

Parent Information Handbook, 2026-2027



90 Cadles Road, Carrum Downs, 3201
Phone: 03 9782 1333

Email: Banyan.Fields.PS@education.vic.gov.au

Principal: Patrick Halpin





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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways on which we live, learn and play. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded, and we are committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in our care to connect to their Cultures, Countries, and Communities.



Djimbang'gurr



Tobin



Warrain



Kurburoo

Principal's Welcome

On behalf of the Banyan Fields Primary School community, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new families. I am excited that you are considering Banyan Fields as a partner in your child's education and look forward to building a relationship with all members of your family. This handbook has been designed as a reference point as you prepare for your child's transition.

At Banyan Fields Primary School, our vision is to create a bright future for every learner, where **Tenacity**, **Equity**, **Synergy** and **Stewardship** guide us to thrive together. We are committed to delivering a holistic education - academic, emotional and social - within a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by our core values of **Tenacity**, **Equity**, **Synergy** and **Stewardship (TESS)**, we strive to ensure that every student feels safe, respected, and ready to thrive.



The overarching goal, of our work at Banyan Fields, is to ensure that every student feels safe and happy at school so they can maximise their learning. We place a strong emphasis on ensuring that every student experiences a wide and varied range of learning opportunities throughout their seven years of primary school. As you read through this handbook, you will learn about the specialist subjects currently on offer. It is likely that these will remain the same in 2027 but please note that changes may be made based on what's right for the students, the school and the community at any given time. You will also read about the camps, excursions, and extra-curricular activities and how we celebrate the achievements of individual students, as well as class groups, year levels, cohorts, and as a whole school.

The teachers at Banyan Fields Primary School operate in Professional Learning Communities and use up-to-date, evidence-based practices to deliver the Victorian Curriculum. In 2026, our whole school focus is on spelling. This involves weekly professional learning sessions run by the school improvement leaders, analysis of student work and assessment to identify gaps in our students' knowledge, and a multi-tiered system of supports to maximise learning.

Through developing strong relationships with neighbouring kindergartens and local high schools, we create effective and supportive pathways for our students. Our wellbeing learning specialist coordinates non-academic supports for our students, when required, and we have access to a network of allied health professionals, including psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists and occupational therapists.

Our staff have engaged in professional learning aligned with the Berry Street Education Model. This trauma-informed, positive education approach benefits every member of our community. It plays a central role in how staff interact with students to ensure that our classrooms are calm, supportive spaces, where we all thrive. Our staff are attentive to how students are feeling throughout their day at school and respond appropriately. This has led to a culture in which students are eager to learn and grow. Our structured routines and positive behaviour strategies further enhance our harmonious learning environment.

We take great pride in our comprehensive academic program, which includes explicit instruction in both Literacy and Numeracy. Our integrated studies approach ensures that our students understand the purpose of the learning tasks and are provided with an opportunity to implement their developing knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. They also gain an understanding of the importance of the essential skills and attitudes they will require to navigate the rapidly evolving world.





Collaboration with parents and the wider community is essential to our success. We nurture the central role that parents play and believe in shared responsibility for student engagement. Our proactive school council takes a consultative and collaborate approach to decision making and this ensures our focus remains directed on our goals.

We are immensely proud of our school's standing within the community. Working together in an educational partnership offers tremendous advantages and potential for everybody. We invite you to be an active participant in our school's journey through getting involved with school council, our parent association, fundraising events, policy review, volunteering in the classroom and on excursions, etc.

Until we meet again, please enjoy reading through this handbook and don't forget to follow our social media accounts to get a real feel for the school and its culture.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "PH".

Patrick Halpin
Principal





Vision

Creating a bright and connected future for every learner, where **Tenacity**, **Equity**, **Synergy** and **Stewardship** guide us to thrive together.

Mission

At Banyan Fields Primary School, we are committed to delivering a holistic education – academic, emotional and social – within a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by our core values of **Tenacity**, **Equity**, **Synergy** and **Stewardship (TESS)**, we strive to ensure that every student feels safe, respected, and ready to thrive.

Values

Tenacity: *We try, we learn, we never give up*

We persist with purpose. Together, we stay focused, prepared, and committed to growth - supporting each other through challenges and celebrating progress.

Equity: *We include, we respect, we support*

We uphold fairness and inclusion. We value the unique backgrounds and strengths of every student, staff member, caregiver, and community partner, ensuring everyone has access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Synergy: *We listen, we learn, we grow together*

We achieve more together. Collaboration across students, staff, families, and the community creates shared strength, deeper learning, and a united path forward.

