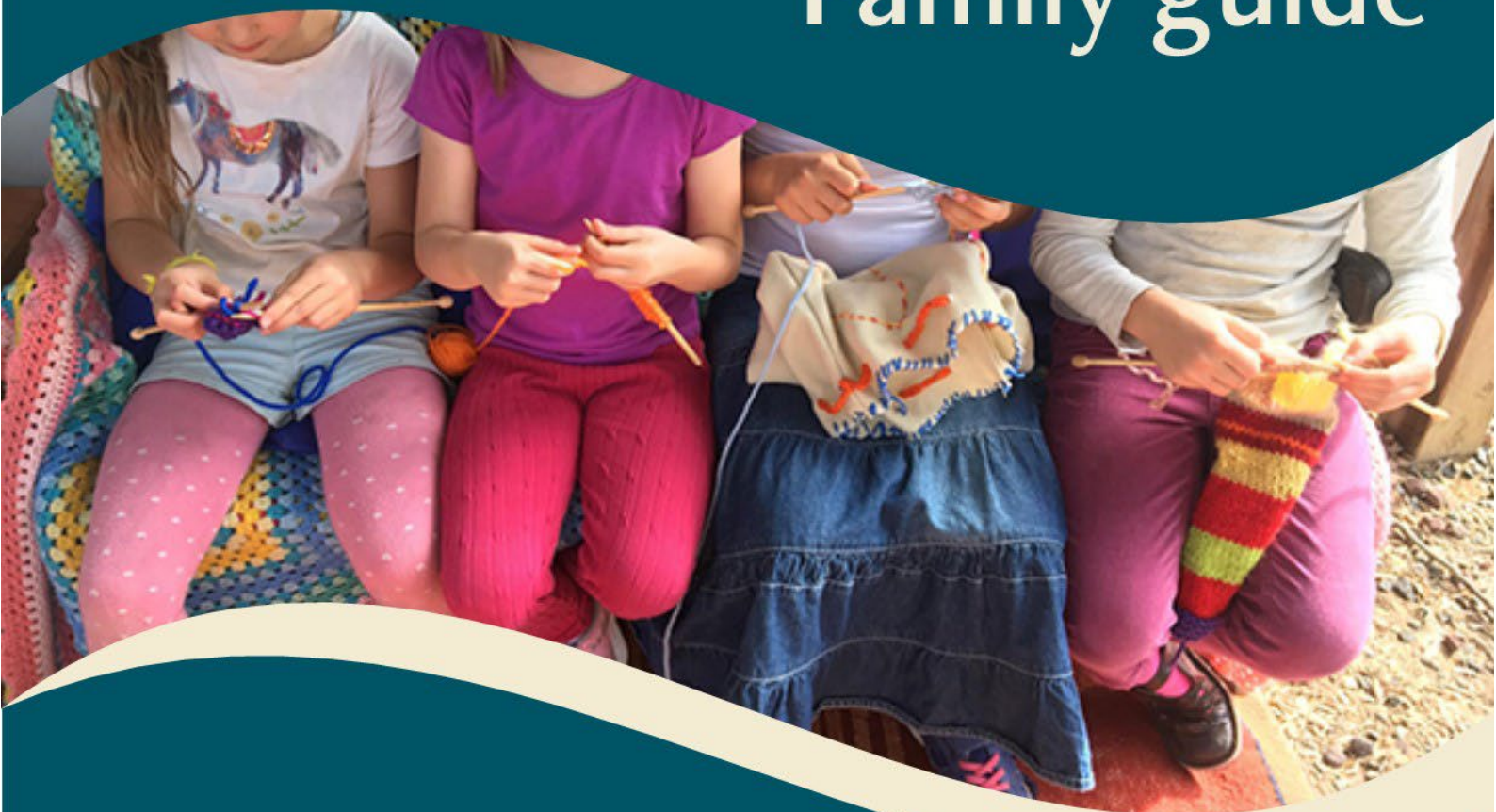
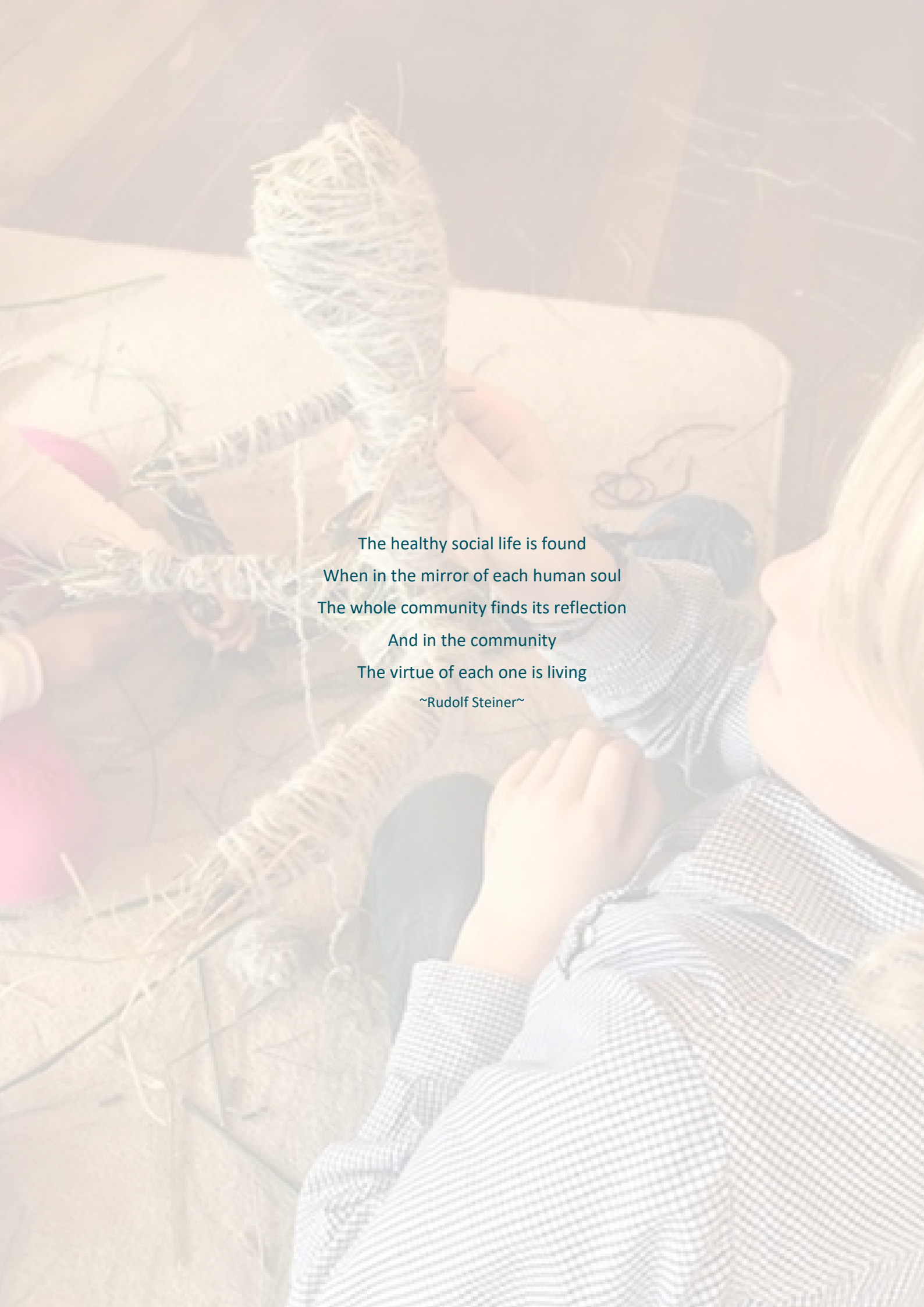


