



FALLS CREEK PRIMARY SCHOOL

PARENT INFORMATION BOOK

2009

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SCHOOL PROFILE

Falls Creek Primary School is a remote, rural school in a unique alpine environment. Situated 30 kilometres from Mt Beauty in the Victorian High Country, the school services the small but fluctuating cosmopolitan population of the Falls Creek ski resort. The school operates year round and student numbers vary seasonally from an initial enrolment of around 10 at the beginning of the school year to 40 in the winter term.

The school was established in 1972 and largely owes its existence to the dedication and support of the Falls Creek community. This sense of community remains strong today as evidenced by the assistance and involvement of the parent body in school activities.

The present school building was constructed in 1985 and facilities include three classrooms, a computer area, small library area and an outdoor play area. The classrooms have operable walls and can be converted to a multi-purpose area. The school is well heated and has a store room for bags and wet weather gear. The outdoor area has artificial turf, a basketball ring, and a sand pit and seating under shade sails.

The purpose of the Falls Creek Primary School is to provide a range of challenging, integrated and motivating learning experiences for the students in all strands of the curriculum. The aim is to develop high standards, foster high self esteem, maximise each child's potential and prepare them for further education.

Key programs operating in the school are:

- The Japanese exchange program where senior students from Falls Creek PS go on exchange to Japan for two weeks every second year and in alternate years this school hosts Japanese students for a similar period.
- The student teacher program with Victoria University where student teachers from the university undertake placements at Falls Creek Primary School for the whole of Term 3.
- The winter snowsport program which culminates in participation in the Victorian and Australian Interschool Snowsport Championships. The school has considerable success in both team and individual events.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Staff

Principal:	Miss Helen Whittaker
Business Manager:	Mrs Carol Bartholomew
Teachers:	Renee Albiston (Tuesdays) Mr Julian Collins (MARC – Library teacher) Additional teachers are employed as needed during the winter snow season

Term dates 2009

Term 1:	Monday 2nd February (first day for students) to Friday 3rd April
Term 2:	Mon 20th April to Fri 26th June
Term 3:	Mon 13th July to Fri 18th September
Term 4:	Mon 5th October to Fri 18th December

Public holidays

Labour Day	Monday 9th March
Queen's Birthday	Monday 8th June

School hours

Terms 1, 2 and 4

School commences:	9.00am
Morning recess:	11.00am to 11.15am
Lunch:	12.30pm to 1.15pm
Dismissal:	3.00pm

Term 3

School commences:	9.00am
Morning recess:	11.00am to 11.15am
Lunch:	12.30pm to 1.00pm
Dismissal:	2.45pm

The above school times for Term 3 apply on days when the students are not participating in snowsports. School hours for snowsport days will vary and will be advised to parents prior to the commencement of the snowsport program.

NEW ENROLMENTS

Enquiries regarding admission to Falls Creek Primary School are always welcome and should be directed to the school office either by telephone on 03 5758 3311 or by email at falls.creek.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Eligibility for admission

To be eligible for admission a child must be at least five years of age by 30 April of the year in which admission is sought. Only Australian citizens or students with specified visas are eligible for admission. Admission is subject to space being available at the school.

Places are currently available for Terms 1, 2 and 4 of the 2009 school year. However, there is extremely high demand for places for the winter term. Families wishing to have their children attend the school for Term 3 may apply to the school to have their names added to a waiting list.

Enrolment process

A confidential Student Enrolment Form must be completed, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school before a student may be admitted. Parents must also provide:

- Evidence of the child's date of birth. This would normally be a birth certificate for children born in Australia.
- An immunisation certificate. This can be obtained from the local council or the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (phone 1800 653 809).
- Evidence of residency for children born overseas.
- If the child is transferring from another school, there must be a transfer note from the previous school.