Stewardship: *We care for people, places and possibilities*

We act with care and responsibility. We nurture our relationships, resources, and environment - working in partnership to build a better future for all.

Our school mascot, TESS, reminds us that we can all thrive when we demonstrate our values of **Tenacity**, **Equity**, **Synergy** and **Stewardship**.





Awards and Celebrations

Student achievements are celebrated in a number of ways at Banyan Fields Primary School.

Generalist Classes

Students are acknowledged in every class in our school through our Class Dojo token economy and weekly awards. They can earn points for demonstrating our school values and redeem those points for rewards that are discussed and agreed at the beginning of each year.

Specialist Classes

The specialist teachers present awards to students who have demonstrated our school values at our assemblies.

Attendance Awards

Attendance Awards are presented to the grade who has demonstrated strong or improving attendance levels. The focus changes each time so students are expected to maintain high levels of attendance throughout the year. Consideration is given to those students who are away because of an explained illness or medical appointment.

Other Achievements

Throughout the year, other achievements (sporting, community engagement, etc.) are celebrated through our school newsletter and social media. Parents and carers are invited to communicate outside-school successes with the school so we can celebrate with the community.





Tenacity: *We try, we learn, we never give up*

- **Students** demonstrate Tenacity by approaching learning with determination, persevering through challenges, and using feedback to improve rather than giving up.
- **Staff** model Tenacity by maintaining high expectations, reflecting on practice, and working collaboratively to find solutions that support every learner.
- **Families** demonstrate Tenacity by encouraging resilience at home, supporting consistent routines, and partnering with the school to help children overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

Typical Day at Banyan Fields

8:45am	Welcome Circle	<i>Thrive & Shine runs in place of our Welcome Circle on Wednesdays</i>
9am	Session 1	
9:50am	Session 2	<i>Students are given an opportunity to have a fruit snack during the morning session. The specific time will depend on their schedule for the day.</i>
10:40am	Session 3	
11:30am	Recess	<i>Students eat in their classrooms before going outside.</i>
12pm	Session 4	
12:50pm	Session 5	
1:40pm	Lunch Eating	
1:50pm	Lunch Play	
2:20pm	Session 6	
3:10pm	Dismissal	





Attendance

At Banyan Fields Primary School, we believe that every day matters. Attendance is not just about being present — it is about being ready to learn, connect and thrive.



Through our Arrive to Thrive commitment, we aim to build a culture where:

- Students arrive on time, ready to engage when the 8:45 am bell goes.
- Families understand the powerful link between attendance and achievement.
- Staff consistently promote high expectations and supportive relationships.
- Every student feels a strong sense of belonging and purpose at school.

Jennifer Churcher (Assistant Principal) leads the Attendance Working Party. Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to:



- Ensure your child is at school every day, unless they are unwell
- Develop a consistent morning routine to ensure predictability and calm
- Aim to be at school by 8:30am to allow your child time to interact with their peers and prepare themselves for their day of learning before the school day begins (Please note: students should not arrive at school before 8:30am as there is no supervision in place)
- Avoid scheduling family holidays during term time

If your child is going to be away on a particular day, parents/carers must report the absence via Compass. Parents/Carers will receive an SMS message by 10am if their child is marked absent without an explanation.



If your child is going to be late for school, parents must

- Escort their child to the office to sign them in
- If the child is expected to arrive later than 9:30am, an absence note must be logged on Compass

All students arriving after 8:45am must visit the school office to be signed in. They are given a late slip that is then passed to the student's teacher on arrival at their classroom.

An award is given to one class at each assembly based on their attendance data. This could be based on total attendance, fewest absences, biggest improvement, etc.





Equity: *We include, we support, we respect*

- **Students** demonstrate Equity by showing fairness, kindness, and respect for others, valuing differences, and including everyone in learning and play.
- **Staff** model Equity by knowing their learners well, removing barriers to learning, and providing targeted support and opportunities so all students can thrive.
- **Families** demonstrate Equity by respecting diverse perspectives, advocating for their children's needs, and working in partnership with the school to promote inclusive and supportive learning environments for all.

Wellbeing

Jordyn Bower (Learning Specialist) oversees the wellbeing initiatives and approaches at Banyan Fields Primary School. She is supported by a wider team including Sharleen Nason (Assistant Principal), Alex Hirst (Learn to Thrive Teacher), Linda Azzopardi (Chaplain), and the team of 19 integration aides.



