



ST ARNAUD PRIMARY SCHOOL

~INFORMATION BOOK~



OUR SCHOOL





PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME



MELISSA MITCHELL

Welcome to St Arnaud Primary School.

We hope that this Information Booklet answers some of the questions that you may have. We have put it together as a reference booklet to use by simply looking for the area of interest to you.

At STAPS we acknowledge parents & carers as valued partners in the education of children. Together with you, we are a team, and by working as a team, we can help your child to achieve their full potential. It is well known that children make best progress at school when parents and teachers work together, and have a close working relationship.

We strongly encourage open communication and welcome parents into our school and classrooms. Through involvement in school programs and activities, we trust that you will soon feel at home here. Our school has a strong tradition of community connections and welcoming volunteer helpers who enrich our classroom learning through variety and skills. Children really enjoy having their parents and loved ones involved in their learning and are proud to share them with their classmates; the cross generational connections formed with many of our volunteers are an exceptional benefit to our students.

Our school is very progressive in a range of curriculum initiatives and support programs, and is active in learning and implementing evidence based best-practice particularly in English, Mathematics and Student Wellbeing & Inclusion. Our school has a strong commitment to developing the whole child through student wellbeing through with the support from our wonderful Allied Health team.

We look forward to the opportunity of sharing our school with you and hope you will take up the opportunity to arrange a school tour and meet with me, to discuss your questions.

Melissa Mitchell



OUR VALUES

RESPECT

- To value ourselves and others
- To value our environment

RESILIENCE

- To have the ability to 'bounce back'
- To adapt to change
- To approach difficult/negative events as constructively as possible

KINDNESS

- To look out for others
- To be inclusive of all

HONESTY

- To be trustworthy
- To be responsible

ASPIRATION

- To do our best
- To aim for our goals





MISSION STATEMENT



Our philosophy is centred on supporting and nurturing children's wellbeing within an emotionally safe learning environment.

Children are met at their point of need and diversity is acknowledged and embraced. Family involvement and connection to the wider community is integral to our school identity.

Our aim is to foster children's love of learning and to develop key life skills such as emotional intelligence, self-expression, and a growth mindset within an inclusive school community that celebrates individual achievement.

Ratified by St Arnaud PS Council, May 2025



ENGLISH

At St Arnaud Primary School English instruction is provided for 10 hours each week.

We have developed a high quality approach to teaching English that is backed by the Science of Reading and embodies a strategic and comprehensive approach to literacy achievement.

Our program focuses on the essential sets of knowledge and skills for reading and writing - oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. The school has a commitment to phonics in the Early Years which builds foundational word reading and oral language skills.

We use research-based programs such as Sounds-Write, Spelling Mastery and The Writing Revolution to deliver best practise for all students from Prep to Year 6. Our staff are trained in these programs and our Literacy Leaders regularly meet with school leaders from the Wimmera South West region to share best practice, plan and develop rich literacy content for our schools, to ensure that our students are receiving the highest quality instruction.





THE SOUNDS-WRITE TEAM

Our school is committed to providing the highest quality teaching instruction we can. This requires the upskilling of staff to deliver the carefully selected programs we offer. We currently have 10 staff who have completed the intensive Sounds-Write training, giving them comprehensive skills to teach reading, spelling, and phonics. Our staff are equipped with effective strategies to enhance literacy instruction in their classrooms through whole class, small group and one on one sessions. Our Sounds-Write sessions align with the program's systematic and explicit instruction method and is delivered through multi-sensory activities and structured lessons making it a valuable tool for our educators and learners alike.



Kirri Ezard



Alana Patton



Amy Purkiss



Bernie Thursby



Emily Gosden



Jennae Polkinghorne



Molly Hendy



Belinda Burke



Alisha Petrie



Aliza Lockhart



MATHEMATICS

Each class is provided with at least 5 hours of Mathematics instruction. We provide a sequential and consistent approach to the teaching and learning of Numeracy for all students. Our school is well equipped with a wide variety of 'hands on' and 'concrete' materials which are used to support teaching concepts.

We ensure a well rounded understanding of mathematics for all students. With a strong focus on the basics, students strive to learn their addition, subtraction and multiplication facts through our Rocket Maths Program. Lessons in Mathematics are carefully planned and based on the Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) model. This means that teachers explain and model new concepts and skills before guiding students to practise new skills in an interactive and responsive environment.





THE ARTS



VISUAL ART

Each classroom has an hour of Art every week. During these lessons students are exposed to the Art elements of form, shape, line, colour, value, space and texture. Artwork is regularly displayed throughout the school and in the shop window next door to Elma Park in Napier Street.



