

BVS Semester 1 Prep Program

Focus

At Barwon Valley School we believe a child's first year at school is vital and instrumental in establishing the foundation for future, lifelong learning.

The Prep Program at Barwon Valley School focuses on laying the foundations for effective learning by developing in each student a sense of a 'school self':

- understanding school routines and expectations
- understanding the language of school
- understanding classroom activities.

In particular, the program addresses social, behavioural, communication and independence skills necessary for meaningful, formal learning to take place.

Program outline:

Within a structured, orderly classroom environment behaviours that are pre-requisites for learning will be introduced, modelled and reinforced. Students will be supported to develop awareness of what is expected of them at school and how to act appropriately in this environment and sessions will focus on practising these skills.

Time will be devoted to building relationships with individual students and developing knowledge and understanding of their communication mode – eye movement, facial expression, gestures, signing, PECS, vocalisations and speech.

Classroom teams will collaborate with Allied Health staff, seeking specialised input and training for students where specific needs are identified. Programs will be developed and set up and students equipped with individualised resources to meet their needs.

Positive Social Behaviours as detailed in the Barwon Valley School Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy will be taught. To support students to act safely, effectively and co-operatively in a social or group setting they need to learn to follow the following basic instructions:

Stop Wait
Sit Come Go
Give
Stand up Hands Waiting Personal Space

Opportunities to develop and practice appropriate responses to these instructions will be given continually and across a range of contexts (within the classroom, playground and School, classroom and bus rules, Barwon Valley School Values and learning intentions will be taught to students in a meaningful way, targeted to their learning needs. (Visual displays, school produced texts, social stories, use of iPads and Interactive Whiteboards) The social skills of turn taking, sharing and being part of a group will be modeled and reinforced.

Independence will be encouraged and fostered with time allowed for students to attempt things for themselves, take supported risks and learn from their mistakes. Students will be supported to undertake tasks such as: -

- hanging up and unpacking their bags
- carrying their chairs to and from the tables
- getting their lunchboxes and drink bottles at snack and mealtimes
- selecting an activity to engage in
- packing away after an activity or play
- participating to the best of their ability in mealtime / toileting / hygiene routines
- demonstrating self-control and regulating their behaviours.

The **sensory** needs of students will be identified and strategies developed to help regulate these. Students will be supported to start to manage their behaviours and emotions through the use of sensory diet activities, Huff'n'Puff programs, break cards and targeted teaching about feelings.

Communication will be facilitated and encouraged at all levels – (signing, gestures, PECS, Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices, speech). Object Symbols and Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) will be used to structure the classroom environment – (timetables, activity cards, choice boards, feeling cards, visual scripts and learning steps). Meaningful associations between objects / actions and visual representations will be made and reinforced.

The Semester 1 Prep program will specifically target students' social, behavioural, communication and independence skills, their sense of wellbeing and enhance their capacity and willingness to learn in a calm, orderly learning environment within the classroom.

Literacy, Numeracy, Physical Education and The Arts programs will be implemented and an integrated approach to learning and skill development undertaken. The specific needs of individual students will be addressed and functional skills that can be generalised to everyday situations will be given priority.

How will we know learning is taking place?

During the first semester, as classroom staff work closely with students, a profile of their skills and abilities will be built up through a series of checklists, observations and anecdotal notes. This will enable a more targeted point of entry for learning goals to be established for Semester 2.

What can you do at home to support this learning?

A variety of resources and materials will be created and sent home to support the learning of students. These will include visual timetables, school produced books, PCS cards related to classroom activities, behaviour commands and communication requests.

Aided Language Displays (ALDs) will be provided to give students the opportunity to communicate about their day and learning tasks they engage in at school.

Specific individual resources will be developed in consultation with parents to cater for student needs as they arise.