

CHRISTMAS HILLS

Primary School

Newsletter



7th February, 2025 - Term 1 - Week 2



Enrolments

We are continuing to promote our school in the local community and work towards increasing our enrolments. We encourage all families to get the word out about our wonderful little rural school and the programs we offer. If you know of anyone who will be starting school next year in 2026, please encourage them to contact me and arrange a school tour. We will be offering some "taster" sessions for perspective 2026 prep students and our playgroup will be commencing again shortly this term.

Principal's Message

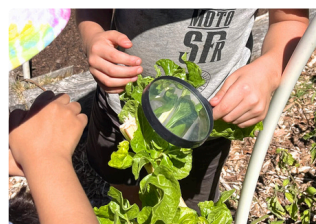
Term 1, 2025 - Week 2

Welcome back everyone to term 1!

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 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.

Also, I would like to welcome our new families and students who have joined our school community this year. We have Ivy in Prep who has transitioned smoothly into her new classroom and Charlie who has started with us in Grade 4.

This term is already looking very busy with various events organised.



Important Dates Term 1

Gymnastics Sessions

20th February

13th February

20th March

27th March

3rd April

Small Swimming Carnival

27th February

Naplan

11th March - 21st March

Term Dates

Term 1 - 28th January - 4th April

Term 2 - 22nd April - 4th July

Labour Day 10th March

Curriculum Days - 11th March



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Staffing

Svetlana Elliott – Teacher
Jodie Finster – Admin/Support Staff
Megan King – Support Staff
Sue Palmer – Teacher/Art
Debbie Azevedo – Bush School/Garden Program Coordinator
Catherine Megaloudis – Business Manager
Chanaka Ruwadeniya – STEM teacher

Upcoming Events:

Gymnastics at JETS – Diamond Creek

Our students will be participating in 5 sessions of gymnastics this term which will take place at JETS in Diamond Creek. These sessions will run for an hour, and we will be driving students to the stadium leaving school around 1.15pm. These sessions will take place on a Thursday from 2.00-3.00pm.

Dates are as follows: Thursday 20th February, 13th March, 20th March, 27th March and 3rd April.

NAPLAN 12th March to 24th March

We will have our Grade 3 and Grade 5 students participating in NAPLAN this year. This will be administered via a national online assessment platform, except for Year 3 students who will continue to sit the Year 3 writing test on paper. Students will complete tests in four areas:

- Writing
- Reading
- Language Conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation)
- Numeracy

More information regarding NAPLAN can be accessed on the ACARA NAPLAN website.

Small School Swimming Carnival (Upper Yarra Primary Schools)

Our students will take part in this event on Thursday 27th February. This is always a great day out and the children have a lot of fun. Events are organised by age/year levels and include a range of “water” activities that students compete in.



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Bush School/Garden Program

Thank you to Debbie who gave up her time over the holidays to come in and water our garden. So much effort has gone into creating a vibrant outdoor learning space which provides rich learning opportunities for our students. Our program has been planned this term and a range of activities including observing and tracking plant growth, collecting produce and then using produce in cooking sessions, have been organised. The children are always so excited for Friday's when Debbie is in to run our Bush School and Garden Program. Thank you also to Georgette who volunteered her time to assist with watering over the Christmas break.

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 Parks
Principal

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 CATOSTROPHIC 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.

NESST Curriculum Day Tuesday 11th March (NO STUDENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL)

This day is a Curriculum Day and therefore students will not come to school on this day as teachers will be off-site participating in professional learning with other small schools. The focus for the day will be unpacking the new Victorian teaching and learning model. These days are always extremely valuable and allow teachers to network and share ideas.