PERFORMING ARTS - MUSIC

Our school values the many benefits of a rich music program and each class has a weekly lesson which includes singing and instrumental music with an emphasis on exposing students to a range of genres, artists and cultures through immersion in music, rhythm and movement.

Mrs Walsh provides a quality music program where students explore a range of instruments, create compositions and collaborate to put on performances, and often incorporates innovative uses of technology.





HEALTH & PE

Health and Physical Education are timetabled weekly for each class. The curriculum covers the teaching of all elements of the Health and Physical Education curriculum - including swimming; athletics; team sports such as tennis, basketball, hockey, cricket, netball, cross country running etc and is enriched by the many opportunities students have to represent the school at Zone (Black Ranges) or Regional (Greater Western) level in team and individual events. The school also actively seeks out opportunities such as tennis coaching; visiting coaches and clinics to add an additional element to the program. The school has a number of Austswim trained teachers on staff to implement a high quality swimming program to all students, every year.





INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

St Arnaud Primary School provides all students with access to a device - iPads in P/1 and Laptops in Yr 2-6 classes, at no expense to parents. ICT is taught across all year levels with a significant focus on eSafety (being safe online) and building a strong foundation in word processing and transferable computer skills to prepare students to be digitally literate.

The use of technology is integrated throughout most subject areas such as Music, English, Mathematics and Science and not just taught as a stand-alone topic. Students use Google Classroom and Seesaw to share class work and learn to program and code robotic devices, including Spheros, Bee Bots and WeDo Robots.





INTEGRATED STUDIES

SCIENCE

Each class is provided science instruction by classroom teachers that covers the four main areas of Science - Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Earth and Space Sciences.

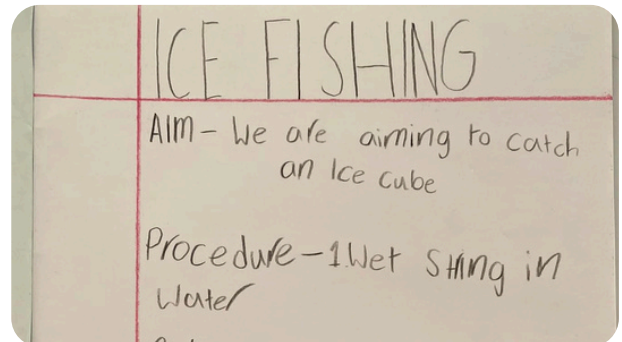
Students engage in hands-on activities, collaboration, reflection, self and peer assessment tasks. Learning is often embedded in our Literacy units and focus on unpacking vocabulary to allow students to understand the concepts being taught.

S.T.E.M. - SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS

The S.T.E.M. curriculum provides students with the learning opportunities to design, create and reflect on their ideas, using everyday items. It encourages creativity, cooperation, consideration for materials used and the contributions of teammates. S.T.E.M. is taught at all year levels and is a highly engaging session enjoyed by all students.

HUMANITIES - HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Our Humanities program is constructed to ensure students' understanding is built upon from one year to the next in an organised and sequential approach. Similarly, to our Science program students' learning is embedded within Literacy instruction where students read to extend their knowledge and write to share their learning.





STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN GARDEN



At St Arnaud Primary School we are many years into our journey of establishing food producing gardens and have the kitchen facilities to support the implementation and the program for each class.

The purpose of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation is to introduce pleasurable food education to children during their learning years, in order to form positive food habits for life.

Pleasurable food education is ripe with learning possibilities. In the kitchen and in the garden students discover ideas and concepts first-hand, through real-life contexts and experiences.

The SAKGF program is able to be fully integrated into the curriculum as it provides opportunity for English, Mathematics, Science and much more. Students also learn life skills they can take beyond the classroom that will help them to make healthier choices into the future.

The dishes cooked reflect the vegetables, herbs and fruits grown by the children in their organic gardens, orchard and eggs from our chickens. The program also delivers social benefits to all children, and encourages critical thinking, teamwork, an understanding of cause and effect, and increased levels of observation.





DANCE



SCHOOL DANCE

As part of our Physical Education program and a way to celebrate with our school community we have the School Dance. Each year there is a new theme and classes learn dances to perform and then invite their families to join in on the night - it is so much fun!

VICTORIAN STATE SCHOOL SPECTACULAR

An extra curricular opportunity for students in Years 5 & 6 is the Victorian State Schools Spectacular. The Victorian State Schools Spectacular program is an invaluable performing arts opportunity for Victoria's government primary and secondary school students, which culminates in a showcase performance at John Caine Arena in September each year.