Students enrolling for the winter term may choose to commence at Falls Creek Primary School on any of the following dates:

- Any date up to Monday 18th May 2009
- Tuesday 9th June 2009 (the day following the ski season opening)
- Monday 13th July 2009 (the first day of Term 3)

The above dates have been set to minimise the disruption to the school program caused by new students arriving at the school and to allow for adequate planning and staffing arrangements to be made. The school should be given notice of the intended enrolment date well in advance.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

Falls Creek Primary School operates on a year round basis and provides learning experiences in the three strands of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). These strands are: Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline-based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning. The strands cover the traditional subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Languages Other Than English (Japanese), as well as the humanities, interpersonal development, personal learning, civics and citizenship, communication and thinking processes.

The focus each morning is on English and Mathematics, with other subjects covered in the afternoons.

As part of Health and Physical Education during the summer terms, some of the activities undertaken are the swimming program, tennis and ball games. The students participate in Jump Rope for Heart and Kanga Cricket. During Term 3, all students are involved in a comprehensive snow sports program.

A part of the school program, the students visit Mount Beauty and Tawonga Primary Schools on an occasional basis. This enables them to participate in sports days, grade days, the Life Ed program and special days with an art or music focus.

The school offers very small class sizes and excellent computer access across all year levels.

More information on the school's specialised programs can be found below.

Japanese

The LOTE studied at Falls Creek Primary is Japanese.

Since 1992 the students at Falls Creek Primary School have studied Japanese language and culture. Interns from the University of Kitakyushu in Japan stay at the school for nine months of the year and share their knowledge with the students.

The school has a sister school relationship with Hokubu Elementary School, which is in Innai on the island of Kyushu. Every second year since 1997, senior students from Falls Creek Primary School have visited Innai, staying with host families and attending local schools in the area. In alternate years students from Innai visit Falls Creek for a similar program. For the last few years this exchange has been run in conjunction with Darnum Primary School and Nilma Primary School in Gippsland.

Library

The MARC (Mobile Area Resource Centre) van visits the school one afternoon a fortnight. This gives the students greater access to library facilities and enables them to borrow library books.

Snowsports

Falls Creek Primary School makes the most of the unique alpine environment in which the school is situated. During the winter term, snow sports are an integral part of the school curriculum.

Each student at the school participates in the snow sports program during Term 3. This comprises an afternoon of alpine skiing or snowboarding lessons given by the Falls Creek Snowsports School on each Friday. Also, teachers from the school instruct the students in cross country skiing one afternoon a week. In 2008 senior students also had the opportunity to participate in a snow sports extension program each Wednesday afternoon. On this afternoon, students did alpine, snowboarding or cross country skiing as determined on a weekly basis by the snow sports coordinator. The details of the program to be offered in 2009 are yet to be confirmed.

Students are expected to provide their own ski clothing, protective gear, alpine ski equipment and/or snowboarding equipment if they wish to snowboard. Helmets are compulsory for alpine skiing and snowboarding. Cross country equipment (skis, boots and poles) is provided by the school.

There is a fee for the snowsports program.

The snow sports program culminates with students from Years 3 to 6 participating in the Victorian Interschool Snowsports Championships, held at Mt Buller at the end of August. Teams and individuals who qualify are encouraged to then compete in the Australian Championships held in September. In past years Falls Creek Primary School has been extremely successful in these competitions.

Swimming

During late Term 4 and the early part of Term 1, students participate in a swimming program at Mt Beauty Swimming Pool. They have lessons from AusSwim instructors and are supervised by the teacher from Falls Creek Primary School.

The program culminates in a swimming carnival held in March. The carnival is organised by Mount Beauty Primary School and includes students in Year 3 and above from Mount Beauty, Tawonga and Falls Creek Primary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Absences

Regular attendance at school is essential for the continued progress of students. Children who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on learning the basic building blocks in subjects, and may experience long term learning difficulties. Written notification is required if your child will be absent from school for any reason. Forms are available from the school office to make it simpler to write a note.

