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we have to offer.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Choosing the right primary school for your child is very important and will play a key role in determining how he or she develops academically and socially. We have put this booklet together to help you make that decision. In so doing, we have concentrated on issues that we know are important to parents.

***There is nothing like seeing for yourself.*** Despite our best attempts, this booklet will only give you a taste of what Buninyong Primary is all about - schools are complex places. As such, we urge all prospective families to visit in person where Bernie, Nicole or Narelle will make themselves available to take you on a tour and answer whatever questions you may have.



***You get to choose the campus that best suits your child and family.*** At Buninyong PS we are lucky to have 2 very different campuses, one in Simpson St Buninyong and the other on the Midland Highway in Scotsburn. They are both terrific and have many similarities, but are very different.

So what are the similarities and differences between the campuses? We are the one school, with one governing body (School Council), one principal, one set of policies and an overriding approach to teaching and learning that applies to both campuses. We are resourced as one school, so students from both have excellent access to the learning tools and experiences they need.

Our Buninyong campus is much larger, with 25 classes, while Scotsburn has just the 2. Given that, students who enjoy the action that comes with a big campus, may be more suited to our Buninyong Campus, whilst those who are more comfortable with a smaller quieter environment can be better suited to the Scotsburn Campus.

Our staff all belong to the greater Buninyong PS Team and come together regularly to plan and engage in professional learning. Staff can move from one campus to the other throughout their time with us. The curriculum at each campus is virtually identical, with the most notable difference being a slightly greater emphasis on the environment and sustainability at Scotsburn. We have high level parent involvement at both campuses, which is fantastic. Some parents choose Scotsburn because they want to be part of a small school community where parents can be closely connected.

Access to both campuses is the same, as a school bus runs from Buninyong to Scotsburn each morning and returns in the afternoon. This is at no cost to parents.

Parents are welcome to take a tour of both campuses to help them decide which campus is best for their child. What's best for a particular child can change over time, so students aren't locked into one campus and there is scope to move from one campus to the other where there is good reason.

Further information about our Scotsburn Campus appears on pages 13-16 of this document. Otherwise, the information in this document applies to both campuses.

## CURRICULUM

Like all mainstream schools in Victoria, our curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum. We work hard to ensure that our curriculum is delivered in a meaningful and relevant way, which captures the interest of all students and is personalised to meet their needs. Coverage of all learning areas is important, with an emphasis on the core areas of English and Mathematics - a 120 minute and 60 minute block is devoted to these subjects respectively each day. On a typical day classes will focus on Literacy from 9-11am and Numeracy between 11:30am -1pm.

Throughout their time at primary school students will study Humanities, Geography, History and Economics to investigate how these areas have shaped the world we live in today. In addition to our learning areas there is a major focus on developing core capabilities, which will help students become independent, critical and creative thinkers.

We are also proud of the fact that we are able to offer specialist teaching in the areas of Music, Physical Education, Art, Japanese and STEM.

**Music** - Our Music Program not only incorporates sequential lessons for each year level, but also provides a range of other opportunities for students to be part of. These vary from year to year, but may include involvement with our choir, the musical items which feature at assemblies, performing in 'Lunchtime Live' events, which are usually held once each term and participation in the Victorian State School



Spectacular.

A concert is held every second year, which provides an excellent opportunity for children to experience the performing arts. We have a concert to look forward to in August of 2024.



**PE** - Our popular Physical Education Program is well supported by a full sized, well-equipped gymnasium. The program includes a swimming program and a selection of inter-school sports, particularly for the senior students.

We put lots of energy into preparing students and teams for sporting competitions to give students every chance of experiencing success, and getting the opportunity to compete at higher levels.



**Japanese** - At Buninyong Primary School, all students actively participate in learning Japanese. The program offers opportunities for the students to speak, read and write the Japanese language. The students are exposed to cultural festivals and are immersed in a classroom filled with Japanese artefacts. We were in the routine of taking a group of grade 5 and 6 students to Japan every second year . We look forward to a trip to Japan in October of 2024.



**Art** – Students from all year levels have a weekly session in the Art Room. This is popular with the students and they get to experience a broad range of art forms as they progress through the school. Our Grade 6 Art Team has done an excellent job recently in working with their art teacher to create art works displayed around our school.

**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics)**- STEM has been introduced as as a specialist subject, with a focus on science. Each class has a weekly 60 minute session, which we know is enjoyed by students.



**Library** - We are lucky to have a well-resourced library which all students access regularly. Classes have time allocated in the library each week providing the opportunity to browse, borrow books, read stories and discuss literature. The library is open to all students most lunch times.