Jordyn Bower



Sharleen Nason



Alex Hirst



Linda Azzopardi

The team meets weekly to discuss supports for students across the school and each response is dependent on the individual child and situation. Supports may include:

- Integration aide support in the classroom and/or on the yard
- Sessions in Learn to Thrive with Alex Hirst or Linda Azzopardi
- Referral to the Student Support Services
- Interaction with the student's NDIS funded team
- Engagement of our Koorie Engagement Support Officer or relevant visiting teacher
- Establishment of a student support group





Engagement

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is held every Tuesday and Friday morning and provides an opportunity for our students to start their day off with a healthy meal that they eat alongside their friends, classmates, house mates and the rest of our school community. Students are invited from 8:10 until 8:30am.

Ready Set, TESS

Our locally designed program is entitled *Ready Set, TESS*. The aim of *Ready Set, TESS* is to establish a positive, consistent, and engaging start to each term by explicitly reconnecting students with the school's values of Tenacity, Equity, Synergy and Stewardship, while building routines, expectations, relationships and learning behaviours that support success, wellbeing and belonging.

Ready Set, TESS helps to bring together our key cultural norms. These include:

- Our vision and values
- Berry Street Education Model
- Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Supports
- Positive Classroom Management Strategies
- Rights, Responsibilities and Privileges

Professional Learning Communities

At Banyan Fields, the students are assigned to one particular class each year. The teachers work in teams, what we call Professional Learning Communities, and this means that, while one generalist teacher will have overall responsibility for your child's school experience, they are likely to work with a wide range of teachers across the year. [You will read more about how our Professional Learning Communities operate on page 13 of this handbook.](#)

House Activities

At Banyan Fields Primary School, our House Activities involve more than sports. Our House Leaders organise activities for the students to complete that are linked to all areas of the Victorian Curriculum. This included literacy, numeracy and sport.





Camps and Excursions

As well as their classroom experiences, Banyan Fields offers a range of extra-curricular activities. Our camps and excursions schedule involves the students participating in excursions and incursions every year. In Year 2, they begin their camp experiences through an evening activity at school. This is extended in Year 3 with a school sleepover and then builds into a 2-night camp in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. Each of the activities and experiences has been specifically chosen to ensure your child has an opportunity to build their independence, resilience, social skills and more.

In the senior years, our students participate in Lightning Premiership sporting activities.

Thrive & Shine

Every Wednesday morning, our students select their preferred activity that they attend from 8:45 until 9am, in lieu of their welcome circle. The activities on offer in 2026 include:

- STEM activities
- Singing (choir)
- Playground games
- Running Club
- Sport skill development
- Dance
- Mindful colouring
- Free Play
- Calm Club

Swimming

Every year level attends a swimming program in Paul Sandler Swimland on Hall Road. The students walk to and from their swimming lesson, supported by staff and volunteer parents.

Thriving Through Excellence (ThriveX)

Students in our senior years are invited to apply to attend our extension program, entitled Thriving Through Excellence. They are expected to submit an application and commit to a 16 week program that is run during lunchtime and designed to provide an opportunity for our students to shine in a specific area. They may choose from:

- Reading





- Creative Writing
- Mathematics
- STEM
- Visual Arts
- Sports
- Auslan
- Choir

Lunchtime Clubs

Many students enjoy being outside and interacting with their friends on the playgrounds, playing sport or building in the sandpit. Some students prefer to engage in different activities, however, and may choose to join our Calm Club or Gardening Club.

- Calm Club is held during both recess and lunch every day. Students can read, draw, write, build, or play boardgames in the school library with like-minded schoolmates
- Gardening Club is held once per week and the students get to plant seeds, care for the seedlings and growing plants, and then enjoy the flowers they have grown. At certain times of the year, they can harvest the vegetables and develop an understanding of how hard work leads to rewards.

Our lunchtime clubs will grow as we develop so watch out for new opportunities for your child to engage.

Buddies

During the transition sessions in November, your child will be assigned a senior buddy from Year 5 or Year 6, whose role it will be to guide and support the Foundation students. The buddies visit the Foundation classrooms throughout the school year and spend time with them on special occasions (e.g. Book Week) and on the yard. Having a senior buddy helps to create a smooth transition into primary school and supports social interactions for all students involved.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

CSEF is designed to support eligible families with the cost of camps, sports events and excursions. Applications are submitted annually by parents/carers. Please contact the office for more information.





Smith Family Foundation

Banyan Fields Primary School is delighted to partner with the Smith Family. Please see the flyer below for more information and contact Alice Stubbs by phone or email if you would like to access the supports on offer.



