



Footscray Primary School Handbook 2026

School Information

Address: 100 Geelong Rd, Footscray, 3011

Phone: 9687 1910

Email: footscray.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm

School Hours:

Monday – Friday 9:00am – 3:30pm

Yard Supervision:

Monday – Friday 8:50am – 3:40pm

2026 Term Dates

Term 1

Wednesday 28th January 2026 Year 1 - 6 students start school

Thursday 29th January 2026 Foundation students start school

****There is no school on Wednesdays for Foundation students for the first four weeks of school. The first Wednesday of attendance will be Wednesday, February 25th, 2025.**

Thursday 2nd April 2026 Last Day of Term 1 – Early Finish 2:30pm

Term 2

Monday 20th April 2026 Students resume

Friday 26th June 2026 Last Day of Term 2 – Early Finish 2:30pm

Term 3

Monday 13th July 2026 Students resume

Friday 18th September 2026 Last Day of Term 3 – Early Finish 2:30pm

Term 4

Monday 5th October 2026 Students resume

Friday 19th December 2026 Last Day of Term 4 – Early Finish 1:30pm

****Please note: 2026 Curriculum Days TBC**

Message from the Principal - Jen Briggs

Hello and thank you for enrolling at Footscray Primary School. I am so pleased to welcome you and your child/ren to our beautiful school community.

Starting or changing school is such an important milestone for children and their families and it comes with many big feelings. Some children will bound through the gate without a second thought and for others it will take enormous courage. There is no right way to feel about big changes, and we will be sure to partner with you and your child to ensure a positive transition into school life based on your child's individual needs.

As a school that values partnership and student agency, we understand that learning is a social endeavour. We invite parents to be partners in the learning as we support students to inquire into their lives and the world around them to be curious, active learners. As a Designated Bilingual Program school, our students learn the full Victorian curriculum in both English and Italian. I love watching our young learners draw on the strong visual and physical supports and classroom routines to engage in rich learning across their English and Italian classrooms. We invite you to attend a tour or information session to learn more about this program and the many benefits that come from a bilingual learning environment if you haven't already done so.

Much of this handbook is written for students commencing school for the first time, but if you are transitioning into Footscray PS at a later year level, you will find lots of helpful information in here, and also on our website.

We look forward to supporting your child with their academic, social and emotional learning throughout their time with us at Footscray Primary School. Feel free to email me at jenny.briggs@education.vic.gov.au if you have any further questions.

Thank you,

Jen.

Daily Timetable

At Footscray Primary School, learning begins promptly each day at 9:00am and finishes at 3:30pm. Our yard is supervised from 8:50am until 3:40pm and children should not be in the grounds outside of these times.

9:00am - 11:00am	Learning time
11:00am - 11:15am	Lunch – inside supervised eating time
11:15am - 12:00pm	Lunch – outside play
12:00pm - 2:00pm	Learning time
2:00pm - 2:30pm	Recess – outside play
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Learning time - <u>Students are dismissed at 3:30pm</u>

Home-School Communication

Before starting at FPS, our lovely office staff will provide you with details to access our home-school communication tool, Compass. This is where you will receive permission forms and student reports, provide consent and make payments, access the school calendar, inform the school of student absence, and receive regular updates about important things that are happening at school. It is critical that you check your compass notifications to ensure all important information is received. If your child is absent from school, please notify us by recording an attendance note through Compass or phoning the school office on 9687 1910. Absence notifications are sent via Compass at approximately 10am each morning to any families who have children that are not present at school and have not been recorded as absent by families.

Formal opportunities to engage with your child's teachers occur three times a year; Meet the Teacher in Term 1, and Student-Led Conferences/Parent Teacher Conferences in Term 2 and 4.

We value the strong partnership between parents and teachers in supporting our students' success. To foster a positive and respectful school environment, we kindly ask parents to be mindful of our teachers' busy schedules.

