



Transition Handbook 2024

General School Information

Principal

Sandy Cartwright
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2024 Teachers

Miss Kate Hughes
Mrs Jude McGrath

2024 Classroom Assistants

Ms Flor & Mr Brent

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<https://www.facebook.com/AlawaPrimary/>

Welcome from the Principal

Greetings to Parents



Transition is an essential part of the school system. We hope this booklet will help you understand how we can all work together to give your child a good foundation for future school years.

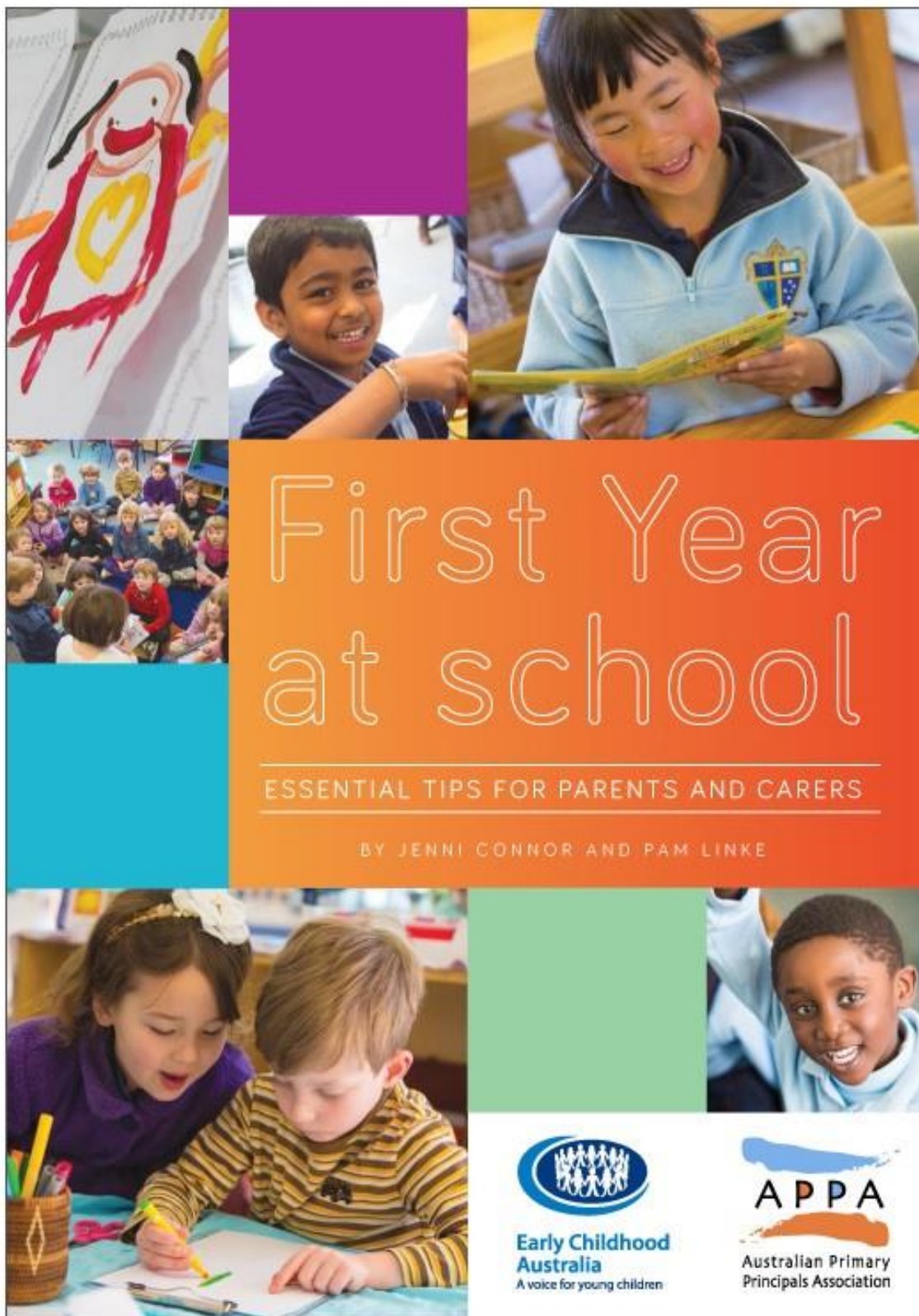
It is our belief that you are a critical part of your child's education at school. You are your child's first teacher and I encourage you to continue the next part of the learning journey with the school. We believe in an open door policy and encourage you to be curious about what is happening in the school environment. There are many ways you can be involved in the school, including attending and being part of School Council, helping out with the occasional working bees, fundraising and assisting in many different ways in the classrooms. Parents can assist in the classroom by listening to reading, sewing or helping make resources. I would encourage you to get to know your child's teacher. Feel free to make an appointment to see them or stop by as you drop your child off to school.

