College aims to provide an experience that nurtures your child's self-esteem, allowing them to realise their full potential and to be caring members of the College community. Your child will be guided and supported in a positive environment to develop academically as well as socially and emotionally.

# Welcome to Point Cook College

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

Welcome to Point Cook College. In choosing our school for your child's education, you are entering into a most significant and valuable partnership. The importance of this partnership between home and school is reflected in both the students' learning and the students' sense of belonging to the school community. We will personalise the learning for your child to ensure they experience success everyday.

Point Cook College is proud to offer a learning environment that is reflective of 21st Century design and is committed to providing your child with innovative teaching approaches. Our teaching and Education Support staff are caring passionate professionals who are committed to providing the best education for all of our students.

Starting school is a major milestone for you and your child and the start of a new phase of life for your family. Our aim is to make your child's move from kindergarten and other early childhood services to primary school as smooth and enjoyable as possible. This handbook has been specifically produced to support children and families of children who are starting Prep at Point Cook College. This document will provide valuable information to support you in your child's transition to school.

This book is to be read in conjunction with the Point Cook College Parent Information Handbook.

Responses to any questions you may have about the School may be found in the following pages.

Kind Regards,

*Mandy O'Mara*

**Mandy O'Mara**

College Principal

*Jenni Gigas*

**Jenni Gigas**

P-4 Sub-School Principal

# Beginning School

**Starting school can be a very exciting time for children and parents. It is important to make the experience as enjoyable and positive as possible. We look forward to starting a strong partnership with you and encourage you to become involved in your child's education in any way you can.**

This involvement is one way of showing your child that you value the home-school partnership and his or her education. Research has shown that this attitude results in children making the most of their educational opportunities. We will ensure that there is the opportunity for both working parents and those at home to participate in home/school partnerships.

Your attitude towards school is vital as children believe what their parents believe. This is a time for developing new relationships and positive attitudes. Be encouraging and assuring your child that they will enjoy school, that they are ready to go and that they will have friends. Try to find a balance between getting your child enthusiastic about starting school without being overly excited as this can sometimes have the opposite effect.

Routines will be established to support your child in feeling connected to the school and a specialist timetable will be distributed to parents early in the term.

Some children will find starting school quite tiring and can be worn out by the end of the day as a new environment and new routines are taken on board. Don't be surprised if they don't want to talk about everything that happens and focus on a particular area rather than the 'big picture'. "What story did the teacher read?", "What did you write and draw about?" or just a simple "Did you enjoy your lunch?". In the beginning it may be a good idea to keep after school activities to a minimum, but remember – every child is different and no one knows your child better than you.

When preparing for school try to avoid the last-minute rush. Leave home with plenty of time to get settled before the school day starts and make sure you allow time to say goodbye and for your child to join others at play.

When saying goodbye for the first time you might stay a while to ensure your child feels secure at school. Once they have settled, a short and reassuring goodbye encourages independence. Always tell your child that you are leaving and what the arrangements are for picking them up at the end of the day. Be guided by your child's teachers if you are unsure whether to stay and be assured that if your child is unsettled they will be taken good care of. A member of staff will call to reassure you that all is well if your child is unsettled when you leave.

## STARTING SCHOOL

Prep students will attend for the whole school day 8:30am - 3:00pm. For the first 4 weeks of school Prep students will have Fridays off school. This allows students to build their stamina in attending school full time and also gives teachers the opportunity to complete a 1 on 1 assessment with each child.

On the Fridays where students are not attending, teachers will be conducting a compulsory interview with each child. Parents will be able to choose an appointment time that best suits them on Compass School Manager. This 1 on 1 time with your child, will allow us to gain a better understanding of your child.

During this time the teacher will carry out a few short assessment tasks, which will allow them to become more familiar with your child and their needs in an individual environment and plan programs accordingly. The assessment is conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and the whole session will take approximately one hour.

## THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

On the first day only, we have a staggered start to assist with settling the students. You will be notified of your beginning time when given your child's community details. When you arrive at school please make your way to your child's Community where your child's teachers will meet you.

Allow your child to place their bag in the locker with their name on it and join in some of the classroom activities. You should then let your child know that you will be going to have a cup of tea with the other parents and then you will be going home. Let them know that you will be waiting for them at the end of the school day or, if they are booked into aftercare, that they will be collected by the YMCA staff.