Family guide



**Freshwater
Creek**
Steiner School



The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection
And in the community
The virtue of each one is living

~Rudolf Steiner~

Contents

Welcome.....	1	Restricted Items.....	11
School Contact Details.....	1	Communication	12
Staff Email addresses:	1	Educational Matters	12
FWCSS Values.....	1	Parent/Teacher Interviews	12
Acknowledgement of Country	1	Class Meetings	12
School Structure.....	2	Permissions and requests for confirmation of family details.....	12
2024 Staff	2	School Reports.....	13
2024 Term Dates	4	School Newsletter – PLEASE READ THIS IF NOTHING ELSE!	13
2024 School Hours	4	Noticeboards	13
Your Child at School	5	Facebook.....	13
Our Commitment to Child Safety.....	5	School Calendar	13
Start of School Day	5	Change of Contact Details	14
Nominated persons	6	Site, Safety, and Financial Matters, including fee payment difficulties	14
Attendance	6	Fee Statements.....	14
Absences from school.....	6	Early Withdrawal	14
Dress Code.....	7	Concerns and Complaints	14
Nutrition and School Lunches	8	Health and Safety.....	15
Classroom Matters	8	Carpark and Parking.....	15
Early Childhood	8	Bushfire Threat School Closure	15
Primary School Curriculum.....	9	Extreme Heat	15
Homework.....	9	Heavy Rain (wet day timetable)	15
Camps.....	9	Lightning Storms	16
Incursions/Excursions.....	10	Accidents and Illnesses	16
Parent Helpers: Working With Children Checks.....	10	First Aid	16
Nature inside and out.....	10	COVID-19.....	16
Environmental Education	10	Medication	16
Festivals.....	10	Allergies/Asthma	16
Children’s Birthdays	11	Headlice	17
Class Plays.....	11	Parents and School Partnership	17
School Assembly.....	11	Study Groups and Parent Education.....	18
Helping in Class.....	11	Parent Craft Circle.....	18
		FWCSS Community Choir.....	18
		Buildings and Grounds.....	18