The school has a 'no tolerance' approach towards any form of bullying and harassment. There is an expectation that all staff and students respect the rights of others at all times. We encourage your support in this approach.

I look forward to working with you and your family over the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Cartwright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandy Cartwright
Principal



This very valuable resource book for parents is available for sale through the front office.

Entrance Requirements

In 2024, children who turn 5 years of age before 30 June can begin Transition at the start of the school year. Usually children have developed a good foundation in Preschool and enter Transition with a strong knowledge of school routines, people and expectations. Some children may need to spend longer in Preschool to ensure that their school journey is comfortable and they are confident about learning and ready for learning.

If your child is new to Alawa you will need to fill in enrolment forms that are available at the main office of the school and provide a copy of:

- The child's original birth certificate or immigration papers
- Record of up-to-date immunisation from health clinic or doctor
- A contact phone number for a parent or guardian of your child in addition to an emergency contact.

If your child is continuing on from Alawa Preschool into Transition, you only need to notify the school and their enrolment seamlessly moves into the 'big school'.

The education of each individual is a mutual responsibility shared by the student, home, school, community and society. Alawa Primary School is committed to fulfilling its share of the responsibility by providing appropriate learning opportunities which will encourage all students to grow intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally toward full development of their potential.

Session Times and Food Requirements

Classes: 8:30 - 10:30am

Recess: 10:30 – 10:55am [children bring food from home or order from the canteen
Wednesdays - Fridays]

Muster: 10:55am each day

Classes: 11:00 – 1:00pm

Fruit Break: Children bring a piece of cut up fruit as a brain break and energy boost throughout the middle session.

Lunch – supervised eating time: 1:00 - 1:10pm [from home or order
Wednesdays - Fridays]

Lunch playtime: 1:10-1:40pm

Muster: 1:40pm

Classes: 1:50 – 2:50pm

Staff are on duty 30 minutes before the first bell in the playground and 30 minutes after the last bell at the front of the school. The School is unable to accept responsibility for children in the school grounds before 8:00am and after 3:20pm.

Some children attend outside after school care with Brat Pack NT. Children wait at the top deck of the quadrangle area and are supervised until the Brat Pack NT bus arrives. They are picked up and taken to their Malak campus. For more information about this service, please see

<http://thebratpacknt.com.au/>



Alternatively, Outside School Care NT based at Wulagi Primary School has both before and after-school care and vacation care programs provided. Catering for children aged Five to Thirteen years or if a child is four years and starting school in February and are turning Five before July that year. Parents should arrange care directly with Outside School Care NT. 0499 989 185.

The Darwin Language Centre also run an after school learning program on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For more information on their services visit <https://ntschooledlcl.libguides.com/dlc/home>

At school we promote healthy eating in our cafe and with the children's packed lunches. Items may be purchased from the cafe for recess or lunch Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Cafe lists are available from the front office or on our school website. Online ordering is also available and is by far the most convenient method for students and parents. <https://quickcliq.com.au/>. Further information is available in the school newsletter and at the front office.