Teachers work tirelessly to deliver high-quality education, prepare lessons, and support students' needs. While communication is essential, we encourage parents to:

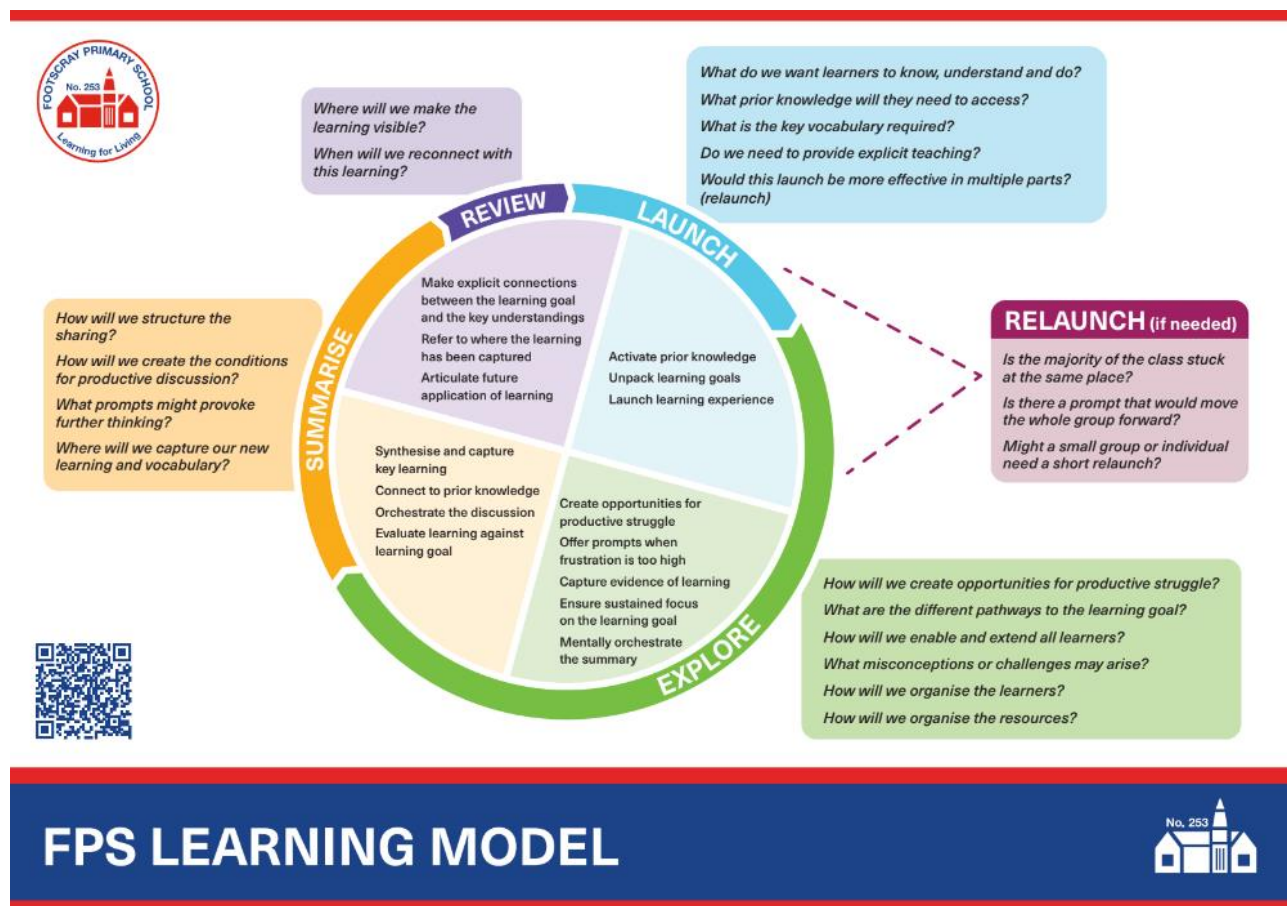
- Use email as the primary method of communication for non-urgent matters.
- Allow reasonable time for responses, as teachers often manage numerous responsibilities during the day, and professional learning sessions after school.
- Schedule meetings or discussions in advance rather than engaging in impromptu conversations during school hours.

By respecting our teachers' time and workload, we ensure they can focus on what matters most: educating and caring for our students. Thank you!