**Extra-Curricula Activities** – One advantage of larger schools is a greater pool of resources and expertise, which makes it possible for each student to pursue their interests and get involved with a range of activities on offer. This is exciting and engaging for students and we feel this is a feature of our school.

At Buninyong PS extra-curricula activities include:

- All of the opportunities that come with the specialist subjects mentioned above.
- A School Concert every 2<sup>nd</sup> year and a fete the alternate year
- Debating, which provides participants with opportunities to compete against other schools.
- A camps program (see page 6)
- A wide range of inter-school sporting events
- A scholarship program for students in grades 4-6, providing access to specialised programs in music, cooking, photography and art.
- A leadership program which gives senior students opportunities to:
  - ◇ Run assemblies and deliver the morning announcements each day.
  - ◇ Attend a leadership conference in Melbourne.
  - ◇ Take photography lessons and be responsible for taking photos at school events.
  - ◇ Organise events such as discos and the annual Japanese theme day.
  - ◇ Meet regularly to design and complete art works to go up around the school.
  - ◇ Help out in the library.
  - ◇ Play an active role in spreading the 'B Positive' message across the school.
  - ◇ Learn skills in Digital Technologies and help out classes when they have problems.



These are just a few of the many programs and events that students can get involved in at Buninyong PS.

## CLASS SIZES

We understand that parents are interested in class sizes when selecting a school for their child. We have 10—12 Prep-2 classes in any given year, at an average of around 21-23 per class, while in Years 3-6 the class size average is 24-25. These numbers allow teachers to cater for the learning needs of all students.

Class sizes can make a difference, but more important is the quality of teacher in front of the class. We maintain a focus on recruiting caring and dedicated staff and invest much time and effort to ensure each receives the guidance and support needed to be successful.

Small class sizes combined with dedicated, enthusiastic and professional staff add up to **“quality education”**.



## LEARNING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Buninyong Primary we are committed to catering for all students. Our teachers are skilled at structuring lessons to cater for the needs of all students. Literacy and Numeracy lessons will begin with a whole-class focus and explicit teaching, but then students will break into independent or small group work to undertake tasks before coming back as a whole-class to share what they have learnt. Goal setting and reflection skills are explicitly taught to build independence and help make students, leaders of their own learning.

Despite a teacher's best efforts, some children will need extra support in order to show growth in their learning. As such, we deliver several programs that cater for the needs of these students. These include:

### The Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI)

In response to the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic and its effect on student learning, our school, like other DET schools, has once again been provided with 1 full time tutor for the 2024 school year. Our tutor will work with selected students for 3-4 sessions per week to provide support in specific areas of need.



**Intervention** - Learning support is also provided throughout the year by our Educational Support Team to those students who are identified as requiring tier 2 intervention in a particular area. The focus for these students in 2024 is as follows:

**Literacy** – Support for students with the basics of early reading will be offered to selected students who have been identified through rigorous assessments as requiring extra support. This extra support is delivered by members of our Educational Support team with groups of 3-4 students for 3 sessions per week and complements the classroom program.

**Numeracy** – The Numeracy program is designed to support numeracy skill development with particular emphasis on improving automaticity and fluency of number facts. Automaticity is the immediate recall of basic information. The program provides extra learning support to identified students in Grades 3-6 and enables them to better know and understand basic number facts. This extra support is delivered by our educational support staff with groups of 3 or 4 students for 3 sessions per week.

### Classroom Helpers

Each year we conduct an information session for parents or carers who wish to assist in the classroom. This session focusses on the routines, processes and protocols of learning in the classroom, strategies to support reading instruction and strategies to support writing instruction. The information presented in this session is also useful to assist with your child's literacy development at home.

**Disability & Inclusion** – School leadership works closely with parents and classroom teachers to identify children that require intensive support. This may be in the form of one-to-one assistance for at least part of the week. This is fantastic for the child, as their skills develop with personal assistance. It is also a great support for the classroom teacher who may otherwise have to manage a child with special needs while catering for the rest of the class.

## STUDENT WELLBEING

We are proud of the classroom and playground environment we have at Buninyong Primary School, which is both conducive to teaching and learning, but also to the wellbeing of our students. Our values of Respect, Responsibility and Kindness permeate all aspects of school life and our students certainly present as confident and happy individuals who get along extremely well. In part, this has been achieved because our staff work effectively as a team, employing a whole school approach based on our Student Engagement & Wellbeing Policy (see the school's website for a copy of this document).

Whilst there needs to be plenty of time spent concentrating on learning, our teachers inject a sense of fun and work hard to create an atmosphere that is exciting and engaging. We really do have a fantastic team of teachers who want the absolute best for their students and are willing to go the extra mile to cater for the needs of every individual.