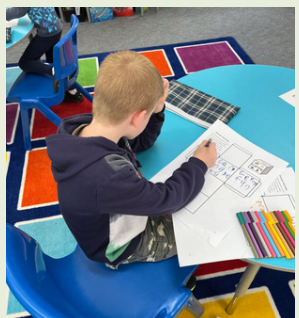
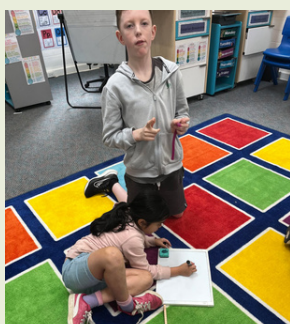
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UPCOMING DATES TERM 1



TERM 1

- 28th January - Staff return to school
- 29th January - Students first day
- 20th February - Gymnastics session
- 27th February - Small Schools Swimming Carnival - Healesville
- 10th March - Labour day
- 11th March - Curriculum Day
- NAPLAN - 11th March - 21st March
- 13th March - Gymnastics
- 27th March - Gymnastics
- 3rd April - Gymnastics
- 4th April - Last day of Term 1 - 2:00pm finish

**Activities may change through out the Term*



EXCITING ACTIVITIES COMING UP

Gymnastics Dates

20th February
13th March
20th March
27th March
3rd April

Small Swimming Carnival - Healesville

27th March



NEWSLETTER



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

We're excited to inform you that we will be continuing to take lunch orders every Wednesday through Dark Horse Café.

Please ensure all lunch orders are placed in the designated box by 3:30 PM on Tuesday, please include the student's name, lunch order details, and exact change.



SCHOOL VALUES


Every child at Christmas Hills Primary School is supported in their social and emotional development in a caring way. We help students build skills in empathy and positive relationships, in a framework centred around our school values of CHIRPS – Caring, Honesty, Inquisitiveness, Respect, Persistence, Sharing.

These school values are built around our emblem, the blue wren, and they were jointly decided by students, staff and parents.

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Primary School

CHIRPS



	Yard	Transitions	Classes	Toilets	Excursions
Caring	Hear calm, polite and friendly voices	Calm, organised	Be mindful of personal space	Good hygiene	Be good role models
Honesty	See inclusive play with a variety of activities	Enter learning spaces in an orderly manner	Take responsibility for your own learning	Respect others' privacy	Hear calm, polite and friendly voices
Inquisitiveness	See people caring for each other	Respectful of other students	Respectful listening		Be mindful of the general public
Respect	Respect nature				Move in an orderly, calm manner
Persistence					
Sharing					

SCHOOL UNIFORM



UNIFORM PRICES

- Polo shirt size 6,8,12,14- \$15
- Polo shirt - Adult S,M, L - \$25.00
- Wide brim hat - \$15

- Communication satchel - \$15
- Child vest - \$20 Adult 25.00
- Blue gingham dress- \$20
- Grade six top - \$50

SCHOOL UNIFORM

School uniforms are available for purchase at any time from the school office. It is important to ensure your child has their school uniform for school excursions.

Additionally, we are now selling book satchels that help keep home readers secure and easily accessible.

How to prepare for a heatwave

A heatwave is an extended period of unusually high temperatures and often high humidity compared to the usual local climate and past weather. Heatwaves are expected to become more frequent and more severe in future due to climate change.

Heatwaves and hot weather kill more people in Australia than bushfires, cyclones and any other hazard, so it's important to adapt your activities and have a plan to keep cool and look after yourself this summer.

Before a heatwave

Get in the know

- Learn about the risks and potential impacts of extreme heat in your area, including its effects on you and your loved ones.
- Visit your state or territory's health authority to learn the signs of heat stress, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
[ACT](#) | [NSW](#) | [NT](#) | [QLD](#) | [SA](#) | [TAS](#) | [VIC](#) | [WA](#)
- You can also speak to your doctor about how heat might affect you including precautions you can take, particularly if you have a health condition or chronic illness. If you take medication, ask how to store it during a heatwave.
- Complete an Australian Red Cross [first aid course](#) and learn how to support someone impacted by extreme heat, then download the [Red Cross First Aid App](#) for the most up to date first aid information anytime, anywhere.
- Check the daily forecast and get to know the Bureau of Meteorology's (BOM) heatwave categories, forecasts and warnings at www.bom.gov.au/heatwave, on the BOM app or the telephone audio warning service (1300 659 215).

Get connected

- Identify your support network — family, friends, neighbours, or a caregiver — who can help you before or during a heatwave. This may include tasks like adjusting your air conditioning, closing blinds, doing your shopping, and checking in on you.
- Make plans with your support network about what you will do if you lose power during a heatwave. Identify a location you can go to stay cool and decide how you'll let your support network know where you are.
- Write down your important numbers (doctors, support network, care agencies, electricity company) so they are easily accessible during a blackout.
- Heatwaves can also make mental health concerns worse. Keep numbers of health services such as Health Direct – 1800 022 222 and Lifeline – 13 11 14 close by.