Chai Café	18
Class Carers	19
Autumn Fair and Open Day.....	19
In General.....	19
Visiting the School.....	19
Lost Property.....	19
Communication (use of parent emails/mobile numbers).....	19
Photographs of Children	19
Smoking.....	20
Dogs.....	20
Television, Media and Computers	20
Family Lifestyle.....	21
Room Hire	21
Library	21
Map of the School.....	22
Who do I talk to ?.....	23



Welcome...

... to Freshwater Creek Steiner School and Kindergarten. We look forward to sharing your family's journey through our school.

In this booklet we aim to provide all the information you will need to settle into our school and community. Changes to the information in this booklet are announced in the weekly newsletter, your go-to place for what's going on at school. You can also find information on the school website, and FWCSS Policies and Procedures may be requested from Reception.

School Contact Details

Street and Postal address; 52 McIntyre Road, Freshwater Creek Vic 3216

Phone: 03 5264 5077

Website: www.fwcoss.vic.edu.au

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/freshwatercreeksteinerschool>

Email: info@fwcss.vic.edu.au

Attendance notifications: Phone: 5264 5077;

SMS/text: 0403 004 280; or

Email: info@fwcss.vic.edu.au

Staff Email addresses: All FWCSS Staff email addresses follow the convention: `firstname.surname@fwcss.vic.edu.au`

FWCSS Values

Warmth • Integrity • Balance • Inclusivity • Vitality

Acknowledgement of Country

FWCSS acknowledges the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin nations; the traditional custodians of the country on which FWCSS resides, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Freshwater Creek Steiner School is committed to Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge the original spiritual sovereignty of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, that comes from “the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors”. We acknowledge this spiritual sovereignty has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

FWCSS supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations for “a better future for our children” as expressed in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart (<https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>).

School Structure

FWCSS is an incorporated association. The school council, staff and community work together to preserve and enhance the special character of the school.

The School Council (the Council) is the governing body of the school and is elected pursuant to the School's Rules of Association. The Council Charter outlines the role of Council and can be found on the website at <https://fwcss.vic.edu.au/policies>.

The Head of School is an ex-officio member of the Council and is delegated the task of overall management of the school. The Head of School employs staff to fill educational and operational roles on behalf of the School Council, who is the legal employer. The Head of School reports to Council.

In line with the ethos of Steiner Schools, the Head of School models and promotes a high level of consultation with staff and the school community.

The Business Manager is delegated the task of financial and business management for the school and oversees the operations staff. The Business Manager reports to the Head of School and is a member of the Council's Audit and Finance Committee.

All staff are accountable firstly to the Head of School and then to Council. The Head of School appoints a Learning Coordinator to lead the Primary School Faculty in educational matters, and an Early Childhood Education Leader to lead the Early Childhood faculty.

The 'College' sits at the heart of our school and is made up of teachers and staff members committed to deepening their Anthroposophical knowledge and understanding of Rudolf Steiner's teachings. The College nurtures the pedagogical impulse that is unique to Steiner education. The College brings consideration of the deeper meaning behind what we do, to questions that arise about curriculum, pedagogy and how we nurture and support our students. The College meets weekly to keep the sense of the whole school and what the life of the school needs.

The Head of School, Business Manager, Primary School Learning Coordinator, Early Childhood leader and College Chair make up the leadership team.