What to Wear



Like at all NT Government schools Alawa Primary School has a compulsory uniform which includes a red school shirt or a house colour shirt [Fridays only] and plain black shorts, or a dress for girls, closed in shoes and a bucket hat. Children wear school uniforms each day. There is a wide selection for you to choose from. These include polo shirts/long sleeved shirts with a logo on them, dresses, shorts, and hats, which are available for purchase through the front office of the school. We also have Alawa sport shirts for sale in the house colours yellow [Goyder], green [Manton] and blue [Finnis]. Children must have a bucket hat to play outside and they must wear closed in shoes to school each day. Children who don't have appropriate footwear or a hat will not be permitted to play and will have to sit in the 'no play' line outside the office. Without hats and closed in shoes they will also not be able to fully engage in the special programs such as the Farm, PMP or active games outside.

School Wide Positive Behaviour and Wellbeing – The Alawa Way

Alawa has a whole school positive focus that aims at enhancing student's skills, knowledge and capacity. The School Values; *respect, encouragement, pride* and *personal best* reinforce the expectations for all children, staff and parents. Children receive Merit Awards for their efforts to apply these at Assemblies throughout the year.

Once the children receive 10 merit awards they hand them in at school to receive an Alawa Honour Award at the School Assembly. This is also put into the newsletter prior to the assembly.

The Alawa Wellbeing and Behaviour Management Plan is displayed in each teaching space and teachers will have a consistent use of strategies and classification of behaviour incidents [minor or major]. The Policy and associated support charts are also available on our website in the Parent handbook.

[<https://www.alawaprimary.nt.edu.au/parent-information>]



The Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation® is a Social and Emotional Program which is being used in the Early Years classes. This program incorporates social thinking concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings and understand how their behaviour impacts those around them. It allows us to have a common language to refer to when describing levels of alertness and different tools and strategies to manage behaviours.



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From "The Zones of Regulation" by Leah M. Kuyper • Available at www.socialthinking.com

21st Century Learner's



At Alawa school we are committed to supporting our students to have the skills to be successful learners

ALLE is our 21st Century Learner

ALLE has a set of tools that are used for learning. These are:

Reflect Collaborate
Persist Communicate Problem Solve

Please refer to our 21st Century Handbook for more information which can be found on our website.

<https://www.alawaprimary.nt.edu.au/learning/21st-century-learning>

Curriculum at Alawa

Alawa teachers follow the Early Year's Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum to inform all teaching and learning experiences.

We teach Victorian Modern Cursive Handwriting. When practising with your child please use lowercase letters [except when capitals are normally used]. If children write with capitals it is confusing for them when we try to teach them to use lowercase letters.

The Importance of Investigations

It has been proven and advocated by Early Childhood Australia that children in the Early Years learn best through play. The National Quality Standards and the Early Years Learning Framework also reinforce this.

Through play-based learning we aim to educate and assist your child, by catering for their needs socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively. At Alawa we run a play-based learning program called 'Investigations' which carefully plans for play, encouraging literacy, numeracy, physical, oral language as well as social and emotional development. It also links the children's interests and abilities closely to the learning to put the child in the centre of the curriculum. This is then linked contextually to explicit teaching sessions.



English

The English program at Alawa provides explicit teaching of letter, sound, word and sentence level instruction from Transition – differentiated for student groups, depending on what the Foundation of Early Literacy Assessment (FELA) data tells us. This teaching is supported with rich texts in whole class teaching and decodable readers in small group context – when the students have achieved the required FELA levels.



The FELA data when analysed, also informs the teaching sequence for those students who need specific intervention to assist in their understanding of reading and writing to build the required skills. This applies to students who have not yet achieved the final four testing segments of the FELA. Further oral work is carried out in small groups to give these students time to practice concept like, rhyming, syllables, and syllable isolation.

Children work in small groups to develop their reading, phonological awareness, letter/sound knowledge and writing skills. Activities vary throughout the year as children progress in their learning. Parent volunteers are most welcome.

Research has shown that there are six key components that contribute to successful beginning reading. Because of the importance of these components, they have become known as the 'Big Six':



- **Oral language** - is the foundation of all literacy skills. If children experience rich oral language when young by talking with and listening to adults and other children, they will have a large 'bank' of spoken vocabulary, words they understand when used in spoken communication. Parents can support children in their oral language development by providing a variety of opportunities for children to listen and talk for different purposes.
- **Phonological awareness** - the ability to hear the sounds within language.
- **Phonics** - builds on phonological awareness. During phonics lessons at school, children learn to connect the sound or phoneme to the letter of the alphabet or group of letters that is used to represent it.