What is *Learning for Life*?

The *Learning for Life* program works in partnership with families to support their children's education and increase their chances of success at school.

Learning for Life provides:



Support from a dedicated Family Partnership Coordinator



Access to educational programs for the whole family



Scholarship money to help with the costs of schooling

Who is eligible for *Learning for Life*?



To be eligible, a family must:

- ✓ Have a current Health Care or Pension Concession Card
- ✓ Have a child in a primary school we work with
- ✓ Demonstrate commitment to education through regular school attendance

What else do I need to know?

Learning for Life is a partnership between the family and The Smith Family.

The parent, guardian, or caregiver, must commit to:

- Regular school attendance
- Completing a yearly update for each child
- Providing a school report yearly for each child
- Maintaining contact with The Smith Family



How can a family join *Learning for Life*?

If you know a family who meets all the above eligibility criteria and would like to join the *Learning for Life* program, please provide the expression of interest form or speak to your local Family Partnership Coordinator.



Alice Stubbs
Family Partnership Coordinator

M 0479 177 092

E alice.stubbs@thesmithfamily.com.au





Specialist Subjects

Students at Banyan Fields attend specialist lessons for seven sessions per week. Each session lasts for fifty-minutes and include:

- [Health and Physical Education](#) (2 fifty-minute sessions per week)
- [Auslan](#)
- [Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths \(STEM\)](#)
- [Visual and Media Arts](#)
- [Performing Arts](#)
- [Student Empowerment](#)

While the students are at their specialist classes, the generalist teachers work together in year level Professional Learning Communities to analyse student data, research and discuss best practice, and plan effective and engaging lessons that ensure all of the students are exposed to their age-appropriate curriculum that is differentiated to meet their individual needs.





Synergy: *We listen, we learn, we grow together*

At Banyan Fields Primary School, Synergy is about working together to achieve more than we could alone.

- **Students** demonstrate Synergy by collaborating positively, listening to others' ideas, and contributing their strengths to group learning.
- **Staff** model Synergy through teamwork, shared responsibility, and open communication to support consistent and high-quality learning experiences.
- **Families** demonstrate Synergy by building strong partnerships with the school, engaging in open communication, and working alongside staff to support children's learning and wellbeing.

Volunteer Parents

Many of our programs would not be possible without volunteers from our parent/carer community. All volunteers are required to:

- Complete the [online induction process](#)
- Obtain a [Working with Children Check](#) and name Banyan Fields Primary School as an organisation at which you volunteer
- Attend an activity specific induction with the organising teacher

Activities that parents often enjoy supporting include:

- Learning activities in the classroom
- Excursions and camps, including swimming
- One of our specialist subjects
- Lunchtime Clubs
- Thriving Through Excellence
- Thrive & Shine

School Council

School Council is responsible for school governance and involvement provides parents and carers with an opportunity to learn about how decisions are made about the future direction of the school. Elections are held in Term 1 every year.





Parent Association

Our Parent Association was established in 2025 and is responsible for running schoolwide events throughout the year. The group meets once per month. Parents and Carers can express an interest in getting involved at any time through the year.

Parent Contributions

The details and processes related to financial contributions by parents are published in Term 4 each year and include:

- Curriculum Contributions: classroom consumables, materials and equipment, online subscriptions, ICT devices for classroom use, printing and photocopying
- Other Contributions: library, student wellbeing, first aid equipment, software, etc.

In addition, families are advised that there are optional events held throughout the year. Classroom teachers will advise you of the approximate cost early in the year to support your budgeting.

Communication

Banyan Fields Primary School communicates with families and the wider community in a variety of ways:

Compass

- Notifications are sent from the school to parents and carers via Compass. Parents and carers can access Compass through the [website](#) and the app.
- If your child is absent, you can enter an absence note on Compass. Schools are legally obliged to retain attendance notes, explaining all student absences. At least once per term, families are sent a reminder to enter an absence note for any absence not explained.
- School reports are published on Compass at the end of each semester. Families are strongly encouraged to read their child's report and familiarise themselves with their child's progress.
- Permissions for incursions, excursions and camps are completed on Compass. Payments can also be made through the platform using a credit or debit card.





Newsletters

- Each year level prepares a weekly newsletter that is shared through Compass. Families are encouraged to keep abreast of key dates and events for each of their children.
- The school publishes a fortnightly newsletter with information about what's happening across the school. Key dates are published and updated, as well as celebrations and announcements.