Most children settle well although some can become distressed, particularly if they sense that their parents are worried about leaving them. Children who are distressed at first usually settle into the community activities quite quickly (particularly after mum or dad leaves). If you are concerned about your child you may like to leave a contact number so that we can ring and let you know your child is ok!

## 1:1 IPAD PROGRAM

As a 21st Century Learning Community, Point Cook College is committed to leading change with students and their families. Students in Year Prep will take part in a 1:1 iPad program from 2021.

It is important that you understand that the device does not replace traditional pen and paper activities. We still believe there is a place for these tools today and in the future. The device is used during certain times in the day and when needed to support student learning. Students will continue to interact with each other face-to-face during class times.

We are continuously seeing the benefits that the 1:1 program can bring to broadening student learning, digital competencies, increased student choice and the personalisation of learning for our students.

Requirements for BYOD program are as follows.

The iPad must:

- Be no less than two years old.
- Apple iPad 8th Generation or Newer / Wifi Only / 64GB or above.
- Support iOS 11 or higher.
- Have a hard case and screen protector.

## CURRICULUM

Our Prep Classrooms provide a supportive and caring environment in which children develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

The expert Prep educators foster students' intellectual and emotional development with a differentiated, explicit and extensive educational program. Individual differences in learning are catered to and each student's potential is nurtured and developed.

The Prep Year provides a firm grounding in Literacy, Numeracy and cross curricular learning opportunities. The curriculum is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant for all learners. It provides opportunities for students to build meaning through both an explicit and inquiry approach to teaching and learning.

The first year of school creates a love of learning, the skills of independence and initiative to carry students through life and become truly educated people.

Academic achievement and emotional and social development are all important aspect of student progress. Staff utilise opportunities to encourage and support the students to take action and make a genuine difference in the world.

We aim to develop resilient, independent, adaptable and innovative thinkers who have a passion to learn, the courage to take risks and the confidence to apply their skills and knowledge in a vibrant learning community.

We aim to enable students to cope with diversity and the challenges that life can bring and to develop the skills to strengthen their relationships and build positive emotions, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

We support the development of these skills by providing learning opportunities through the "Resilience Project", "School Wide Positive Behaviours" and "Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships" curriculum.

## CLASSROOM SUBJECTS

Students will participate in a range of curriculum areas throughout the day.

Curriculum areas include:

- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling
- Mathematics
- Inquiry

## READING

We aim to develop readers who not only possess a love of reading but have the skills and knowledge to decode a text and comprehend what they have read. Students will work on a daily basis with their teacher, beginning the session as a whole group, moving into small collaborative groups that work on purposeful reading tasks, based on the needs of the students. When such small groups are running, teachers are working with one particular group to develop their reading skills.

Everyday students will participate in independent reading, this process will allow students to build their reading stamina. During this time students read from their individual book box which is full of just right and student selected texts. Students' iPads will be used throughout the reading block as a tool to access online texts, research topics being explored in their books, practice reading skills, word knowledge and record their thinking.

## WRITING

Writing is a fundamental skill that our students will use everyday of their lives. Each day your Prep child will be given the opportunity to be an author and engage in meaningful and purposeful writing. Prep students will become familiar with a range of text types throughout the year which will help them develop an understanding of how to construct various pieces of writing to engage an audience.

We will focus on developing our students as writers who display a deep understanding of the fundamental writing skills which allow them to create a range of texts and convey a message. As a school we follow a writing process, where students can plan, draft, revise and edit their pieces with the end product being a published writing piece which is determined by the students and provides them choice in how they wish to present their written piece.

## SPELLING

At Point Cook College we use a number of tools to develop our students reading and spelling skills.

Spelling will be explored on a daily basis and students will build an understanding of how letters make sounds in words and how they can be recorded when writing. Through daily exposure, practise and hands on activities students are able to listen and record various sounds in a range of curriculum areas and solidify the connection between writing and reading.

## MATHEMATICS

Prep children will be given the opportunity to explore mathematical concepts in meaningful and purposeful ways. Throughout the year we will focus on a range of strands which include concepts related to Number and Algebra; Measurement and Geometry; and Statistics and Probability. As a school our aim is to create students who can not only answer a problem but apply a range of strategies and explain their thinking and reasoning when solving a problem. We achieve this by working with students to develop their problem solving skills through the use of technology, hands on materials and open ended tasks which relate to real life situations.

