

# CHRISTMAS HILLS

Primary School



## Newsletter

30th January 2026 - Term 1 - Week 1



### Welcome back everyone to term 1!

This week we will be heading off to Bundoora Farm on It was lovely to see the children and parents back after the holidays and hear all about the exciting events that took place over the Christmas break. There were lots of smiles on the children's faces as they caught up with their friends and teachers, which was just lovely to see. Children have quickly settled back into the routines of school and are super keen to learn and share ideas.

### Principal's Message

This is our final newsletter for 2025 and what an I would like to welcome our new families and students who have joined our school community this year. We have Wirilda in Prep, Alice in Grade 2 and Poppy in Grade 5, all of whom have transitioned smoothly into their new school. Our Prep students Wirilda and Roland (Arlo's brother in Grade 4) have had wonderful week getting to know their teachers and other students and have shown so much enthusiasm for activities that have been taking place in the classroom.

Also, I would like to thank all our families who volunteered their time over the holidays to water the garden and feed the chickens. The garden looks amazing with many of our fruit trees thriving and producing fruit for our students to enjoy and learn from.



### Important Dates End Of Term 4

- 28<sup>th</sup> January - First day of school for students
- 4<sup>th</sup> February - First Playgroup for the year
- 5<sup>th</sup> February - School welcome BBQ - 2:00pm
- 11<sup>th</sup> February - Sailing excursion
- 13<sup>th</sup> February - Responsible pet incursion
- 4<sup>th</sup> March - Small schools swimming carnival
- 5<sup>th</sup> March - Gulf Station excursion
- **9<sup>th</sup> March - Labour day public holiday**
- **10<sup>th</sup> March - Curriculum Day**
- 11<sup>th</sup> March Hockey Incursion
- 11<sup>th</sup> March - 23<sup>rd</sup> March - NAPLAN
- 30<sup>th</sup> March - Quantum Victoria Excursion
- 2<sup>nd</sup> April - Last day of school - 1:30 pm Assembly, 2:00pm finish.

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## Upcoming Events:

### Welcome Family BBQ Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February (2.00pm)

Next Thursday, we will be having a sausage sizzle at lunch time to welcome new and existing families to our community. Please put this date in your calendar and we look forward to seeing everyone at this event.

### Sailing – Sugarloaf Dam Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February

We will be taking students to Sugarloaf Dam for a sailing session which is run by the Sugarloaf Dam Sailing Club. We will be leaving school around 12.30pm for a 1.00pm session and returning to school at 3.00pm. Parents are welcome to attend.

### Responsible Pet Education Incursion Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February

This incursion will be taking place at school at 11.30am. It is extremely well run by experienced educators and provides an opportunity for students to develop safe and confident interactions with dogs.

### Small School Swimming Carnival (Upper Yarra Primary Schools) Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March

Our students will be taking part in the Small School Swimming Carnival held at Healesville Outdoor Pool which is always a great day out for students and parents. The events are organised by age/year levels and include a range of “water” activities that students compete in which are fun based. We invite parents to come along on the day and stay tuned for more information to follow.

### Meet the Teacher Weeks 2 and 3

We will be organising times with families over the next couple of weeks to have a meeting to discuss their child/children and gather any important information to ensure we are supporting students' wellbeing and academic learning needs. These meetings will also provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions and discuss any concerns. They will run for 15 minutes generally after school or at another time that is convenient. We will do our best to accommodate requests.

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### Staffing for 2026

Svetlana Elliott – teacher

Dani Angeli – Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader/teacher

Jodie Finster – Admin/Support Staff

Megan King – Support Staff

Jayden Wilson – Music/Instrumental Program

Chanaka Ruwadeniya – STEM teacher

### Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader

As part of a new government initiative in schools, we welcome onboard Dani Angeli who will take on the role of Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader at our school. This role includes working across the school to implement a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing for students, staff, and families. Dani will be working on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Dani is a highly experienced classroom teacher with a strong passion for student wellbeing and learning, and we are so excited to have her working with us to support our school community.

### Enrolments

We are continuing to promote our school in the local community and work with kindergartens in our area. Our enrolments are increasing and our students are thriving. I encourage all families to get the word out about our wonderful rural school and the programs we offer. If you know of anyone who will be starting school in 2027, please encourage them to contact me and arrange a school tour. We will be offering an open morning and information session for perspective 2027 prep students in term 1 and our playgroup will be commencing again on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February.