2024 Staff

Position	Name
Head of School	Gabby Brennan
Business Manager	Emily Galang
Operations	Sarah Olliff
Enrolments and Admin Manager	Leanne Mirams
Reception/Accounts	Mandy Toohey
Teachers	
Kindergarten Teachers	Toshi Komatsu Jerringup Kindergarten program
	Tanya Carmody Gnarri Kindergarten program

Prep	Lisa Anderson/Adele Calvert
Class 1	Amy Murphy
Class 2	Elle Hopton
Class 3	Lisa Bianchi
Class 4	Julia Dean
Class 5	Amy Ingles/Ollie Fabinyi
Class 6	Rachel Bowen
Education and Student support	
Early Child Education leader	Adele Calvert
Early Childhood Steiner pedagogy leader	Toshi Komatsu
Playgroup Leader and Early Childhood Support	Kelli Lavelle
Playgroup Leader and Kinder assistant	Oriel DaSilva
Jerringup Kindergarten	Jenny Bradshaw
Gnarri Kindergarten	Leanne Freestone
Prep	Lisa Hunwick Emily Clarke
Primary School Learning and Student Support Coordinator	Sonya Mordaunt
Student Support: Wellbeing and team leader	Ollie Fabinyi,
Student Support: Academic support and compliance	Samantha Pearson
Class 1	Cassandra Thieme
Class 2 and 3	Maureen Cromer
Classes 3 and 4	Lee Eastgate
Class 5	Odette Downey-Boogaard
Specialist teachers and tutors	
Violin	TBA
Cello	Louise Brown
Choir/Music	Lucy O'Grady
Craft	Katey McRae
Japanese	Yasushi Hayashi
Farming	Mary-Rose Coleman

Gardening	Kelli Lavelle
Asteya Library	Lee Eastgate
School Council (Changes to Council membership can be found on the FWCSS website)	
Chair	Casey Tutungi
Treasurer	Mark Kilinski
Members	Vanessa Como
	Jennifer Ma

2024 Term Dates

Term One	Tue 30 Jan - Thu 28 Mar Mon 11 Mar: Labour Day Public Holiday Fri 29 Mar: Good Friday Public Holiday
Term Two	Mon 15 Apr - Thu 20 Jun Thu 25 Apr: ANZAC Day Public Holiday Fri 26 Apr: Student free day: Prof Devt Fri 7 Jun: Student free day: Report writing Mon 10 Jun: King's Birthday Public Holiday
Term Three	Tue 16 Jul - Fri 20 Sep Fri 23 Aug: Student free day: Vic Steiner Schools conference
Term Four	Mon 7 Oct - Fri 6 Dec Mon 4 Nov: Student free day: Report writing Tue 5 Nov: Melbourne Cup Day Public Holiday

2024 School Hours

Administration Office	8.45am – 3.15pm Monday to Friday The office is closed during school holidays.
Playgroup/Stepping Stones	Sessions vary according to demand. Please contact info@fwcss.vic.edu.au or visit www.fwcss.vic.edu.au for details
Kindergarten	9.00am to 3.00pm
Prep to Class 6	8.50am to 3.10pm Yard supervision commences at 8.35 am.

Primary School Daily timetable

8.50 – 10.50 am	Main lesson
10.50 -11.00 am	Morning Tea
11.00-11.20 am	Playtime
11.20-12.05 pm	Middle Lesson 1
12.05-12.50 pm	Middle Lesson 2
12.50-1.00 pm	Lunch
1.00-1.40 pm	Playtime
1.40-2.25 pm	Afternoon Lesson 1
2.25-3.05 pm	Afternoon Lesson 2
3pm	Prep children to be collected by parent/carer from “bus stop” outside the Prep gate.
3.10 pm	Class 1-6 students are accompanied to the Wetlands Deck for collection. Class 5 and 6 students may be picked up from the car park, if they do not have a younger student with them.

Your Child at School

Our Commitment to Child Safety

The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.

At Freshwater Creek Steiner School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children’s best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture. More information about the school’s Child Safe Policies and Student Wellbeing Officers, can be found at <https://fwcss.vic.edu.au/child-safety>

If you have concerns that a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Start of School Day

Kindergarten and Prep programs start at 9 am.

Kindergarten children must be signed in at the kindergarten at the beginning of each session by a parent or guardian. No late pass is required. Class 1-6 children must arrive between 8.35 am and 8.50 am. Prior to 8.35 the grounds are not supervised, and children may not be left at school unattended. Dropoff is from 8.35am and lessons start at 8.50 am. It is important for your child that they arrive before the beginning of the morning session. In the primary school, the daily rhythm begins with morning circle, which promotes social cohesion in the class, prepares the children for their work and relates to the Main Lesson study being undertaken. If your child is consistently late, they will miss out on this valuable social and educational component of their education. It is your responsibility to ensure your child/ren arrive at school on time.

If late arrival is unavoidable, children must be signed in at reception by an adult. They will be issued a late pass to give to their teacher.