The program showcases and unites government school communities through working towards a common goal of more students reaching the highest level of achievement in the Arts, ensuring kids are happy, healthy and resilient, and building pride in our schools. And our students absolutely love it!



CAMPS & EXCURSIONS

Each class participates in a major excursion each year. These excursions are an important part of the school curriculum, covering social, cultural and academic skills. Excursions are curated to enhance and extend student learning in line with the curriculum and provide real life experiences linked to classroom learning.

The St Arnaud Primary School offers a sequential camps program from Years 3-6 which is arranged to correlate with a unit of study being undertaken. These camps not only provide children with the experience of visiting other areas, increase their knowledge of a topic being studied but also provide the valuable social and personal development experiences gained by the experience of living away from home in a group situation. Camp opportunities include:

- Yr3/4 students alternate between an outdoor education camp in even years and the Urban Camp in Melbourne in odd years.
- Yr5-6 alternate between Canberra Camp in even years and a less expensive outdoor education camp in odd years.
- Prep-Yr2 will have a day excursion and late night or overnight stay, varying from year to year.

Planning for camps commences two years ahead of the event and every effort is made to ensure a highly educational and experience rich opportunity is provided, with the best value for money in mind for our families.





RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships is a program implemented across Victorian schools including Government, Catholic and Independent schools and early childhood services. The program focuses on teaching resilience, rights and respectful relationships for Prep to Yr 12 students.

Respectful Relationships is a primary prevention initiative to reduce family violence. Respectful Relationships does promote respect and gender equality and helps students learn how to build healthy relationships.

Respectful Relationships is a valuable part of the Victorian Curriculum. It prepares students to face challenges by developing problem-solving skills and building resilience and confidence. Schools involved in the Respectful Relationships initiative are building a culture of respect and gender equality, by looking at their practices and policies to drive meaningful change.





SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

	BE RESPECTFUL	BE SAFE	BE A LEARNER
	We will:	We will:	We will:
LEARNING SPACES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use our manners and kind words Be inclusive Care for our school and school property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be where we are expected to be Follow classroom routines Encourage others to be their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be ready to learn Respect others right to learn Do our best
EVERYWHERE & ALWAYS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions from all staff Create a safe and calm environment Keep our hands, feet and objects to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help others Be honest Take responsibility for our actions and accept the consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take pride in our school and our uniform Participate Celebrate achievements
TOILETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect people's privacy Leave play for outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash our hands Ask an adult before leaving the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straight there - Straight back!
YARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play by the rules Be inclusive in our play Listen for the music and move quickly to the line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in the play areas Share the equipment Seek help from an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use our WITS Play cooperatively Have fun!

It is important that all staff and students have knowledge of the expectations outlined in the Matrix. Teachers are expected to teach this to students from the beginning of the year, and refer to the Matrix as the opportunity arises to reinforce behavioural expectations throughout the year. Education Support Staff are also expected to know the Matrix and use it when working with students and as the need arises. The Matrix is displayed in each classroom.



COMMUNITY

At St Arnaud Primary School we pride ourselves on our community connections. We take every opportunity possible to connect our learning to the community in which we live, learn and play. We regularly invite community members and organisations into our school to foster these connections and the sense of belonging that is so important. We have formed many wonderful partnerships and created a range of social and academic learning opportunities for our students. Our regular visits to Coates Hostel and Kara Court are favourites amongst the students.

Our students visit the town library each month, volunteer to deliver Meals on Wheels, participate in the ANZAC Day service, deliver food hampers around the community, visit the local Preschool and much more. We also have a long standing friendship with residents of McCallum Disability Services who visit our school weekly and join us to celebrate school events.





STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student leadership is an area of student development our school fosters closely. We have many leadership opportunities at our school with each class electing two Junior School Council Representatives at the beginning of every year who provide a voice for their classmates and help to raise funds for the school and other non-profit organisations.

We also have a Green Team who are a group of passionate eco warriors leading our school to do their bit for a more sustainable future.

Year 5 students are given the opportunity to become Buddies for our incoming Prep students. They work closely to support our new little ones during their transition to school and at the beginning of their school journey.

The Student Leadership group is made up of enthusiastic Year 5 and 6 students. They meet weekly to discuss their responsibilities including School Assembly, leadership qualities and improvements around the school, extra-curricular activities and how to be a leader. Our leadership team is given the opportunity to further develop their skills at the Halogen Student Leadership Conference in Melbourne.