Education Maintenance Allowance

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is paid to low income families to help with education-related costs. If you have a child under 16 years of age, receive an eligible Centrelink benefit and hold a valid Health Care Card or a valid pension card you may be eligible to receive this allowance.

The amount is split evenly between the parent/guardian and the school and is paid in two instalments – from March for instalment 1 and from August for instalment 2. The parent portion may be used to help with excursion or other school-related expenses as they see fit.

For further information, or to apply for this allowance, contact the school office.

Excursions

Excursions are organised by the school on an occasional basis. Details of any excursions will be advised in the school newsletter.

It is a Department of Education and Early Childhood requirement that written approval from parents is obtained for all excursions. It is therefore essential that permission forms and medical forms are completed and returned to the school in a timely manner. Prompt payment of any excursion fees would be appreciated to avoid time being wasted by staff in chasing outstanding fees. Money sent to school should be in an envelope and clearly labelled with the name of the child, amount and what the money is for.

Homework

Homework helps children by supporting classroom learning, fostering good lifelong learning and study habits, and providing an opportunity for students to be responsible for their own learning.

You can help your child establish a homework routine in a number of ways, such as finding a regular time to read together. It is important that children enjoy reading and that they receive regular encouragement from home. Read together, talk about the book, encourage and show an interest in reading.

In Prep, homework mainly consists of daily reading. Children in higher grade levels will receive more homework.

Lunch

Children need to bring enough food/drink for morning recess and lunch. Please note that during Term 3, children should bring food that does not require preparation or heating. Due to safety concerns, students will not be able to use the kettle, oven or microwave to prepare their lunches.

Healthy eating has a long-lasting and positive impact on a child's growth, development and health. It will maximise his or her concentration and ability to learn.

Foods eaten at school contribute significantly to your child's daily nutrient intake and also have a considerable influence on the development of their eating habits, growth patterns and energy levels.

Good lunch ideas include:

- Sandwiches or pita bread with cheese, lean meat, or salad
- Cheese slices, dry biscuits with spread and fresh fruit
- Washed and cut-up raw vegetable or fresh fruits
- Water bottles, or Tetra Pak of milk

Highly processed, sugary, fatty and salty foods should make up only a very small part of your child's diet. Foods to limit in school lunches include:

- Processed meats such as salami, pressed chicken and Strasbourg
- Chips, sweet biscuits, and muesli and breakfast bars
- Fruit bars and straps
- Cordials, juices containing sugar, and soft drinks

Please let the Principal know if your child is allergic to certain foods.

Money sent to school

All monies sent to school should be in an envelope or bag and labelled with the name of the child, amount and reason for sending it to school.

Newsletter

A newsletter is normally sent home fortnightly. Due to the nature of the school program, not all students are in the school building in the afternoons to be given the newsletter. Subject to your access to the internet, the best way to guarantee receiving the newsletter regularly and on time is to have it sent by email. This also helps to minimise the school's impact on the environment. If email is not convenient, a hard copy can be sent home with your child. Spare copies of forms needing to be completed and returned to school are available in the office for those who are unable to print them off at home.

Punctuality

To maximise the learning opportunities of children at the school, it is important that they arrive at school with ample time to be ready for class to start at 9.00am. If your child will be late to school, please ring the school.

Teachers will endeavour to have classes finish punctually so as not to inconvenience parents who are waiting to collect their children.

School Council

The School Council is the official management body of the school, with responsibility for finance, facilities, ancillary staffing and educational policy. The Council comprises 5 parent members and the Principal as an ex-officio member.

Two Council meetings are held each term. They are open meetings and interested parents are welcome to attend. School Council elections are held in March each year.

School Start Bonus

The School Start Bonus is paid to every family of a child starting in Prep at the school. This initiative helps parents meet the cost of purchasing school related equipment. Parents will be issued with a voucher by the school. This voucher can be redeemed at selected Australia Post outlets from mid January 2009. This is a one-off payment of \$300.