- **Vocabulary** - When children have a large 'spoken' vocabulary, meaning they use and understand lots of different words, they are well placed to recognise and understand those words when they see them when reading. As with oral language, parents can best support their children in learning vocabulary by encouraging them to talk and listen for a range of different purposes and reading aloud to them often.
- **Fluency** - Reading fluency refers to the ease with which children read. When reading aloud, fluency is affected by accuracy, rate, and expression.
- **Comprehension** - or understanding what we read is the whole aim of reading. Children make predictions, connect with the text, ask questions about what is being read and consider the text purpose when comprehending.

For more information see <https://www.literacyhub.edu.au/media/dt2lgwyj/the-big-six-a-guide-for-families-english.pdf>

To support the reading process, sight words are explicitly taught and practised. At Alawa, we explicitly teach and assess using the Oxford words in Transition to support reading and writing fluency. You may hear teachers referring to these words as high frequency words (HFW).

Home Reading

In Term 1 the children will bring a picture story book home each day to share with you. We encourage you to read the story together, discuss the story and enjoy it as a family.

From Term 2, when reading with your child at home you will notice that books are decodable as well as High Frequency words are included in the reading folders.

So encourage your child to:

- segment words (sound out) and blend together (re-read the word in one breath),
- use their knowledge with HFW
- use picture clues
- use prediction for repetitive text

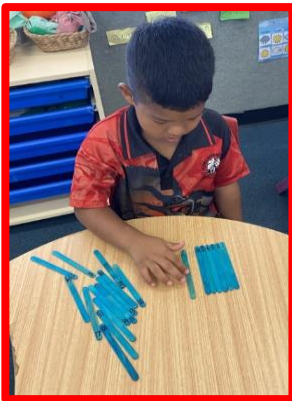
Remember: It is important to provide a range of reading material for your child from a very young age. We want children to develop a love of reading and find reading fun and interesting.

Children will be borrowing weekly from the library when they bring a library bag. If you would like to volunteer your time to read with children and change their readers, please let us know.

Meaningful Maths

Meaningful Maths is a whole school maths program. All children participate in a one hour maths session each day.

- ▶ Children are taught in smaller groups
- ▶ Greater emphasis on developing mental strategies
- ▶ Discussion [student voice] is encouraged
- ▶ Teachers question for thinking
- ▶ Children record their Maths in a variety of ways
- ▶ Less use of text books
- ▶ Teachers and children use a variety of equipment



Transition Helps Your Child

Transition activities aim to develop the foundation of attitudes to learning, study habits and early literacy and numeracy skills. During Transition children progress toward:

- Developing early reading skills such as learning letter sound association and simple sight words.
- Developing early mathematical skills.
- Working and playing together.
- Listening to and following directions.
- Sharing and taking turns.
- Listening quietly when others are talking.
- Cultivating ease and self-confidence in talking before the group.
- Accepting responsibility, to take care of equipment and materials, and assisting with housekeeping duties.
- Finding joy in creative play.
- Enjoying stories, poems and nursery rhymes.
- Understanding safety rules and their importance.
- Linking home knowledge to school learning.



Alawa Farm

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen, Garden Farm program teaches children about the importance of healthy living, connects them to the natural environment and provides an excellent opportunity for children to take responsibility for developing sustainable practices for our wellbeing and survival.



The children engage in hands-on, real-life learning experiences so they can develop an appreciation for fresh, seasonal, nutritious food; healthy eating and lifestyle habits; and scientific understandings from an early age. Early Childhood students [including Transition] participate in this program through weekly visits to the garden and farm. The Farm is open during lunchtimes once per week and children can choose to go and spend their time in the Farm with a staff member.

Perceptual Motor Program [PMP]

The children will participate in a Perceptual Motor Program called KIDDO throughout the year. Perceptual motor is taught in a rotational format with students moving through activities that target their fundamental movement skills, fine-motor and literacy. Children who participate in perceptual motor develop better coordination, greater body awareness, stronger intellectual skills, and a more positive self-image.