Get organised

- Prepare your home to make it cooler where possible, e.g. installing fans, or shade cloths. For pre-existing fans and air conditioners, make sure they have been serviced and are working well.
- Consider buying personal cooling items, such as an ice vest or small fans. Get a cooling bag for water and medications.
- Some medical conditions can get worse in extreme heat. Make sure your conditions are well managed and you have a plan in place for when a heatwave or blackout occurs.
- Plan ahead to make sure you have enough supplies, such as food, water and any medication required.
- Make a plan for any pets or animals and ensure they have enough food and water and a cool place to shelter during a heatwave or a blackout.
- Investigate public locations in your local area where you could go to stay cool e.g. community centres, libraries, movie theatres.

Get packing

- Pack essentials for a few days at home without essential services.
- Also consider items you'd want if you have to leave home unexpectedly.
- Refer to the [Get Packing Checklist](#) for useful suggestions during a heatwave and blackout.
- Consider including torches, power banks, battery-powered fans, first aid kits, water, and non-perishable foods.

During a heatwave

- Stay inside and keep out of the heat as much as possible. Plan to do most of your activities early or late in the day to avoid being outside during the hottest hours.
- Avoid sport and heavy exercise during peak hours of the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Keep your home cool by using external shade cloths or blinds to shield the inside of the house from direct sunlight.
- Where possible use a combination of air conditioning and fans to keep certain rooms in the house cool. Electric fans can be an effective method of cooling if air conditioning is not available.
- If not using air conditioning, open windows during the cooler parts of the day and allow ventilation between rooms.
- Take cool showers or baths, splash yourself with cold water, or use a cool damp cloth to cool down.
- If it's too hot at home, go to an air-conditioned shopping centre, community centre, library or your local swimming pool.
- Avoid direct exposure to the sun where possible and protect yourself with appropriate clothing (loose-fitting, lightweight and light-coloured). Do not leave children or animals in parked vehicles.
- Keep in touch with friends, neighbours and relatives, particularly if they're unwell or isolated.

Get help

- Take notice of your health, including your energy levels mood and ability to think and plan. If you notice negative changes take action to cool down and seek support from caregivers, crisis lines, and health providers.
- If you or someone you know becomes unwell during a heatwave, call 000 immediately. Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency and can cause a person to collapse or fall unconscious.

NAPLAN 2025

Information for parents and carers



Why do students do NAPLAN?

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a literacy and numeracy assessment that students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sit each year. It is the only national assessment all Australian students have the opportunity to undertake. As students progress through their school years, it is important to check how well they are learning the essential skills of reading, writing and numeracy. NAPLAN assesses the literacy and numeracy skills that students are learning through the school curriculum and allows parents/carers to see how their child is progressing against national proficiency standards. NAPLAN is just one aspect of a school's assessment and reporting process. It does not replace ongoing assessments made by teachers about student performance, but it can provide teachers with more information about students' educational progress. NAPLAN also provides schools, education authorities and governments with information about how education programs are working, and whether young Australians are achieving important educational outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

Your child will do the NAPLAN tests online

Online NAPLAN tests are designed to provide precise results and are engaging for students. The tests are tailored (or adaptive), which means that each test presents questions that may be more or less difficult depending on a student's responses. This helps students remain engaged with the assessment.

Tailored testing allows a wider range of student abilities to be assessed and measures student achievement more precisely. A student's overall NAPLAN result is based on both the number and complexity of questions they answer correctly. Your child should not be concerned if they find questions challenging; they may be taking a more complex test pathway.

All Year 3 students will continue to complete the writing assessment on paper.

What does NAPLAN assess?

NAPLAN assesses literacy and numeracy skills that students are learning through their regular school curriculum.

Students sit assessments in writing, reading, conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. The questions assess content linked to the Australian Curriculum: English and Mathematics. All government and non-government education authorities contribute to the development of NAPLAN test materials. To find out more about NAPLAN, visit nap.edu.au.

Participation in NAPLAN

NAPLAN is for all Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students. ACARA supports inclusive testing, so all students have the opportunity to participate in the National Assessment Program.