FPS Learning Model

We believe that our students learn best when they are actively involved in authentic, connected learning across all curriculum areas. We aim for our students to develop confidence in their own abilities, to think for themselves, to express their opinions and to respect the opinions of others. Students are supported and nurtured in their social and emotional development as well as in their creative, linguistic, sporting and academic programs.

Our FPS Learning Model describes the way we teach and learn around here. We aim to provide rich core tasks with enabling and extending prompts that provide regular opportunities for all students to experience 'productive struggle'.



Specialist Classes

We take great pride in offering a range of specialist programs aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and designed to enrich your child's education experience. Students attend each specialist for one hour each week.

Our specialist areas include:

- Science & Design - Taught by Caitlin Wood (Specialist Team Leader)
- Visual Art in Italian - Taught by Rachel Taylor
- Physical Education - Taught by Nadine Halpin
- Music - Taught by Bryce Turcato

Italian Bilingual Approach

Footscray Primary School is proud to be a member of the Department of Education's Designated Bilingual Schools Program. Your child will learn the full Victorian Curriculum in English and Italian, spending half of their school day in the English classroom with their English teacher and the other half of the day in the Italian classroom with their Italian teacher. In some years, we have one classroom where the teacher takes on the role of both English and Italian teacher.

In the Italian Room, the teacher uses Italian as the language of instruction and in their interactions with students. Your child does not need to already speak Italian or have any experience with the Italian language before they start school. For the majority of students, listening to (and eventually speaking) Italian will be a completely new experience.

At the start of the year, our focus is on helping students become comfortable hearing Italian in the classroom and supporting them to use it in their day-to-day routines and learning activities. Students will not always immediately understand what the teachers are saying and for your child this might feel a little different and uncomfortable at first. As the routines and environment become familiar, students develop strategies to understand what is being said and what is required of them. They also learn that if they don't understand the first time they can wait for the next 'clue' to help them.

We use a number of strategies to scaffold learning and support student understanding:

- We use simple language and don't use too many words or introduce a lot of new language.
- We recycle and reuse words and phrases, so that students recognise and become familiar with this language.
- We repeat things, particularly instructions. So, if the student hasn't heard or understood the first time, they know to wait until we say it again.
- We use props, actions, mime, songs, chants and pictures to help the students work out for themselves what we are communicating to them.
- We demonstrate, model and use examples so that students know what is expected.

In Foundation, we encourage students to participate, to explore and enjoy learning through Italian and we focus on providing them with the support and opportunities they need to achieve and experience success.

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

It is important to remember that each child is different and will be at different stages of their learning and development. Try to avoid the temptation to compare your child's stage with other children in the class. We will meet your child at their point of need. Some children will be focussing on the correct way to hold a pencil whilst others will be writing their name. Some children will be reading independently, and others might show no interest in books yet. All of these stages are completely ok!

You will be curious to know what is going on at school and may question your child about the activities of the day. Don't be concerned if your child is not keen to talk at length about school. You could try asking open-ended questions that help scaffold discussion such as 'What stories did you read/listen to today?', 'Where did you play at lunch time today?' 'Did you get to go to any other parts of the school today?', 'Did anything funny happen at school today?'

Our parents are our partners and we work together to provide the best learning experience we can for your child. The teacher will become an important influence on your child's life. If you are concerned about any matter or have any questions, you are always welcome to discuss these with your child's teacher. Please phone to make an appointment, at a mutually suitable time, outside of teaching times to minimise disruption to lessons.

Library

Your child will have access to a well-stocked classroom library, as well as our beautiful school library with a wide range of texts that are updated regularly. We have an Indigenous corner with a large range of books by First Nations Authors and Illustrators, fiction and non-fiction texts, and a large range of bilingual books. We aim to source books in every language spoken within our diverse community – let us know if there is a language you would like represented. Families are most welcome to visit the school library in the main Bluestone building near the office before and after school to help their child return and select books to borrow.