End of day

Kinder and Prep children are to be collected by 3pm. Kindergarten children must be signed out at the kindergarten, by an authorised parent or guardian.

Primary School children are to be collected at 3.10pm. Children are supervised until 3.25pm. If your child has not been picked up by 3.25 pm, a parent/guardian will be called. Please be on time for pickup.

If you know you will not be able to get to school by 3.10pm, in the first instance please try to contact another parent in your class who can stay with your child until you arrive and/or pick them up on your behalf. As a last resort, contact the Administration Office (preferably prior to 2.45pm) and a message will be delivered to your child or child's teacher and arrangements will be made to supervise your child until you arrive.

If you need to collect your child before the end of school, please do so at one of the following times, and advise your child's teacher or the office before 8.50am in the morning.

Early pick up times are:

- the beginning of morning tea (10.50am)
- the beginning of lunchtime (12.50pm), or
- the end of lunchtime (1.40pm).

Children leaving early must be signed out at the office by an adult. In the case of emergency requiring urgent collection of your child, please contact the office for an immediate response.

Nominated persons

Please ensure the school is kept up to date regarding persons nominated for/restricted from collecting children on your behalf. Please notify the School Office of any Court Orders in place relating to your child.

Attendance

The Steiner curriculum is based on continuity of lessons and it is important for the child both academically and socially that they attend each school day, except in times of illness or emergency. It is the legal obligation of parents to send children to school as outlined in the Education and Training Reform Act 2017 (Vic).

Seasonal Festival days, camps, and excursions including swimming programs, are an integral part of the primary school curriculum and attendance is compulsory for all school children. If your child is unable to attend, the reason needs to be provided in writing in advance and signed by a parent or guardian.

Children should attend for the full term and take holidays within the designated dates. This gives your child the best chance of benefitting fully from their school experience. If you have planned an extended absence for your child, please complete the form available in the office, so we can discuss your circumstances with you.

Absences from school

Accurate attendance record keeping is a legal requirement of the school and aims to safeguard children.

If your child is absent for the day, please advise the school before 9.00 am by:

- Phone: 5264 507,
- SMS 0403 004 280, or
- email info@fwcss.vic.edu.au

If a child is absent without notice being received, the school will contact the parents/carers by phone or text.

Dress Code

How we dress is an important indicator of how we regard ourselves and relate to others.

We purposefully allow children to wear their own clothes rather than a uniform. School is a place of learning and culture however, and the following rules apply for Early Childhood and Primary school:

Clothing should be comfortable, suitable to conditions, safe and reflect the school's values. This means:

- Clothes should be well fitting, casual, robust and preferably made from natural fibres to allow the child's skin to breathe.
- Clothes should allow freedom of movement such as running, jumping and sitting on the floor, whilst protecting modesty. Second hand clothes are great, so the children don't feel stressed about getting them dirty or damaged.
- Clothes must be sun safe. Tops must be over the shoulder and cover the belly and back. Shorts and skirts must be mid-thigh length or longer. All children must wear broad brimmed hats in Summer and Spring. In the primary school these are provided. No hat, no play.
- Children must be warm in Winter. Layers made up of singlets, thermals, long sleeves and pants and woollen jumpers keep your child warm in our very cold Winters. Beanies and gloves are encouraged for Winter mornings. All children need a raincoat at school, for much of the year.
- Clothing MUST be plain or patterned, natural colours with NO BRANDING, commercial images or advertising of any kind. This includes sport clubs and political slogans. Fluorescent, transparent, sparkly clothes and the like, or commercial character costumes are not permitted. Creative and culturally specific clothing is definitely permitted. Children will be asked to cover clothing that does not meet the dress code.
- Shoes must be sturdy, suitable for running and playing, and easy for the child to take on and off. No thongs, loose sandals, high heels or open toes as we have snakes and other natural hazards in the grounds.
- Shoes must be worn to and from school, including playgroup and kindergarten children.
- In Winter all children need gumboots for outdoors and slippers for indoors. Boots or sturdy, closed toe shoes must be worn for Magic Woods outings, farming, gardening and other outdoor excursions to protect from snakes and other natural hazards.
- Jewellery (studs and sleepers excepted), makeup, hair colouring, body piercing (other than ears) and other accessories are not permitted.

- Analogue watches are permitted from Class 3 upwards. No digital watches or other digital wearables are permitted at any time.
- Hair must be kept off the face and tied back if long enough. This aids your child's focus, vision and safety, and potentially reduces the spread of headlice.
- Early Childhood and younger Primary School children need a spare set of clothes at school particularly pants and socks.
- ALL childrens clothing must be clearly labelled.