Swimming

In the past few years the children in the Early Years at Alawa participated in swimming lessons delivered by Royal Life swimming instructors. We would like to offer this program again in 2024 and we are planning for this to occur in Term 4. The swimming program will include eight, 40-minute lessons. This is an additional cost to the children's education and can be paid either in full or in part with the Back to School Vouchers. More information will be communicated later in the school year.

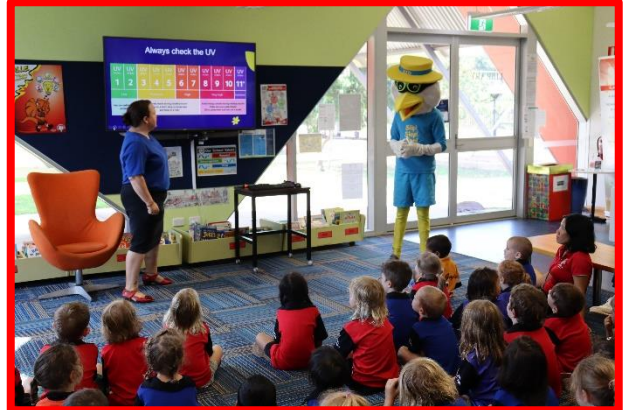


Library

Children will participate in library lessons once a week where they will borrow a library book. Children should bring a library bag to school for use. Your child will not be able to borrow new books while they still have old books at home. The library is open each lunchtime and children can choose to go inside and play quietly, colour in and/or read books with their friends.

Excursions and Visiting Performers

Excursions and visiting performers broaden your child's experience in general and bring 'learning to life' with hands on experiences. Whilst these activities are not compulsory, it is strongly recommended that the children participate, as the teacher usually plans related activities either before or after the experience. A small cost may be incurred.



Please note that written parental permission is sought for any excursion and there is a standard form that is sent home. It may be a good idea to have your doctor's details and child's Medicare number on hand. Parental assistance is always appreciated at all excursions.

Assembly

Assemblies are held every second Friday at 8.40am. They are held in weeks 2,4,6,8 and 10 of Terms 1 -3 and Weeks 1,3,5,7 and 9 of Term 4. Classes will take it in turn to host the Assembly and parents and families are most welcome to attend. The class who hosts the assembly invites parents to stay for morning tea afterwards. Honour awards are distributed at assemblies and listed in the newsletter a few days prior to the Assembly so parents have notice to come along and join us if they are able to.



School Attendance

It is a requirement of the NT Department of Education that students attend school every day and on time. At Alawa we have developed an attendance initiative that encourages all students to attend school each day and to wear school uniform. Alawa has a 90% attendance goal for each student as well as no more than five days late a term. Notes will be sent home for absences, recurring lates and incorrect school uniforms. Please notify the school as early as possible if your child is away from school and advise the reason for the absence.

Communication with Teachers

Class Dojo is the way we communicate with parents about what is happening in our classroom. It is how we celebrate and share student learning and encourage positive student behaviour. It is by far the most convenient method of written communication as you can send messages directly to your child's teacher from your phone or device. The classroom teacher will provide you with information at the beginning of the year on how to join and be involved.



Our school newsletter is sent out every Wednesday afternoon either by email link, through the Xuno Parent Portal or it can be found on the school's website. School news and information will also be communicated to you through our school Facebook page, Xuno Parent Portal and the electronic notice board at the front of the school.

If there is a serious matter you wish to discuss please ring the school and make an appointment with the classroom teacher. Otherwise pop in for a chat as we love to share the learning experience with you.

When to Keep your Child at Home

There are times when children should stay home. If your child is kept home due to illness, please ring the school to inform staff. Each child's attendance is marked daily. While regular attendance is strongly encouraged, if a child is ill, that child needs to stay at home.

In the event of a case of nits in the classroom, a note will be sent home with each child. Please put treatment in your child's hair and remove all eggs before returning your child to school. Children are expected to have their hair checked. Similarly, if a child has allergies, the school must be informed and appropriate medical protocols will be discussed with both the classroom teacher and first aid staff in the school.