Playing in the yard

Teachers wear high visibility vests when supervising the yard so children can easily identify them. In the initial weeks of school, we provide additional supervision to ensure Foundation students have support to navigate their new outdoor environment and can comfortably make their way to the canteen, toilet, first aid, playgrounds and back to class. We will have a variety of passive and active play spaces for our young people to explore each day. The library is open most breaks for quiet reading, and the Friendship Zone in the Greenwood Building is open for more social indoor play in a supervised area.

First Aid

The safety and well-being of our students are top priorities. While our school does not have a dedicated nurse on staff, we ensure that first aid is managed effectively by our Education Support Staff.

A number of our staff members are trained in basic first aid and respond promptly to injuries or illnesses that occur during school hours. Any visit to first aid is recorded and shared via Compass.

For more serious concerns, we will contact parents or guardians immediately, and if necessary, seek professional medical assistance. In a medical emergency, staff may take emergency action and do not need to obtain parent/carers consent to do so. Staff may contact Triple Zero '000' for emergency medical services at any time.

We encourage parents to inform the school of any medical conditions or requirements their child may have, so we can provide the best possible support. Your cooperation helps us maintain a safe and caring environment for all students.

You can read more about our First Aid Policy in the Policies section of our website.

Out of Hours Care

Our out of school hours care is provided by TheirCare on the school site and is currently located in the Hall/Theatrette inside the smaller Bluestone building at the front of the school. The service operates from 7am to 8:45am, and 3:30pm - 6pm and they offer a holiday program during term breaks and pupil free days. TheirCare are active supporters of our school community and partner with us for school events and celebrations. Further information on the TheirCare program is provided on our website.

Uniform

School uniform is compulsory at Footscray Primary School. The Footscray Primary School uniform is available for purchase from Noone Imagewear at the below locations for your convenience. You can find more information on our website. We encourage all students to purchase a top with our school logo displayed, however, your child can choose to wear plain clothing in our school colours of royal blue and red if this is more financially viable or better suits your child's sensory needs. All of our uniform items are considered non-gendered, so please feel free to choose whichever items your child prefers.

Noone Imagewear Shop
543 Keilor Road, Niddrie
Phone: 03 9379 5037 Fax: 03 9379 8446
Email: niddrie@noone.com.au

Second-Hand Uniform is available via the Donate, Swap, Sell Facebook page that has been established and managed by a fabulous group of volunteer parents and carers. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fpssecondhanduniform>. If you are not able to access Facebook, please contact our office for support. There is also a second-hand uniform stall most terms with details shared via Compass.

FPS Social Club

We have an active parents and friends committee known as the FPS Social Club and they are always open to new members to help them organise social events and fundraising for the school. You can learn more about this awesome group on our school website or you can reach them via footscrayprimarysocial@gmail.com.

Each year we have a range of fabulous community events for students and for the adults including colour runs, movie nights, discos, and family trivia.

FPS Website

For more information about our school programs and policies, you can visit our website at <https://www.footscrayps.vic.edu.au/>. You can access all of our active school policies and strategic plans via the 'About' section and encourage you to use this site as a first stop when you have questions about something at school. You can also reach out to our very helpful office staff in person during office hours (8:30 - 4:00pm Mon-Fri) or via email at footscray.ps@education.vic.gov.au or phone 9687 1910.

Foundation Information - Your Child's First Year at School

To help settle into school routines and in accordance with the Department of Education regulations, the days of attendance for Foundation students differ from the rest of the school at the beginning of the school year.

Foundation students will not be required to attend school on Wednesdays for the first four weeks of school.

Your child will be allocated a 1-hour interview time with their teacher on one of these Wednesdays. During this time the teacher will guide your child through a 1:1 learning interview to gather information about your child's literacy and numeracy understandings. There is no minimum expected level of literacy or numeracy at the beginning of Foundation. Teachers develop learning programs based on each child's point of need. We ask adults to wait outside the room or drop their child into the classroom and return at the end of the appointment. If your child is anxious, we can schedule their assessment later in the month to allow time to connect with their teacher before this appointment.

Arrangements for the First Day of School

On your child's first day of Foundation, please take your child to their Entry Door to meet with their teacher. Please keep in mind that children have mixed feelings about starting school. It helps us settle the children into routines if all parents/carers take their photos and say goodbye quickly. It can help to arrange for a post drop off coffee with some friends to process your own big feelings about sending your child off to school!