**Your support of this dress code is much appreciated.
Teachers are responsible for ensuring students are appropriately attired
and may find alternate clothes for your child if they deem it necessary.**

Nutrition and School Lunches

FWCSS has a strong focus on living responsibly within our environment and living a healthy lifestyle. It is through example that children learn how to make their own life-supporting and healthy choices as they develop into adulthood.

School lunches should be made up of healthy fresh wholefoods. Water is provided at school and no other drinks are required.

Highly processed foods and foods high in sugar should not be brought to school.

Peanuts and peanut products are strictly banned from school and Early Childhood as we have members of our community at risk of anaphylaxis.

Dairy and all Nut products are strictly banned from the Prep area in 2024, as we have children in the Prep class at risk of anaphylaxis.

Some students have additional dietary requirements so children are discouraged from sharing food from home. Class teachers will inform families if there are specific restrictions that apply to their class.

For school events please ensure the food you so generously prepare also follows these guidelines.

All ingredients of food brought for events should be clearly labelled in case of dietary requirements. Nude Food! Reusable containers and no packaging please. The school has a rubbish free policy, which helps to keep our school grounds tidy, our wetlands healthy, and models environmental care to our children.

Classroom Matters

Early Childhood

The early childhood years (0-7) are characterised by children actively learning through imitation and play. An additional handbook for Kindergarten and Prep parents is available from Reception.

As a registered Kindergarten, the Jerringup and Gnarri rooms program are guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) whilst providing a Steiner kindergarten experience to the children.

In Steiner schools' children aged 5-6 years old (Prep) are still part of the Early Childhood area. At FWCSS our Prep program also meets the VRQA requirements for the first year of school.

Early Childhood hold some special events throughout the year including Festivals. Please note the dates of these events as they are particularly beautiful occasions for the children to experience.

Primary School Curriculum

FWCSS Primary School follows the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (ASCF), which has been recognised by the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) as an alternative to the National Curriculum. The ASCF was developed in response to the Federal Government's proposal to create a mandatory Australian Curriculum for all schools. As Steiner education is internationally recognised, Steiner Education Australia was given the opportunity to put forward an alternate curriculum framework, developed out of Steiner's indications, in order to protect the integrity of Steiner education philosophy and pedagogy.

Teachers are happy to answer any class-specific questions about the curriculum or you can read more on our website.

Homework

Homework is given at the Class Teacher's discretion. In the earlier classes the tasks may be informal such as gathering an object from nature or observing something. From Class 3 onwards the activities may be of a more formal nature such as projects associated with Main Lesson.

Homework is set within the student's capability and is not intended to dominate the child's free time after school, nor create stress or conflict. If you have any concerns about a homework task, please speak to your Class Teacher.

Children learning a stringed instrument are expected to practise daily. Children who play their instrument each day make progress, which builds confidence and understanding of the instrument. Our instrumental teachers provide advice regarding music practice to the children at the end of their lesson, and to their parents.

Camps

The curriculum for classes two to six includes a school camp, beginning with one night away from home and progressing in length and depth of experience. Camp activities extend the physical and emotional boundaries of the children. Attendance at camps is compulsory for all children and is included in the annual tuition fee.

The Class Teacher will discuss the year's camp with parents and send official notification including details of the dates, location, travel plans, packing requirements, and activities. Parents will be asked to complete and return an electronic permission form before their child can attend the camp.

A small number of parent helpers are required on class camps to assist the teacher and meet requirements for supervision and care of the children. Parents may volunteer to attend camps. The teacher in charge has responsibility for ensuring the mix of parent volunteers is suited to the needs of the camp.

Incursions/Excursions

Various day incursions/excursions are integrated into the class curriculum and serve to deepen the children's understanding of a main lesson. The cost of excursions is included in annual tuition fees and children are expected to attend.

Parent helpers may be required on excursions.

Parent Helpers: Working With Children Checks

All parent helpers are required to have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC). Information on how to obtain a WWCC card can be obtained from the Administration Office or www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au . The school keeps a register of known cardholders.

It is important to note that WWCC's can take up to 3 weeks to process, so if you are considering volunteering on a camp or excursion, please organise your WWCC well in advance.

Nature inside and out

Environmental Education

Respect and reverence for the natural world is a fundamental principle of Steiner education and is modelled and reflected in the way we live our daily lives. Immersion in the natural world is a major part of the children's experience at FWCSS.

Specific subjects, activities and events are held throughout the year to immerse the children in the seasonal cycle of nature, and to specifically learn about caring for the natural world.