## INQUIRY

Each term students will be presented with a compelling question which will enable them to delve into the inquiry process, exploring essential understandings and questions. Inquiry allows students to investigate, collaborate, question, explore, create, plan, problem solve and communicate with their peers and teachers. The inquiry process encourages students to be curious learners, to use the knowledge and skills they learn to pursue their questions and interests, and apply this to make meaning of real life contexts.

Students will also participate in specialist classes including:

- PE
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
- Japanese
- Indonesian
- Science



## ART SMOCKS

All children require a long sleeve art smock for visual art classes. Plastic art smocks tend to make students overheat on hot days, an old shirt from Mum or Dad makes the perfect art smock! Please make sure your child's art smock is labelled clearly with their name.

## DISMISSAL

At 3.00pm children will be dismissed from their classrooms through the external doors within their own community as we need to ensure all children leave with an adult. No children will be released from the room without an adult for the First Term. If you require an older sibling or caretaker to pick them up please let the teachers know.

Your child may be eager to tell you about their very exciting first day of school but others may require time to unwind after a hectic day before wanting to tell you about their experiences.

## ENROLMENT

To enrol your child in a Victorian School you are required to supply:

- Evidence of your child's date of birth – Birth Certificate or Visa for children born overseas
- Names and addresses of the child and parents, guardians and carers
- Parents' phone numbers (home, work, mobile) and email addresses
- Names and contact details of emergency contacts
- Doctor's name and phone number
- Immunisation Status Certificate (If vaccinations were given overseas, this Certificate may be obtained from the Council upon presentation of proof by you that your child has received the vaccinations recommended to enter a Victorian school.)
- Health and welfare information (for example, does your child have asthma, diabetes, allergies, poor eyesight or hearing, specific custody arrangements)
- Information about the language/s your child speaks and hears (to help the school build on your child's knowledge).

A VSN parent brochure is available to download here.

- For further information about the VSN you may like to visit:  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/participation/parentupdate/feb10/vsn.htm>
- For Government payments you may be eligible for please visit:  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/financial-help-school-items.aspx>

## HOME LEARNING

At this level, developing the home/school partnership is of prime importance. Reading to and with your child each night is essential for language development. Both children's literature and take home books can be shared each night. There may be special tasks for preps to do at home from time to time, for example letter or word detective activities, high frequency words, interviewing relatives or collecting resources. We encourage you to set up a regular time to read at home to help establish routines.

## HOMEROOM GROUPS

Homeroom groupings will be finalized prior to the commencement of the new school year. These homeroom groupings will be based on observations the teachers make during transition sessions and information provided to us by parents and kindergarten teachers. We work hard to ensure that homerooms are put together for the benefit of all students. You will be advised of your child's teacher and homeroom location before the end of the year. We reserve the right to make alterations to homerooms within the first few weeks of Term 1. In the event that changes need to be made we will arrange a meeting time with parents to discuss these arrangements.

## LUNCH BOXES

Lunch boxes should be clearly named. Lunch boxes take a fair beating at school so please check to make sure it doesn't leak and has a lid that seals properly. Children need to have a separate snack for their lunch and a suitable drink container – No fizzy or flavoured drinks – water only please!

Children eat both their snack and lunch in their classroom under teacher supervision. It is important that a substantial snack if provided. A healthy breakfast at the start of the day is essential.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All clothing needs to be labelled or embroidered with your child's name and grade to ensure misplaced items are returned promptly. Please make sure your child recognises the positioning and print of the label. If your child has new school shoes it is wise to 'break them in' prior to school beginning.

Please supply a change of clothing in your child's bag including a change of underwear and socks in the event of a toileting accident. It is common for children in Prep to have accidents, busy children sometimes 'forget' to go to the toilet.

## READING SACHEL

All Prep students should purchase a reading satchel. These are waterproof and an appropriate size for sending home reading materials and notes to parents.

## SCHOOL BAGS

School bags can all look the same. Attaching a key ring or some identifying symbol that will help your child identify their bag.

## TRANSITION PROGRAM

During Term 4 your child will be invited to attend a transition program. This is an important opportunity for your child to become familiar with school, their peers and teachers. This is also an opportunity for our teachers to become familiar with your child and put plans in place to support their successful transition to school. It is essential that all children attend as many of these sessions as possible.

## PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

As a parent, you play a vital role in your child's education. There are many things you can do to support a great start to school for your child. The behaviours and skills we believe will provide your child with the strongest Prep for learning include: independence, cooperation, sharing, caring for belongings, respecting property and the rights of others, listening, speaking and having a go.

### How you can help

All children have different interests, needs and motivations and each child's transition from kindy to Prep will be unique. You can help your child to feel more comfortable about starting school by engaging in everyday activities.

You can help your child prepare for their first year of school by:

- building confidence
- strengthening their independence
- having a daily routine
- packing a healthy lunch
- knowing your school
- getting involved with your school
- doing family activities at home.

### Build your child's confidence

Help to build your child's skills to cope in various situations and increase their self-confidence by:

- finding answers to their questions or concerns together.
- talking to your child about how to ask for help and model what to say.
- asking your child's kindy teacher for ideas about how you can help your child to prepare or school
- talking through some "what will I do if...?" situations with your child, for example "what will I do if my yoghurt spills?"

### Strengthen your child's independence

Before your child starts school, you can encourage independence by helping your child to practice:

- packing and carrying their own school bag
- putting on their shoes
- eating and drinking without help
- going to the toilet on their own
- using tissues to blow their nose
- recognising their belongings
- giving them small responsibilities like packing away toys and setting the table.

## Daily routines

Daily routines can help children understand what they need to do, when to do it each day and why it's important.

To help prepare your child for school, encourage a routine which includes:

- going to bed early
- waking up at a certain time and leaving plenty of time to get ready
- having a healthy breakfast and needed for energy and concentration
- preparing and eating lunch
- making time for physical activities.

## Packing a healthy lunch

When packing your child's lunch:

- include them in making choices and helping you
- provide healthy and filling food in realistic quantities for morning tea and lunch
- make sure they can easily open wrapped items and their lunch box
- provide a variety of smaller items instead of 1 or 2 large items
- provide a water bottle every day and encourage your child to drink it.

## Know your school

Help your child get to know the school environment and routine by:

- driving past and walking around the school, especially during school hours, so that your child gets used to the number of children, and their movements within the school grounds. When visiting the school, please report to the office.
- asking the school what equipment and materials your child needs, like a school bag, library bag or hat. Make sure all possessions are labelled with your child's name.

Before their first day, your child should know how to easily find their classroom and where to:

- put their things, like school bag and hat
- have their lunch breaks
- meet you each day when school is finished.

### Get involved with your school

Help your child get a great start to their education. Take an interest in their schooling, be positive about it, and let them know it's important to attend.

Help your new Prep teacher get to know your child. Provide your child's kindergarten transition statement and talk to the teacher about:

- your child's interests
- how your child learns
- your goals for your child.

Get involved with their school by:

- meeting the teacher
- attending school events with your child, such as transition programs and open day events
- informing the teacher of any changes affecting your child
- talking to other parents
- reading school newsletters and bulletin boards
- attending school events like parent association meetings, fetes, open days or sporting carnivals.

### Family activities at home

You can also help your child's progress at school by doing family activities including:

- Reading aloud (this develops concentration and awareness of language patterns) and writing with them (e.g. shopping lists and letters)
- Stimulating their imagination and natural curiosity (e.g. visiting a zoo, park or airport)
- Provide them with a range of manipulative materials for them to use and teach them how to use them correctly such as crayons, pencils, children's scissors, play dough, box construction
- Practice the skills of moving from one activity from one activity to another
- Playing sports, card or board games help develop mathematical, problem solving, language and social skills such as turn taking
- Shopping, walking or gardening together
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes together.
- Providing ample time for developmental play – construction, blocks and role play
- Engage them in purposeful conversations by practising the art of good speaking and listening skills
- Visit friends and family often and encourage them to interact with different people.

If you have any further questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact the school.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSING PROGRAM

A free health assessment is offered by the Department of Education and Training to all students during their first year of school. This assessment addresses any concerns you may have regarding your child's health and wellbeing and offers advice, information and support as appropriate. You will receive a consent form and questionnaire prior to the confirmed date of the nurse visit, which will need to be returned to the College before the assessment can take place. It is recommended that all children have a basic health check prior to starting school, in particular hearing and eyesight checks.

If your child has been referred to a health care professional such as a speech pathologist, occupational therapist or psychologist please provide relevant reports at time of enrolment to ensure we can support your child when they transition to school.

We trust you will find your experience at Point Cook College an enjoyable and rewarding one.





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