Standards of student behaviour and discipline are important to parents who want their children to be safe, happy and free to learn in a settled and supportive environment. We are very fortunate to have fantastic kids and enjoy strong support from home, which helps our school maintain the sort of school environment that all parents and students enjoy.



Every school will have incidents of inappropriate behaviour to manage, and the types of incidents will vary from school to school. It is how a school deals with inappropriate behaviour that counts. We work hard to make sure any issues are dealt with thoroughly and are followed up.

We like to keep parents well informed when student wellbeing issues arise. It is only when home and school truly work together that significant behavioural improvements can be achieved.



It's important to us that the playground environment is positive, where students have a range of options for play. As such, the school community has worked hard to create a yard with a number of very different play spaces with something to suit everyone.

Our preps at the Buninyong Campus all play together in an area close to their classrooms.

We always have a high level of adult supervision at break times and often you'll see staff actively engaging with the students as they play.

Visitors at break times invariably comment on how it is wonderful to see all the students actively engaged in play or activities of some sort and how well they get along and play together.



## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Our SEL curriculum is primarily implemented through the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) program across Grades P-6.

The RRRR curriculum is an evidence-based whole school approach to SEL, where it develops the personal and social capabilities including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. Respectful Relationships is a wide-ranging initiative to help students manage a range of challenges they may face and covers topics including Emotional Literacy, Strengths, Positive Coping, Problem Solving, Stress Management, Help Seeking, Gender & Identity & Positive Gender Relations.



The 8 topics and activities are explicitly taught in classrooms from Grades P-6, as well as through other school initiatives and priorities including School Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPBS) and the Open Parachute Program. Students participate in at least one lesson per week of Respectful Relationships, along with additional sessions explicitly focused on SWPBS and our school values.

Our SEL promotes equality and helps students learn how to build healthy relationships, face challenges and build empathy, resilience and confidence.



## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Our school has invested heavily in Learning Technologies in recent years (Interactive TVs & iPads), knowing this is an effective way of engaging our students and providing many opportunities for learning.

A 1:1 iPad program involves students in grades 3-6. This has greatly increased the access our students have to learning technologies. Information sessions are held for students entering Grade 3 to discuss school expectations and how parents can support their child as they increase their exposure to technology as a learning tool. These are essential sessions to ensure the students are well supported both at school and at home while working in the online world.



When combined with regular access to our mobile computer lab, our students have excellent access to learning technologies.



## CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

The grade 2s have a sleepover on campus at Buninyong, and at Scotsburn P-2s have a sleepover. These events lead nicely into the grade 3-6 Camping Program.

Our grade 3-6 students (both campuses) participate in camps that run over 2 or 3 days. The camping schedule is outlined below.

Grade 3s & 4 s have a 2 year rotation:

- Queenscliff with a focus on marine life (2 days)
- Anglesea with a focus on adventure activities (2 days)

The grade 5s & 6s also have a 2 year rotation:

- Halls Gap with a focus on team work (3 days)
- Melbourne with a focus on familiarising the students with Melbourne (3 days)



Every second year, we aim to take a group of grade 5/6 students to Japan for 9 days as a means of providing our students with a real world experience to support, apply, enhance and expand their language and intercultural learning. As numbers are limited, students apply for a place on this trip, with selections made on a pre-determined criteria. It's usually about 20-25 students that we can take on this trip and the cost is around \$3,000.



The Department of Education and Training also runs Somers Camp for grade 5 & 6 students. We are invited to send groups of students (usually about 12) to Somers Camp in even years. When our students attend, they join a collection of students from other schools in the Ballarat district. We have lots of students keen to attend this camp, so have to select students based on a pre-determined selection criteria. The cost for these camps is approximately \$250.

All year levels participate in excursions and incursions across the year that provide a range of learning experiences that build on the regular program.

## HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

It is important for schools to remember that a strong influence on any child's attitude to learning is the interest parents take in their child's education.

For this reason, we place great importance on the "home/school" partnership and take advantage of all avenues when it comes to involving parents at school.