Social Media

Parents and carers are encouraged to follow Banyan Fields on Facebook and Instagram. While we don't use social media as a formal mode of communication, it can be helpful as a reminder of upcoming events.

Assemblies

Assemblies are held every Friday afternoon in the gym and alternate between *Junior* (Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2) and *Senior* (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6). The student leaders run our assemblies and, while they are primarily aimed at students, parents and carers are invited to attend, particularly if your child is receiving an award.

Face to Face Meetings

Banyan Fields Primary School values the opportunity to build open relationships with parents and carers. As well as our formal parent-teacher interviews that are held in Term 3 every year, the teachers are available to meet by appointment if there are any specific questions or concerns. Your child's classroom teacher is the first point of contact.

Contact Details

Parents and carers are reminded to keep the office updated on changes made to contact details (address, phone number and email address).

Outside School Hours Care: TheirCare

Their Care provide the outside school hours care at Banyan Fields and run their service from the portable building off Cadles Road. They run from 6:30am until 6:30pm on school days and during school holidays. Please see the flyer overleaf for more information and [register your child for their service using this link](#).





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Wider Community Engagement

Banyan Fields Primary School has relationships with several external organisations to build our sense of community. Currently, we work with Seaford RSL, ConnectEd, and Carrum Downs Secondary College. We are always on the lookout for new partnerships, which are announced through our newsletter and social media pages.





Stewardship: *We care for people, places, and possibilities*

At Banyan Fields Primary School, Stewardship is about taking responsibility for our actions and caring for our learning community, environment, and resources.

- **Students** demonstrate Stewardship by looking after school spaces, making responsible choices, and taking pride in their learning and behaviour.
- **Staff** model Stewardship by acting with integrity, using resources wisely, and creating safe, supportive environments where all learners can thrive.
- **Families** demonstrate Stewardship by supporting school expectations, reinforcing positive values at home, and working with the school to nurture a respectful and sustainable community.

School Council

School Council is responsible for school governance and involvement provides parents and carers with an opportunity to learn about how decisions are made about the future direction of the school. Elections are held in Term 1 every year.

Parent Association

Our Parent Association was established in 2025 and is responsible for running schoolwide events throughout the year. The group meets once per month. Parents and Carers can express an interest in getting involved at any time through the year.

Enrolment Process

In line with the [Department of Education Placement Policy](#), families are invited to enrol their student in our Foundation class in the following year between April and July. The specific dates are set by the Department of Education annually – in 2026, enrolments open on Monday, April 20th and close on Friday, July 31st. [Parents and carers can complete the online form](#) or request a paper copy from the school office. All enrolments are confirmed in the first 2 weeks of August each year.





Students who have a sibling already enrolled at the school are given first priority. Students who live within our school zone according to the [Find My School website](#), are considered next and, when there is sufficient space, students who live outside the school zone are offered a place based on the travel distance between the student's permanent address and the school. Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to attend a school tour at their zoned school before making a final decision.

Transition Sessions

Your child will be invited to join us for our Foundation Transition sessions in November and December of the year prior to them starting. In 2026, these sessions are scheduled for:

- Monday, November 9th: 2:30 – 3:10pm
- Monday, November 16th: 2:30 – 3:10pm
- Monday, November 23rd: 2:30 – 3:10pm
- Monday, November 30th: 2:30 – 3:10pm
- Tuesday, December 8th: 10am – 1pm

During the first four sessions (Monday afternoons), parents will be invited to join us for our information sessions. At these sessions, parents will get to meet the staff, meet other parents and ask questions in relation to preparing your child for their transition to primary school.

The final session is longer than the previous four. On Tuesday, December 8th, students will spend a half day with their classmates and their teacher and classroom for 2027 will be confirmed.

As well as the dates noted above, students will be invited to attend a one:one assessment with a member of the Banyan Fields team in November. This assessment provides the team with important information in building classes and developing the specifics of the curriculum.

Term 1

Dates for Term 1, 2027 are currently under review. It is likely that our Foundation students will begin school on either Friday, January 29th or Monday, February 1st. Foundation students will not attend school on Wednesdays in February. Instead, each student will attend a one:one session with their classroom teacher on one of the





Wednesdays. More information will be shared by the Foundation team as part of the transition process.

A draft list of important dates for 2027 will be shared with families in December.

More Information

If you would like more information, please:

- Book in for a school tour
- Visit our school website
- Contact the office by email or phone using the details below.

All prospective parents are also encouraged to follow the school's Facebook and Instagram pages, where you will get a good idea about the day to day events, celebrations and focus areas.