Student Code of Conduct

Good standards of behaviour are expected from students at all times.

A Student Code of Conduct is in the process of being drafted for approval by School Council. It will be distributed to all families when finalised.

Student-free days

The 12th June will be a student-free day for all Victorian schools in 2009.

Student Health

A medical form is sent home at the beginning of each year. This is kept on file for the year. If there are any changes to your child's health, please contact the office for a new form.

It is essential that full details of any disabilities such as hearing, sight or speech problems, allergies or other conditions are known to the school.

If your child is asthmatic, please have your doctor complete an asthma management plan which will be kept on file at the school.

When enrolling a child in primary school, or transferring between schools, parents need to provide their child's immunisation certificate. Children who are not immunised can still attend school. However, if an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs at the school they will be sent home until the danger has passed.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction when a person is exposed to an allergen. If your child has anaphylaxis you must provide an ASCIA Emergency Action Plan signed by your doctor (forms available from www.education.vic.gov.au/anaphylaxis/) to the school and your child's EpiPen.

Children in Prep receive a health assessment from a school nurse. Prior to the nurse's visit, parents will receive a School Entrant Health Questionnaire. All information provided is confidential. Due to the school's low Prep enrolment, Falls Creek students usually see the nurse at Tawonga Primary School.

If your child has head lice, he or she may come to school the day following the commencement of treatment. Please let the class teacher know, so that school families can be advised of an outbreak.

In the case of some infectious diseases, a child must be excluded from school. Further information is available from the school office.

Medication for your child should be clearly labelled with the child's name, the correct dosage required and when it is to be administered. It is the responsibility of the child's teacher to give him/her medication whilst at school. If you have any queries or concerns with the administration of medication, please speak to the Principal. Under no circumstances will medication be administered without written direction from you, the parent or guardian of the child.

It is advisable not to send children to school if they are unwell. Apart from the possible spread of the illness, it is unfair to the child, teacher and classmates to send a child along if he or she is unwell. Children who are sick or not fully recovered from an illness are unlikely to be receptive to learning activities and are better off at home.

Student Reports

Student reports are sent home at the end of Terms 2 and 4. If parents wish to have an interview with their child's teacher, they are welcome to contact the teacher to organise a time.

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to your child's progress and happiness at school.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your child, whether it be at report time or not, please contact the teacher. The best times to ring a teacher are during recess or lunch times or after school. Please try to avoid contacting teachers during lesson times.

Student supplies

The school provides most of the children's supplies at no cost to the families. However, it is much appreciated if parents of winter students could provide their children with basic supplies such as pens, pencils, textas, erasers and rulers.

Parents will be required to pay a fee for the cross country ski program. The fee covers hire of ski equipment, lessons and trail fees.

SunSmart

Falls Creek Primary School has a SunSmart policy. This requires all students and staff to wear a broad-brimmed hat outdoors during Terms 1 and 4. Children should also use sunscreen and wear appropriate SunSmart clothing.

Sunscreen and sunglasses or goggles are essential during Term 3 for the snowsport program.

Sunscreen is provided at school and children are encouraged to use it at play times and during physical education and sport.

Uniform

Due to the transient nature of the Falls Creek community the school does not have a school uniform. Students should wear clothing appropriate to the environment and be mindful of SunSmart guidelines. Sensible footwear is required. Thongs are not appropriate.

During winter, children need to bring slippers, runners or similar to change into. Ski or snow boots should not be worn past the entry foyer. Children should wear warm comfortable layers underneath their ski suits. Hanging space is provided for their wet weather gear. Specific clothing requirements for the snowsport program are sent home prior to the commencement of the program.

Please ensure that items of clothing and shoes, including ski gear and boots, are labelled with your child's name. Unclaimed items will be sent to the Op Shop at the end of each term. Winter families are encouraged to check they have all of their child's property before leaving at the end of the winter term.