Dear Parents,

Already, the 2016 Preps have made a wonderful start to the school year and have quickly become a fantastic addition to the BPS community. Important classroom routines are beginning to become established and new friendships are flourishing. The children have been super busy participating in classroom activities and are becoming comfortable with the way their classroom operates. We hope that the students are using their ‘rest day’ on Wednesdays to rest and recharge!

**School Routines**
Routine is of the utmost importance to a successful schooling experience, particularly at the beginning of the year. Classroom teachers endeavour to implement effective routines from the moment students walk into the classroom and with your help, we can ensure that these routines become a natural part of your child’s schooling experience. The bag bell rings at 8.50am and this gives your child the opportunity to independently complete their morning jobs such as unpacking their bag, putting notices on their teacher’s chair, changing their reader and going to the bathroom before the ‘wave goodbye’ music finishes. This not only promotes independence, but it ensures that all students are ready for learning at 9am.

**Recess and Lunch Time**
Children are outside for both recess and lunch breaks at the same time as the rest of the school, but will have a teacher with them at all times until they are familiar with playground expectations, at which time there will be yard duty teachers on hand to supervise. They have been introduced to various areas of the school grounds, but will be exclusively playing on the Prep playground for some time with only prep students. On very hot days a school wide “Sweat Day” is called which means that children are supervised in their classrooms during break times out of the heat. This also happens on days when it is raining and a “Wet Day” is called.

**SunSmart at BPS**
It is important, especially during the summer months, that the children wear sunscreen to school or are able to apply their own for protection, as teachers are not permitted to do this. The school also has a “No hat - No play” policy. Children are required to wear a broad brimmed hat up until the 1st of May and will begin wearing hats again on the 1st of September. Please ensure your child brings their Broad Brimmed hat to school each day.

**Our Building and Classrooms**
In the F – 2 building, we have a variety of furniture scattered throughout that allows for a flexible learning space, which we know is fantastic for learning experiences. Please supervise toddlers when in the building as teachers will often set up a specific learning experience in the open space for students in the morning and learning time can be delayed when these items are moved or interfered with. We also ask that toddlers are not using areas such as home corners and making tables as the F-2 students do a great job of keeping these areas tidy!
The open space is an extension of our classrooms and you will therefore often see groups of children from all the classes working co-operatively in this area. Due to this, we ask for your help and support to ensure that valuable teaching time and the children’s learning and thinking is not interrupted. Leaving the building before 9.00am and not coming in before 3.30pm will optimise your children’s learning opportunities.

**Integrated Unit**
Our integrated unit for this term is “Me and My New Community”. The aim of this unit is to ensure that your child’s transition into the BPS community is not only smooth, but an enjoyable experience that will give them skills that they can put into practice as they progress through the year. This unit allows students to develop their sense of belonging, which will enable them to feel safe, happy and able to learn within their new environment.

**Literacy**
As part of our stimulating Literacy program, you will frequently see students working in small groups on a variety of reading, writing, and handwriting or spelling tasks that are designed to meet their individual learning needs. As part of our writing program, children will focus on the writing process through the use of a picture plan, development of fine motor skills that are required to write letters and building on their knowledge of letter sounds and high frequency words to write their pieces. In reading this term, children will be focusing on establishing the routines during ‘Reading Groups’, using high frequency words and letter sounds as well as ideas in a text to help them read and gain meaning. While the children will initially work in small groups within their classroom for reading and ‘guided reading’ sessions, they may also move between classrooms to work with other groups of children of like skills and needs.

**Numeracy**
In Numeracy, students engage in content through the use of concrete materials and mental strategies. At Balwyn Primary School we have a strong focus on creating tasks through which students can make, record and explain their understanding before they move towards formal algorithms and formulae. A fantastic resource can be viewed at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vetg7vWitTU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vetg7vWitTU), which sheds some humorous light on learning the algorithm before having a concrete understanding. In Foundation and across the school, students are encouraged to develop and explain their understanding in a variety of ways, using a range of physical materials and technology. In Numeracy this term the students will be introduced to the routines of numeracy time through exploration, modelling, and learning the value of numbers. They will also learn language around location within their surroundings and will explore patterns and the ordering of objects.

**Birthdays**
Birthdays are an important event for Preps at school. It is always enjoyable to celebrate together. If you are planning to make something for the class to share, we recommend individual items as they are easier for the children to eat. We recommend that lollies and chocolate are kept for these special occasions and are not included in snacks and lunches. If your child is having a birthday party that requires invitations, please hand these to your classroom teacher who will place these in individual reader pockets.
Anaphylactic Reactions
At Balwyn Primary School we have a number of children who have an anaphylactic (life threatening) reaction when exposed to eggs, dairy products, shell fish (e.g. prawns), sesame seeds, peanuts, kiwi fruit and other nut products (such as Nutella, peanut bars or mixed nuts). We seek your support in ensuring that the children at risk are safe within our school by keeping foods that contain these products out of the classrooms.

5/6 Buddies
Within the first couple of weeks at school, the Preps will be meeting with their 5/6 Buddies. It is wonderful to see the positive interaction between older and younger children as they engage in a variety of activities. They learn so much from each other and the positive relationships that are formed will carry over into the playground.