Information on adjustments available for students with disability who have diverse functional abilities and needs is provided in the National protocols for test administration. Schools should work with parents/carers and students to identify, on a case-by-case basis, reasonable adjustments required for individual students with disability to access NAPLAN.

To help inform these decisions, you may consult the National protocols for test administration (linked above), NAPLAN public demonstration site, the Guide for schools to assist students with disability to access NAPLAN, and our series of videos where parents/carers, teachers and students share their experiences in using NAPLAN adjustments.

In exceptional circumstances, a student with a disability that severely limits their capacity to participate in the assessment, or a student who has recently arrived in Australia and has a non-English speaking background, may be granted a formal exemption.

Your school principal and your local test administration authority can give you more information on adjustments for students with disability or the process required to gain a formal exemption.

What if my child is absent from school on NAPLAN test days?

Where possible, schools may arrange for individual students who are absent at the time of testing to complete missed tests at another time during the school's test schedule.

What can I do to support my child?

Students are not expected to study for NAPLAN. You can support your child by letting them know that NAPLAN is a part of their school program and reminding them to simply do their best. Some explanation of NAPLAN is useful to help students understand and be comfortable with the format of the tests; however, it is not necessary for parents/carers to do this. Teachers will ensure students are familiar with the types of questions in the tests and will provide appropriate support and guidance.

ACARA does not recommend excessive preparation for NAPLAN or the use of services by coaching providers. See the types of questions and tools available in the online NAPLAN assessments at NAP – Public demonstration site.

How is my child's performance reported?

From 2023, NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards. There is a standard for each assessment area at each year level. Proficiency standards provide clear information on student achievement. They are set at a challenging but reasonable level expected of the child at the time of NAPLAN testing, based mainly on what has been taught in previous years of schooling.

Student achievement is shown against 4 levels of proficiency: Exceeding, Strong, Developing and Needs additional support.

A NAPLAN individual student report will be provided by your child's school later in the year. If you do not receive a report, you should contact your child's school.

How are NAPLAN results used?

- Students and parents/carers use individual results to discuss progress with teachers.
- Teachers use results to help identify students who need greater challenges or extra support.
- Schools use results to identify strengths and areas of need to improve teaching programs, and to set goals in literacy and numeracy.
- School systems use results to review the effectiveness of programs and support offered to schools.
- The community can see information about the performance of schools over time at myschool.edu.au.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about NAPLAN:

- contact your child's school
- contact your local test administration authority at nap.edu.au/TAA
- visit nap.edu.au

To learn how ACARA manages personal information for NAPLAN, visit nap.edu.au/naplan/privacy.

NAPLAN timetable

The NAPLAN test window is 9 days. This is to accommodate schools that may not have the capacity to complete the tests in a shorter time frame. The NAPLAN test window starts on Wednesday 12 March 2025 and finishes on Monday 24 March 2025. Schools will schedule the tests as soon as possible within the testing window, prioritising the first week.

Test	Scheduling requirements	Duration	Test description
Writing	Year 3 students do the writing test on paper on day 1 only. Years 5, 7 and 9 writing must start on day 1 (schools must prioritise completion of writing on day 1, with day 2 only used where there are technical/logistical limitations).	Year 3: 40 min Year 5: 42 min Year 7: 42 min Year 9: 42 min	Students are provided with an idea or topic called a writing stimulus (or prompt) and asked to write a response in a particular genre (narrative or persuasive writing).
Reading	To be completed after the writing test.	Year 3: 45 min Year 5: 50 min Year 7: 65 min Year 9: 65 min	Students read a range of informative, imaginative and persuasive texts, and then answer related questions.
Conventions of language	To be completed after the reading test.	Year 3: 45 min Year 5: 45 min Year 7: 45 min Year 9: 45 min	Students are assessed on spelling, grammar and punctuation.
Numeracy	To be completed after the conventions of language test.	Year 3: 45 min Year 5: 50 min Year 7: 65 min Year 9: 65 min	Students are assessed on number and algebra, measurement and geometry, and statistics and probability.



Christmas Hills

Primary School

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 and 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 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

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, Nillumbik 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 Nillumbik 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 phone.

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.