What to bring

Your child should arrive at school on time wearing the correct school uniform (please see Dress Code Policy on our website). As Footscray PS is a sun smart school, this includes a broad-brimmed or legionnaires school hat, which must be worn outside from August 15

through to April 30 each year.

Your child will need to bring the following items to school every day. Please have all items clearly LABELLED with your child's name.

Sun smart hat - broad brim or legionnaires

Packed Snack and Lunch. The school focuses on healthy eating and nude food so please try and include a range of healthy food with minimal packaging.

Water Bottle – able to be opened and refilled easily by your child.

Fresh fruit/vegetable snack for optional fruit time such as an apple, banana or cut up fruit/vegetables. These need to be able to be eaten with minimal disruption to learning time.

A change of clothing in a plastic bag inside a school bag in case of water or toileting accidents.

Preparing your Child for School

Getting Ready

Have a few mornings where you practise the 'getting ready' routine. You might create a visual timetable/checklist at home to make this process visual for your child.

Talk about school in a positive way and make use of the social story we will send home before the start of school.

Try to align snacks and lunch with the school timetable if appropriate.

Establish a routine with a set bedtime to ensure your child gets enough sleep.

Toilet

In Foundation, teachers plan regular visits to the toilet to help students transition to new routines. Children can ask to go to the toilet during learning time when needed and have access to multiple toilets during outside play. It can help to ensure your child feels confident using the toilet on their own. Consider practising undoing buttons and zips, flushing the toilet, and using a urinal if your child is not yet confident with these routines. Stall toilets, as well as urinals, are available in the male toilets. There are accessible, gender-neutral toilets available in the Bluestone first aid room, the Greenwood building, and the Palazzo student toilets.

Dressing for School

Encourage your child to dress themselves so they can manage things like taking jumpers on and off at school. Reinforce the need to care for their own belongings. Label everything and

get used to visiting our lost property near the main office!

Food for Energy

Please supply a healthy lunch, snack and fruit snack in a clearly named lunchbox and water in a clearly named plastic bottle. You may want to go through what foods are eaten when, however, our Foundation teachers will help your child manage this also. Practise opening and closing the lunchbox at home.

Self-Regulation

Starting school can be tiring for young people and you might find your child comes home with some big feelings and reactions and may be more tired than usual. Generally, children work hard to regulate themselves throughout the school day and when they get home to their favourite people, they have limited capacity to maintain their self-regulation strategies into the evening. Quiet activities such as drawing, having a bath, and a nice early dinner can help your child transition. You will likely find that bedtime comes a little earlier for a short while also...which is never a bad thing, right?

Saying 'See You Soon'

Saying 'see you soon' to your child can be difficult for families. Your child looks to you to understand the world so try hard to remain positive and confident during the first few drop offs so your child can see they have nothing to worry about.

For the first few days you might like to put a family photo or special toy/article of clothing in your child's bag that they can visit for comfort throughout the day. Tell your child you are leaving, give them a kiss and a hug and then leave quickly. Reassure them that you will be back at 3:30pm to collect them. If your child is upset, staying longer can make the separation more difficult. Our teachers are well-trained at comforting and distracting children and this process is easier once the child can no longer see their adult. We always have extra adults and members of leadership in the Foundation rooms to assist during the first few days. If you think you need some help to separate from your child, give us a signal and we'll help you out!

Approach the teacher if you know that the separation may be difficult so they can be ready to give a little extra support to your child should they need it. It is not unusual for some children to be upset when parents/carers first leave. If your child is unusually distressed, the teacher will discuss further strategies to help your child adjust to school.

Picking your Child up after School

Children will be dismissed from their classrooms. We love having families in the yard before and after school but please do not approach the classroom windows before the end of the day so your child can remain focussed on the classroom routines. Foundation teachers will make sure each child has their adult in sight before they leave the classroom. If an older sibling is collecting your child, please let the classroom teacher know.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child/ren into Footscray Primary School and invite you to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.