Health and Physical Education
During Term 1, Foundation students will be introduced to Health and Physical Education through an engaging and fun approach. They will focus on minor games such as Stop and Go, Summer Warm-Up, I See... and many more to develop their ability to listen to and follow instructions as well as body and special awareness. Students will begin to develop throwing and catching skills through isolated activities and minor games. Skills will be learned developmentally and students will focus on the key points of throwing and catching so these can be applied to a range of activities and sports.
Ashley Cull

LOTE
This term, Foundation students will be introduced to Mandarin as LOTE at Balwyn Primary. In our language classroom, AIM (Accelerative Integrated Methodology) is used to enhance students’ acquisition of Mandarin, where gesturing plays an important part. Students will learn about basic greetings, class routine expressions as well as Mandarin songs and rhymes, which will prepare them for the future AIM story learning.
Lei Zhu

Music
During Term 1 Music classes, Foundation students will be exploring their voices and how to use them in a variety of ways. They will be encouraged to sing confidently in front of their peers and together with the class. They will start to learn the difference between beat and rhythm. Through songs, chants, rhymes, games and dance/movement, students will begin exploring the musical elements of rhythm, pitch, form, texture and timbre. Percussion instruments will be a focus for the term and students will learn the correct names, how to create a good sound on them and play cooperatively in a group ensemble. The idea of playing and sharing music for enjoyment and pleasure will always be a feature in every class.
Jenny Ranogajec

Visual Arts
Students will make visual artworks to communicate their responses to the book, ‘The Rainbow Fish’ by Marcus Pfister. Ideas will be used to reinforce the school values relevant in the art room. Students will experiment with drawing and making marks using oil pastels. They will be introduced to the terminology used in Art and explore the art elements of colour, shape, line, pattern and texture.
Jacqui Arnott
Library
Students have the opportunity to go to the library once a week and borrow wonderful books to read at home, in addition to their daily reading prescribed by classroom teachers. Students will bring home any borrowed books in their personal library bags each week and these must be returned before the next library session the following week. Library books must be returned weekly in order to borrow a new book so please ensure that your child is remembering to bring their library bag in on the day that they have library.

Tissues and Paper Towel
We ask that each child bring along a box of tissue and a double packet of paper towel for everyone to use this year. Thank you to those who have already done this.

Friday
This Friday will be our first Fresh Fruit Friday. Please send along a piece of fruit cut up into small pieces in a labelled container - ready to share. This helps children begin to form healthy eating habits along with developing social skills such as sharing, taking turns, letting others go first, cleaning up and being organised. Children will not need to bring anything else for morning tea.

Take Home Books
By now you will have had the opportunity to read a ‘take home book’ from school. At this stage, you might like to read it to your child first and then encourage them to read it to you, or they might be keen to read it independently. Yes, we all know that the books are levelled but the children don’t, they need to investigate reading free of the pressure of worrying about levels. In the classroom, when asked about the numbers on the back of the book we say ‘there are numbers on the back so the teachers know where to put the books away’.

Book Covering
For durability, student books must be fully contacted in clear contact before we can begin to use them in classrooms. Our PFTA offer a contacting service for a small fee (fundraising) where they will contact all of your child’s school books. If you wish to contact these yourself, we will send your child’s books home for a weekend, but they must be contacted and returned the following Monday.

Help from Home!
Classroom teachers are always working hard to provide the best possible learning experiences for students and this can be time consuming. Any help that parents can offer, however great or small, is always much appreciated. Things like sharpening pencils and cutting from home are great ways that you can help out! If you’re interested, please let your classroom teacher know. If you wish to become a parent helper in the classroom, you need a current Working with Children Check and have to complete our Classroom Helper’s course. Information about this course will be available soon.
Every Day Counts
In order to give your child the best possible learning experience at BPS, attendance is key and missing days immediately puts them behind. We understand that students will get sick and we encourage you to keep your child at home on those days, but any family trips should be planned for the holiday period where possible. Students who regularly miss school are unable to develop concrete routines and miss out on the fundamental skills required for the rest of their school years.

WANTED!
Appropriate magazines, used wrapping paper, cardboard boxes and cylinders and recyclables for learning experiences, developmental play and craft activities. No toilet rolls or egg cartons please.

DATES for the FRIDGE

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>10th Feb</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th Feb</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Conferences</td>
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<td>19th Feb</td>
<td>Parent Info Night + Welcome Picnic</td>
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<td>3rd March</td>
<td>School Photos</td>
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<td>4th March</td>
<td>Twilight Working Bee 4-6pm</td>
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<td>9th March</td>
<td>Bright Beginnings 4-5pm</td>
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<td>14th March</td>
<td>Labour Day – No School</td>
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<td>15th March</td>
<td>Curriculum Day – No School</td>
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<td>24th March</td>
<td>End of term – 2.30pm finish</td>
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Just a few more things to remember...
- **Monday:** Assembly 2.45pm in the F – 2 building (keep an eye on the Foundation entrance door for information about when the Foundation students will begin to attend assembly)
- **Wednesdays:** Rest Day/assessment day for the month of February – please check your child’s scheduled day/time for assessment
- **Wednesday:** As of the first week in March, children will be able to purchase an icy-pole for $1
- **Friday:** Fresh Fruit Friday- please bring a container with a cut up piece of fruit in it to share with the class, this will be the students’ morning tea

We thank you for the support you have already given to our class program and we look forward to working together throughout the year.

Rebecca Clark  Ashlee Blackburn  Rachel Yeoman  Natalie Merivale
Foundation C  Foundation B  Foundation Y  Foundation/1M