We encourage families to actively participate in this aspect of school life. There are many ways to do this from fossicking with your child for interesting items to put on your child's Class nature table; bringing fresh flowers for the classroom; helping with gardening, and farming; coming along to the annual tree planting days and seasonal festivals. Keep in touch with your Class teacher, and read the weekly newsletter to find out about opportunities to join in.

Festivals

Each term brings a new season at school which is worth celebrating! The Spring, Autumn and Summer festivals are prepared and celebrated with the children and teachers during the school day. This enriches our school life by uniting us in shared reverence and celebration. The Winter Festival is a wonderful, whole-community event held at Winter solstice, when the darkest night of the year takes us to the turning of the season and the days begin to lengthen again. Please see the newsletter for dates and times and requests for help with preparations.

Term 1	Autumn	We celebrate the changing mood with an Autumn Harvest Festival. Our Annual Autumn Fair and Open Day takes place in this term.
Term 2	Winter	We celebrate with a mid-winter night time festival and lantern walk and invite all families to share in this special occasion. Children walk the Winter Spiral during the day. Please note, the Early Childhood Winter festival and the primary School Winter festivals are on different nights.

Term 3	Spring	We celebrate the budding and renewal of life with a Spring Festival - often with kites, dancing and song.
Term 4	Summer	We welcome the warm weather! Graduation ceremonies for Prep and Class 6. St Nicholas, Christmas and Summer celebrations.

Children's Birthdays

A child's birthday is a special festival for the child and the Class Teacher may conduct a simple ceremony on your child's birthday, usually at morning or afternoon tea. Parents are encouraged to celebrate with their child's class, if possible. Please check with your child's teacher two weeks prior to your child's birthday and discuss what food can be brought to celebrate with the class. Usually plain cakes, with natural toppings or a fruit platter are preferred. Please ask Admin if you need a recipe or other hints!

Class Plays

Class 1-6 usually prepare a play as part of their curriculum, and the children greatly look forward to presenting the play to parent guests. Class teachers will share these details as the big event approaches.

Plays can present opportunities for parent involvement – scouting Op shops for props and costumes, helping children make their outfits and sets, and listening to lines. Your Class Teacher will welcome your offer of help!

School Assembly

Primary school assemblies are held on Friday mornings during term from 9-9.30am. Assembly includes an acknowledgment to the traditional custodians of the land, the Waddawarrung people; small group or whole community singing, class sharing, birthday celebrations and sometimes presentations by teachers or other invited guests. Families and friends are warmly invited to attend Assembly.

Helping in Class

We welcome parents' involvement in their child's class activities. Cooking, farming and gardening, reading groups, craft, local walking excursions to the Farm or the 'Magic Woods', swimming program for classes 1-6, and camps are all activities that require parent helpers. Please talk to your Class Teacher if you would like to be involved or have a special skill to offer.

The role of Class Carer is usually discussed and decided at the first class meeting of the year. More about this role is listed in the Parent-School partnership section of this booklet.

Restricted Items

Students are not permitted to bring personal electronic devices, such as cameras, games, or mobile phones to school. If you need to contact your child during the day, please phone Reception and a message will be passed on.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys or activities from home, unless this has been permitted by the Class teacher. We provide a full and varied day at school with many opportunities for imaginative play. Items from home can greatly distract from full access to the school experience.

Communication

The school uses a variety of channels to communicate with parents. Please take a moment to familiarise yourself with methods of communication in the school.

Educational Matters

For all educational matters concerning your child, your first point of contact is your Class Teacher.

Please arrange a suitable 'out of school hours' meeting time with the teacher by speaking to them at pick up time or sending a brief email. We respectfully ask that you do not seek a conversation about a specific matter before or during school hours, unless absolutely necessary, as teachers are focused on the children at these times.

If, after having spoken with your child's teacher, you do not feel your concern has been resolved, you may request an appointment to meet with the Head of School, along with your child's teacher, via Reception.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Teachers hold individual Parent-Teacher interviews in Terms 1 and 3, from Kindergarten to Class 6. You will be given notice of meeting days and times and a mixture of day and evening times will be available for primary school parents. Kindergarten parent-teacher interviews are held in the afternoon, after Kinder pick-up.

The parent-teacher interview is a time for you to discuss your child's progress at school. If you have specific questions, it can be helpful for the teacher if you email them before the meeting so they can prepare a thorough response. Parent/Teacher interviews are not the best time to ask questions about the curriculum in general – these are best saved for the class meeting.