Safety

Children in the Early Years of school should practise and discuss the following safety procedures with parents. For your child's safety, as well as for the safety of others, it is recommended your child knows:

- His/her full name, address and telephone number.
- The safest and shortest route to and from school.
- That he/she is expected to go directly home after school.
- That he/she should look both ways when crossing the road.
- That he/she should hold an adult or carers hand when crossing the road.
- That he/she should watch for cars turning the corner.
- That he/she is to accept no rides or go anywhere with strangers.
- What he/she is to do if he/she is lost?
- The dangers of playing in the street, around fires, or where construction is going on.
- That he/she should NOT arrive on the school grounds before 8am, if he/she walks to school or rides a bike.

What Children Need to Bring and Helpful Hints

Children need;

- A backpack, or a bag for to carry his/her work and other items to and from school.
- An Alawa bucket hat (Clearly mark all clothing and belongings with your child's name).
- A water bottle to allow them to drink water throughout the day.
- Spare change of clothes (in case of accidents).
- Closed in shoes that they can be put on unassisted. No thongs or crocs please. Shoes with laces should only be worn if your child can tie them without assistance.

Children in Transition will also be encouraged to bring along a library bag for home library books and school readers. Transition children may borrow a book from the library during their weekly lesson. Please make sure your child looks after our library books.

There are a few ways you can help your child have a successful first year at school.

- Discuss how Transition is a happy place to play and learn and experience exciting events and activities.
- Show sincere interest in the things he/she brings home from school. It will help develop respect for his/her work.
- Pack lunch boxes (and an extra piece of fruit which must be cut into pieces, if needed, for fruit break) with your child. Talk about what may be eaten for fruit break, recess and lunch. At the end of the day, unpack lunch boxes with your child so it gives you an opportunity to discuss why certain foods weren't eaten.
- Support your child to develop independence by packing/unpacking their bag and looking after their belongings.

Children Will Learn Best When...

- ◆ They feel confident because of previous experiences of success.
- ◆ They are expected to learn.
- ◆ Their natural curiosity is aroused.
- ◆ They are active and involved – discovering, solving problems, explaining what they are doing.
- ◆ They feel safe and they feel challenged.
- ◆ They go to school every day.
- ◆ They are mature enough to master the task.
- ◆ The task is interesting and makes sense.
- ◆ They have the opportunity to observe and imitate others.
- ◆ They have plenty of chance to practise.



How Parents can Make a Good School Better

- ♦ Develop a clear understand and support the aims and values of our school.
- ♦ Participate on committees and in discussion groups that consider educational issues and give opinions to the staff.
- ♦ See the school as 'your' school. Encourage your children to see it in the same way.
- ♦ Go to school activities – open days, plays, concerts, picnics, sporting functions, celebrations. Take a friend.
- ♦ Join the official parent group [school council] and look after the school's interests.
- ♦ Welcome new parents. Help them feel that they belong. Build their confidence in the school.
- ♦ Encourage your children to cooperate fully, to join in all school activities and to take pride in the buildings, the grounds and the school community as a whole.
- ♦ Consider being a parent helper in the classroom at various times throughout the year.

Student Support- Wrap Around Service

It is recognised that in order to meet student's needs, further professional assistance may be required.

These students can be referred by the parents or a teacher. In both cases the Special Education Teacher must be first consulted and is responsible for the forms being submitted to Student Services. DOE provides assistance from a Guidance Officer, Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist or Special Education Advisory Teacher and the school's Special Education Advisory team can provide direct assistance to families. Students also have access to the Engine Room and Mindfulness Room which aim to support students with resources to develop their emotional regulation and wellbeing.

2024 School Dates

Semester 1	
Term 1	Tuesday 30 January – Friday 5 April
<i>Term Break</i>	Monday 8 April – Friday 12 April
Term 2	Tuesday 16 April – Friday 21 June
<i>Semester Break</i>	Monday 24 June – Friday 12 July
Semester 2	
Term 3	Tuesday 16 July - Friday 20 September
<i>Term Break</i>	Monday 23 September – Friday 4 October
Term 4	Tuesday 8 October – Thursday 12 December