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### Cyber Safety Incident

As you are all aware there was a cyber safety incident that occurred over the holidays. Please be assured that our school was NOT impacted. The department did identify the point of the breach and has put safeguards in place.

### Curriculum Day Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March (NO STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL)

Schools in our network will be having a Curriculum Day on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March (day after the Labour holiday Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March) and therefore students will not come to school on both these days. All our staff will be participating in professional learning on the Curriculum Day focusing on continuing to unpack new initiatives within the department. These days are always extremely valuable and allow staff to network and share ideas.

### Fire Danger Ratings for School Closures and Relocation Procedures

We have been experiencing some very hot weather of late including heatwave conditions. Please be assured that our school is always prepared and takes all the necessary precautions to minimise any risks. Every day I receive advice from the Department of Education Emergency Management team of the weekly forecast ahead and expected fire danger ratings.

Just a reminder to families that the school uses the Fire Danger Ratings for the NILLUMBIK Local Government Area. On days that are predicted to be EXTREME the school relocates to Kangaroo Ground Primary School and on days predicted to be CATASTROPHIC the school is closed. We are always guided by the Department of Education and the CFA regarding Fire-Danger Ratings and advise our parents/carers immediately once we receive any communication.

We do, however, always encourage our families to take appropriate personal fire and hot weather safety precautions and to follow their own fire safety plans.

Again, I thank you all for your continued support and I am looking forward to another exciting and memorable year with our students, staff and families.

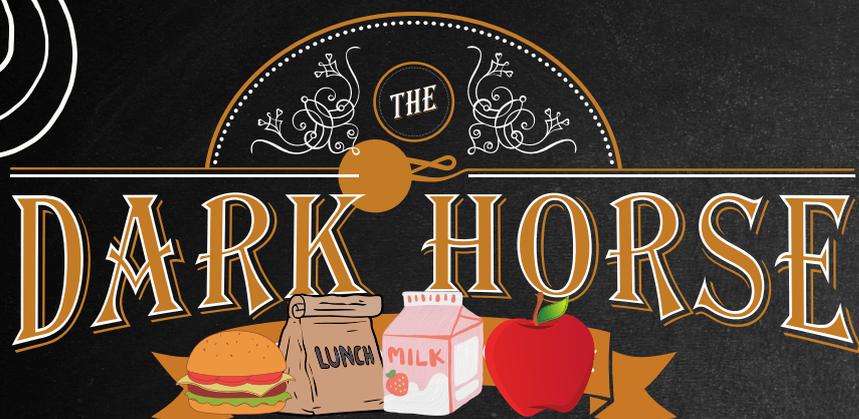
*Maria Parke*  
Principal

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## CHPS LUNCH ORDER MENU

Nuggets & Chips \$7

Burger & Chips \$7

Napolitana Pasta \$7

Chips \$4

Party Sausage Roll \$2

Party Pie \$2

Chocolate Milk \$3

Strawberry Milk \$3

Orange Juice \$2.5

Apple Juice \$2.5

Zooper Dooper \$2



**LUNCH ORDERS ARE EVERY WEDNESDAY PLEASE WRITE YOUR ORDER AND CHILD'S NAME ON A BROWN PAPER BAG OR ENVELOPE AND ENCLOSE CORRECT MONEY.**

**LUNCH ORDERS ARE DUE TO THE OFFICE NO LATER THAN 3:30PM TUESDAYS**



Child Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name \_\_\_\_\_



### Menu

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- Nuggets & Chips \$7
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- Chips \$4
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**Please Enclose Correct Money**

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Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Child Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please Enclose Correct Money**

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Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Schools in Category 0, 1 and 2 on the Bushfire At-Risk Register

## School preparations for the bushfire season

Each year, we undertake a range of activities to ensure the safety of our school and to prepare for bushfires and grassfires.

An important part of this process is communicating to parents what will happen when certain fire danger ratings are issued to help ensure the safety of students and staff.

**Our school has been identified as being in one of the highest fire risk categories - BARR 1 .**

On elevated fire danger days, schools in the highest levels of risk take pre-emptive actions to minimise the risk of being caught in a fire in these conditions.

Our school will action its pre-emptive plan for **relocation** on a day forecasted as **Extreme fire danger rating** in our **local government area (LGA), Nillumbik**.