BREAKFAST CLUB

St Arnaud Primary School has a long history of providing a warm and filling breakfast for students every day of the week. In recent years, the school has been supported by the State Government Breakfast Clubs initiative. Our program is run by our wonderful Education Support staff and community volunteers. Breakfast is available to all students from 8:40am until students head to their classrooms - everyone is welcome and this morning gathering is the social highlight for most students and a lovely way to start the day!





INVOLVEMENT

Parents are warmly invited into our school through many opportunities. These include our weekly School Assembly on Monday morning where we celebrate student achievement and announce upcoming events.

The year is always ushered in with the much loved Welcome Picnic on the front lawns of the school. Other events on the school calendar include the swimming sports, school dance and athletics days where parents are welcome to come along and support student participation.

Other opportunities to contribute exist through being a classroom helper, joining Parents Club or School Council or helping out with the cooking program or brekky club.





SHAKE RATTLE & READ

Shake Rattle & READ is a free, oral language program aimed at children from 0-5 years. It runs each fortnight and is a fun, interactive way to foster a love of reading and the early development of language. The session includes a story, some rhyming, an activity and some physical play in the open Art Centre using a range of equipment to support gross motor development. Parents and carers are offered a social outlet and coffee, and a nutritious fruit snack for everyone's morning tea.

Shake Rattle & READ is open to everyone who wishes to attend - current school families or otherwise and is a great way to meet other parents in our community.





DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

At St Arnaud Primary School we support and celebrate student diversity. We plan classroom activities and host many events and fundraisers to promote awareness and support and celebrate what makes us unique. Our students love to support the Walk for Autism, raise money for the Royal Children's Hospital, celebrate Harmony Day, RU OK Day and Do It For Dolly to name a few, as well as build connections with community groups to build inclusion and acceptance.

The Diversity Dash is a huge favourite with students and parents alike. Joined by the Secondary College, McCallum, parents, grandparents and the local Police members - the Dash is a wonderful display of tolerance, acceptance and inclusion and we are very proud to be leading such an event.





WELLBEING DOG (RUSTY)

At St Arnaud Primary School we have a wellbeing dog! Rusty is a Cavoodle who lives with Ms Purkiss and her family when he is not at school. He loves socks and digging holes in the garden, cuddles, meeting new people and smelling everything! He chases balls, plays tug of war and then enjoys a long nap! His birthday is on Australia Day and he loves to celebrate with the students when the school year commences.

Rusty spends time in classrooms each week, supporting students to regulate their emotions, teaching us all how to understand our emotions and those of our friends, by reading his body language and non verbal cues to develop empathy and skills that support a safe and calm learning environment.





WELLBEING ROOM

At St Arnaud Primary School we have built a range of Allied Health services to support students across a range of additional needs. To do this, visiting staff are provided with a dedicated room to work from and a growing pool of physical resources to enable the delivery of specialised programs to individual students.

Onsite services mean less travel to appointments for parents and minimised loss of learning time for students. Our team are able to complement NDIS plans for students where possible.

Speech Therapy is provided weekly, by Aleshia Petrie.

Occupational Therapy is provided weekly, by Annabel Melino.

Counselling is provided weekly, by Jojo Naughton.





STAFF



MELISSA MITCHELL
Principal



EMILY GOSDEN
Learning Specialist



KIRRI EZARD
Literacy Leader
Prep/1



MELISSA WEIR
Wellbeing & Inclusion



JENNA WILSON
Year 5/6



AMY PURKISS
Year 1/2



BERNADETTE THURSBY
Year 2/3



JENNAE POLKINGHORNE
Physical Education



RENEE CARROLL
Yr 3/4



CHLOE COATES
Classroom Teacher



ROSEMARY WALSH
Music



RUSTY
Wellbeing Dog



STAFF



ALANA PATTON
Education Support



KELLY LEACH
Education Support



MOLLY HENDY
Education Support



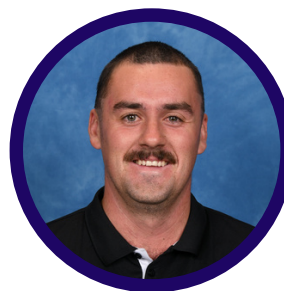
ALIZA LOCKHART
Education Support



GEORGIA TAYLOR
Education Support



BELINDA BURKE
Education Support



RILEY BURKE
Education Support



TOM COLLINS
Education Support



SHIRLEE TILLIG
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