



# Prep at Burwood Heights

## What makes our Prep program unique?



### Multi Sensory Approach to Literacy

Our literacy results speak for themselves. We are blown away with what our Prep students are able to achieve in one year of schooling. We use a multi-sensory approach to Literacy that involves multiple exposures, so the students are exposed to the information over and over until they consolidate their learning. We introduce the single letters in Term One and then introduce two-letter phonograms in Term Two and Three. Students write on lines from the start of the year and learn how to correctly form each letter and how to construct a sentence. Students take home a sight word ring that proves a great motivation to learn their sight words and move through the levels in Reading. Students develop a love for Reading and Writing and we are incredibly proud of the program that we have developed.



### Prep Playground

We are extremely fortunate to have a Prep Playground. This allows Prep students to become familiar with their surroundings in the comfort of their own playground, where they can get to know their peers and always find a staff member or Prep Playground Monitor to assist them. In Term Three, students begin to explore the larger school area by wearing 'Prep Free Play' badges and venturing out into the 'big playground' in small groups. This allows staff and older students to keep an eye on them and be aware that they are new to the wider school playground.



### School Community

Burwood Heights Primary School has a school community of 360 students. Our school currently consists of seventeen classes, of which three are Prep classes. Our Principal endeavours to keep class sizes small. The benefits of our school size is that all of the students know all of the teachers and all of the teachers know the students. This creates a caring community in which students feels safe and they always see familiar faces wherever they go.



### Inquiry-based Play

Burwood Heights is currently an International Baccalaureate Candidate School, working towards authorisation. We have chosen to use an inquiry approach to learning as inquiry goes across and beyond subject areas, pursues students' interests, develops students' higher order thinking and interpersonal skills and engages students in real-world questions and problems.

In Prep, all of the classes come together to participate in play-based learning where all activities link to the Unit of Inquiry and what we have been learning in Literacy and Numeracy. The children think that they are 'just playing,' but we know that they are doing so much more. 'Scientists have suggested that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain, unless it is done through play, in which case it takes between 10 and 20 repetitions.'

Our Prep students are given the opportunity to develop social skills, language skills, creative thinking and problem-solving skills as well as being able to develop fine and gross motor skills.





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### Family Relationships

We place great importance on the relationship between home and school. Prep students are brought into the classroom by family in the morning and collected from the classroom at home time. This provides the opportunity for teachers to have open communication with families, sharing the children's learning journey, successes, and talking about any issues that may arise.

A Prep Newsletter comes home frequently and details what we have been doing in class. We also have the Class Dojo app where parents receive photos and videos of their child at school.

We enjoy and welcome interaction with our families to enhance students and families school experience.



### Buddies

Our Prep students have Middle School Buddies (Grade Three and Four). We found that when they have Grade Six students as buddies, the Preps were very upset when their buddies left the school at the end of the year. Having Middle School buddies means students see each other around the school for many years.

Every child at our school has a buddy. Our Middle School students have Prep buddies and our Junior school students have Senior School buddies. Every child in our school has a buddy.



### Numeracy

Maths is a hands-on and fun experience for our Preps! Our Maths lessons are planned and designed to have as many hands on activities as possible. Being hands-on is especially important in the classroom because it allows students to experiment with trial and error, learn from their mistakes, and understand the potential gaps between theory and practice. And most important, it provides educators with a unique opportunity to enrich the minds of their students in new and engaging ways.

We endeavour to make sure students understand that Maths can be used in many real life situations and give them experiences to use their knowledge in 'real life.'



### Classrooms

We are incredibly lucky to have spacious Prep classrooms with a dedicated space for Inquiry-based Play where all three classes can spend time together.



# Extra-Curricular Programs

At Burwood Heights, we offer a diverse range of programs to cater for the whole child. Students from Prep - Grade 6 have the opportunity to join activities and clubs.

## Dance & Choir



Over 100 students participate in our school's Dance program. Classes available include Hip hop, Jazz, Lyrical, Ballet, Tap and Boys Dance Crew. Students perform many times during the year and at the end of year Dance and Glee Concert. Students from Grades One to Six are invited to take part in choir and perform numerous times throughout the year at school and community events.

## Real Life Adventures

Students are taken on adventures around the state to participate in unique learning experiences such as:

- 'Set Sail' - Sailing on Albert Park Lake
- 'Trees Alive' - High Ropes at Glen Harrow Park
- 'The Power of Water' - Maroondah Dam and Yarra River visit
- 'Horsepower' - Mill Valley Ranch
- 'Cool' - Lake Mountain snow trip
- 'Minecraft' - Castella Quarries and Warrandyte Gold Mines



## Garden Play

Garden play is offered at lunch times, three days a week, to students in grades 1 – 6. It is an area where creativity and exploration are promoted. Prep students have a garden lesson once a week to introduce them to the garden area and provide them with unique learning experiences outside the classroom.

Some activities provided in the garden for students are: sandpit play, woodworking, cubby building, animal care (chickens and bunnies), dress ups, cooking, painting, imaginary play, gaming (e.g. outdoor scrabble) and water play.



## Bright Sparks



Bright Sparks is an extension program that offers courses for students in topics such as robotics, game coding, animation, programming, filming and 3D printing. The purpose of this program is to use technology to engage and enrich student learning.

Other extra curricular activities include:  
Library – Maker Space, Coding Club, Art Club, Lego Lab, Drama Club and Ballroom Dancing.