Our school will also **close** on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in **Central fire district**.

We will let you know when we are enacting our pre-emptive action plan by Sentral.

Please be aware that no one will be on site on days where the school has enacted this plan.

As part of preparing our school for the fire season, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan and reprioritised any maintenance works that may assist in preparing for the threat of fire and cleared our facility's grounds and gutters.

## ***What can families and the school community do to help us prepare?***

- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers.
- Keep in touch with us by - reading our newsletters, checking our website <https://www.christmashillsps.vic.edu.au/>, by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff about our emergency management plan.
- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements if our school is relocated or closed due to elevated fire danger or closed due to a Catastrophic fire danger rating. Further information can be found on the [CFA's website](#).
- Action your family's bushfire survival plan if your own triggers are met. Our school community may be spread out across many areas and some families may be at higher risk than others. Your family's safety is critical, so please let us know if you are enacting your bushfire survival plan and if your children will be absent on these days.
- If your child is old enough, talk to [them about bushfires](#) and your family's bushfire survival plan.

You can find more information on emergencies, and preparedness actions here:



- VicEmergency app – that can be downloaded on your android and iOS mobile devices
- VicEmergency Hotline (1800 226 226)
- Website <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/vicemergency>)
- ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***What is the department's policy?***

The Department of Education annually assesses the fire risk of all schools and early childhood services with the support of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). They are allocated a category of risk (categories 0 to 6). Schools and services that are categories 0-3 are published on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). Schools at some risk of bushfire and grassfire are published on the Category 4 List.

The department's Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy requires schools at high risk of bushfire to enact pre-emptive action plans based on LGA-level fire danger forecasts. Conditions can vary significantly across the wider weather district, so using local forecasts helps us to respond appropriately to risks in our local area and maintain stability and educational continuity for our students and school community. This policy is consistent for all schools at high levels of risk and this approach is supported by emergency services.

The policy also requires that all schools and early childhood services on the BARR and the Category 4 list close when a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast in their fire weather district. All school bus routes which travel in or through a district with Catastrophic fire danger must also be cancelled.

### ***Why do we use the LGA forecast?***

When the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides public fire danger rating forecasts, they use fire weather district areas. In Victoria, there are 9 fire weather districts, which include numerous Local Government Areas.

As conditions can vary significantly across a wider weather district, the department uses BoM LGA forecasts for some pre-emptive actions to respond appropriately to risks in the local area and maintain safe educational continuity for students and the school community. LGA forecasts are a subset of the weather district ratings and while not issued publicly, are provided to emergency services and government departments to support planning and operational activities.

This policy is consistent for all schools at high levels of risk and this approach is supported by emergency services, including the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

### ***What do we do when our LGA has a different fire danger rating to the wider fire weather district?***

As we respond to local conditions, there may be days during the fire season when our fire weather district, **Central** is forecast as an Extreme fire danger rating, but our LGA is at a lower level of fire

danger. On these days our school operations will continue as normal; however, we will be taking action in line with fire services' advice by:

- checking our Emergency Management Plan and taking any necessary preparedness actions
- actively monitoring our local conditions and warnings
- having plans and procedures in place for if a fire starts to support us to take immediate action.

While our school will continue to operate, we encourage our school community to consider their own bushfire survival plan and reassess any travel through bushfire risk areas. We encourage you to follow your family bushfire survival plan and the advice of emergency services.

There may also be days where our LGA is forecast as Extreme fire danger, but Central is not. On these days we **will** enact our pre-emptive action plan.

### ***When will our school be closed due to Catastrophic fire danger?***

Our school will also **close** on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in **Central fire district**.

Closure of the school due to a Catastrophic fire danger rating will be enacted when the BOM forecast and related public safety messaging is confirmed. Due to uncertainties in the forecast, the timing of this confirmation may vary. Information regarding potential or confirmed Catastrophic fire danger days will be communicated to you by Sentral and a letter home.

It is also important to be aware that:

- No one will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Catastrophic day.
- All bus routes that travel through the Catastrophic area will be cancelled.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast for fire weather district in which the camp is located, or if the travel involves passing through areas that have Catastrophic fire danger.

Families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan on Catastrophic fire danger rating days. **On such days, children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.**

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) advises that when Catastrophic days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Catastrophic day.