Key features of our home/school partnership include:

- Class newsletters are sent home at the beginning of each term to keep parents abreast of class routines and expectations, and what is coming up in the school term ahead.
- A Meet & Greet Night is held mid-term 1 to give parents and teachers the opportunity to touch base, make sure they are on the same page and ensure the year gets off to a good start.
- Informative written reports at mid-year and end-of-year. Each followed up by a formal opportunity for parents to catch up with class teachers by way of three way conversations and parent – teacher interviews.
- Our Compass communication portal that allows parents to receive notifications, submit attendance notes and see their child's timetable. Compass is our official digital communication portal that can be accessed through the internet or downloaded to phones and devices as an App.
- School Council provides parents the opportunity to be involved in key decision-making for our school.
- Parent helpers are welcomed in the classroom.
- Chances to be involved in many other ways (eg, helping out in the library or canteen) - we understand that not all parents may wish to be involved in classrooms.
- Friendly staff that welcome a chat with parents at any time and take 'on board' their concerns or issues in an understanding way.
- We run one major community event each year, alternating between a Fete and a School Concert. These provide lots of opportunities for parents to get involved.



We understand the learning process needs to be shared between the school and home. When the home-school partnership is strong, children are in the best position to achieve results that reflect their true abilities.

## SCOTSBURN CAMPUS

### INTRODUCTION

Buninyong Primary School is very lucky to have a second campus at Scotsburn, delivering a slightly different schooling experience to that provided at the larger Buninyong Campus. At Scotsburn the classes are multi-age and the smaller school allows a more community based schooling experience. Having said that, our children have access to all of the resources and programs run at Buninyong, which is not the case for most small rural schools. A Campus Head (Jarrod Morgan) takes charge of the day to day running of the Scotsburn Campus.



### CONNECTING CAMPUSES

Most small schools are limited with respect to resourcing and the range of experiences they can provide for students. This is not the case for our Scotsburn School Community, as it is part of the larger Buninyong Primary School community. Scotsburn staff are part of the Buninyong Primary School Team and work closely with colleagues as part of that team to engage in professional learning and to plan for the delivery of quality programs.

Scotsburn students are also regularly involved in programs and special events that involve students from both campuses. These include school fetes and concerts, camps, excursions, inter-school sporting teams, debating teams, scholarship programs, student leadership programs, special theme days, trip to Japan, and the many other things that happen in bigger schools. Regular access to the library and gym at the Buninyong campus is also an added bonus. This all means our Scotsburn students enjoy experiences not normally afforded to children in small schools.

## SCOTSBURN FACILITIES

The facilities at Scotsburn are fantastic. There are 3 classrooms, as well as the original building (used for meetings, intervention programs, small group work, cooking and so on), a large multi-purpose room (decked out as a comfortable space for some specialist classes, lunch time activities, assemblies, etc) and another classroom dedicated for Art and Japanese classes. The yard is inviting and presents a broad range of play options for the students. There is a resurfaced oval complete with an in-ground sprinkler system, creative play areas for building cubby huts, a Ga Ga Pit, a Playpod and cubby, basketball rings, sand pit, a range of climbing apparatus and much more.



## SPECIALIST CLASSES

In the past, Scotsburn students travelled to Buninyong for their specialist classes, but these are all now delivered on site. The students are fortunate to have a dedicated Art and Japanese space, a STEM space as well as a renovated multi-purpose room for PE (not to mention the resurfaced oval). As is the case at the Buninyong campus, the specialist subject areas covered are PE, Japanese, STEM and Art.

## STUDENT LEADERS

At the Scotsburn campus, students enter grade 6 expecting to take on a school leadership role. Campus leaders take on the following roles:

- 1. Events Coordinator / Media
- 2. Specialist subjects
- 3. Environment
- 4. B+ (Social Emotional Learning Focus)

In addition, Campus leaders assist in the running of the weekly Assemblies and act as group leaders for our whole school family group activities. With so many opportunities to broaden their leadership skills, the Scotsburn Gr 6 students enter Secondary School with confidence and a wide range of attributes that enable them to flourish during their senior schooling years.



## ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

Scotsburn has a strong environmental focus, with children caring for chickens, a lizard, tending to a vegetable garden, seed propagation & tree planting. Being a Landcare school also enables the children to be involved in programs and excursions in conjunction with the local Landcare group. Our weekly Friday Family Group Rotations also provide a wonderful opportunity for students to go outside to get their hands dirty. During this time they maintain the vegetable garden, take great care of the animals and enjoy looking after what are beautiful school grounds.



At Scotsburn, sustainability is a significant focus. Each class contains 3 different bins that allows teachers to enhance the knowledge of how all students can impact the environment positively. Students learn about the impact of their rubbish, recycling and also food scraps which are used to feed the chooks. All excellent life skills.

## FAMILY GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Friday rotation of gardening, cooking and Positive Ed Team Building activities is a major draw card for the Scotsburn campus and thoroughly enjoyed by all students. A highlight is when the children cook using produce from their vegetable garden. Each week the cooking group prepare, cook and serve a meal for themselves. They develop life skill behaviours such as how to set the table and wash and clean up. The emphasis on correct procedure and manners is yet another important skill that the students develop whilst at the Scotsburn campus.



## COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

The community culture that has been created at the Scotsburn campus is what sets it apart from most. Families are drawn into the friendly and welcoming nature of the campus and enjoy the plethora of opportunities to be actively involved. A welcome picnic early in the year sets the scene which is then followed by a casserole evening, working bees, fundraisers, regular morning teas and our Christmas breakup, which is always good fun. On top of that, the daily opportunity to build lasting friendships with families at drop off and pick up time is what makes the campus such a wonderful place to be.

## CAMPS

Unlike most small standalone primary schools, the students at Scotsburn are in the fortunate position to experience a wide range of camps, excursions and special events with our connection to the Buninyong campus. Our children join in with the major camps along with the Buninyong students. This includes grade 3-6 Camps, Somers Camp and the Japan trip.

## EXCURSIONS

Our Scotsburn students are fortunate to be involved in a variety of excursions throughout any given year. These are seen to be of enormous benefit to the children, giving them broadened educational experiences which also have a great social benefit. All Scotsburn students participate in a Swimming program each year. This program is delivered by qualified staff and offers great learning for our students.





## OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

The school runs Before School, After School and Vacation Care under the banner of Base 1270.

We have employed a terrific team to run this program, which is based in the gymnasium but uses facilities and resources across the school and community. The program is proving to be extremely popular.



Our aim is to provide the children with a fun and engaging program and make use of the school wide resources and community partnerships to achieve this.

For more details or enrolment information, contact the office team.





Playgrounds that have something for everyone

We keep the children active at break times, making sure they have the facilities, equipment, guidance and encouragement to engage in interesting activities.

In recent years we have created many more opportunities for creative play, including the introduction of PlayPods and Lunch Time Clubs.



## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

**How can I see the School in Action?** – Prospective parents are welcome to pop in anytime and someone will be available to give you a tour. Parents are also welcome to come along to one of our **Open Days**, in term 1 (both campuses—March 6 and 7, 9am—1pm). These days present another opportunity to see normal prep and other classes in action.



**School Costs** – The cost of sending your child to a local primary school is very reasonable...generally about \$200, depending on the year level. This covers essential classroom requisites, subscriptions and specialist items. A full explanation of costs and payment options is sent home in term 4 each year.



## TRANSITION INTO PREP

We certainly do our best to give every child the opportunity to make a smooth transition into primary school. Each pre-school has its own transition arrangements with local schools. We work in with our main feeder pre-school (Buninyong Pre-School) to arrange some visits to our school.

However parents with children from any pre-school or day care centre are welcome to have their child participate in the following transition events:

- We run a **Pre-Schooler Program** in term 4. Normally this program is made up of 4 sessions (some 60 and some 90 minutes) that run early in term 4. (see dates below).
- An **Orientation Day** is scheduled for December 10. This is close to a full day of school, starting at 9:30am (9am at Scotsburn) and finishing at 2:30pm. Once the children have settled in on Orientation Day, there is an information session for parents.

Those enrolled will be sent reminders and updates regarding transition activities.



### 2024 PRE-SCHOOLER PROGRAM

As part of our transition process, each year we run a Pre-Schooler Program. To work in with pre-school programs, sessions are run on both Wednesdays and Fridays...participants come along to the Wednesday or Friday session, but not both.

The dates for this year's program are:

- Session 1 – October 9 & 11
- Session 2 – October 16 & 18
- Session 3 - October 23 & 25
- Session 4 – October 30 & Nov 1

Sessions 1 & 2 will run from 10 - 11am and sessions 3 & 4 from 9:30am – 11am. Each week the children will participate in different activities.



This is a great way to help your child make a smooth transition into primary school. All children starting school in 2025 are welcome to join us for this program.

**Note:** The Pre-Schooler Program at our Scotsburn Campus will operate on the Wednesdays only (Oct 9, 16, 23 & 30).

## ENROLMENT INFORMATION

Copies of the enrolment form can be collected from general office or downloaded from the school's website.

It is important to get your enrolment form in as soon as possible. Soon after an enrolment form is submitted, you will receive a letter that either confirms a place for your child or indicates your child has been placed on a waiting list.

Priority for enrolment is those that live within the school's designated area (zone). To find the school you are zoned to, go to [findmyschool.vic.gov.au](http://findmyschool.vic.gov.au) and type in your address.

Contact the principal (Bernie) or the Enrolment Officer (Janine) if you have any questions regarding enrolment.