Class Meetings

The Class Teacher will hold regular meetings with class parents – usually one per term.

Class meetings are a wonderful opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the activities and curriculum the children are undertaking, for you to ask questions about the curriculum and how the class is working, and to understand what you can do to assist with your child's education.

They are also an opportunity for teachers to inform parents on matters concerning the class such as proposed changes to the timetable or important class dates, and to share their observations of the social fabric of the class. These meetings provide a glimpse of what is happening for the children and strengthen the bond between home and school.

We expect that at least one parent/guardian per family will attend each class meeting.

Permissions and requests for confirmation of family details

From time to time the school will request your permission for a student activity, or details from you to enable us to complete our Department of Education reporting requirements. Generally, these requests are made electronically.

Invitations for your child to attend excursions, camps, and some incursions, will be sent via email. The email will contain all the relevant information about the excursion, camp or activity and who you should contact should you have any questions. We ask that you respond to these electronic invitations as soon as possible as this ensures medical and dietary information is up to date for your child.

To update student details at any time, you can request an update link by calling the office on 5264 5077 or emailing info@fwcss.vic.edu.au.

Should your child remain in the temporary care of a relative or family member, it is important to let the School know in order for notifications to be sent to the correct person.

School Reports

In classes one to six, written reports will be provided at the end of Term 2 (Semester 1), and at the end of Term 4 (Semester 2). The kindergarten teacher will provide a School Readiness report at the end of your child's 4-year-old kinder year. Written reports are not provided for Prep or 3-year-old kinder children.

School Newsletter – PLEASE READ THIS IF NOTHING ELSE!

The newsletter is the principal source of information regarding the daily life of the school. You'll know what is going on if you read the newsletter each week!

The Newsletter is emailed to each family on Friday during term time. If you cannot access the newsletter electronically, please let admin know and we'll work out how to get it to you. The newsletter provides:

- Dates coming up, for the whole school and for each specific class;
- Information on what is going on around the school;
- Updates and insights into what the children are doing in their classes;
- Contact details for School Council; and
- Notices about Steiner/Waldorf non-school activities and events that the school is happy to support.

Noticeboards

The blackboard on the entrance driveway is a great way to keep up with what's on at school in the current week.

A community notice board on the school grounds is available for the school community to display appropriate material that may be of general interest. It is located outside the Kindergarten. Inappropriate material will be removed.

Facebook

The school has one official Facebook page, and two parent-administered group pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/freshwatercreeksteinerschool>

Official school Facebook page (administered by staff)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/fwcsspnf>

FWCSS online Parents and Friends community – discussions, reminders and invitations to events (administered by parents and moderated by staff)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FWCSSshopping>

FWCSS Parents and Friends community group - buy, sell, swap or offer up freebies (administered by parents and moderated by staff)

Please do not post any identifiable pictures of children other than your own, on any social media.

School Calendar

Important dates are available on the school website and in the weekly newsletter.

Change of Contact Details

Please keep the office informed of any changes to contact details or addresses, so that we can contact you quickly in the event of an emergency. A short email to the administration team (info@fwcss.vic.edu.au) is the best way to communicate any changes. Alternatively, you can visit the administration office or call 03 5264 5077 between 8.45am and 3.15pm.

Site, Safety, and Financial Matters, including fee payment difficulties

Please direct site, safety, and financial matters to the Business Manager.

FWCSS is an independent, non-denominational school that is funded by a combination of Commonwealth and State Government funding, fees paid by parents, grants, fundraising and donations. FWCSS depends on tuition fees to bridge the gap between Government funding and the cost of providing a high quality, Steiner education. A proportion of funds raised, or fees collected by the school may be used to support the operation of the early learning centre.

Timely payment of fees is essential for our financial stability and viability. To ensure equity across all families' right to choose this education for their children, we adopt an assertive position regarding the collection of fees. If you experience difficulties meeting your fee payments by the due date, please make a time to meet with the Business Manager as soon as possible as there may be assistance available.

A number of fee discounts and Government Allowances are available to families – details of these are included in the FWCSS Fees Schedule, which is available on the FWCSS website. Reminders of the closing dates for any Government Allowances are placed in the Newsletter.

Fee Statements

Fee statements are generated for 10 equal instalments and emailed to the party/s responsible for paying school fees on or around the 1st of each month from February to November. If you have not received your statement via email (or if you do not have access to emails), please contact Reception to make alternate arrangements. The school's Fees Policy is available on the school website.

Early Withdrawal

Early withdrawal of a child from the kindergarten or school requires a term's notice (10 term weeks). Full conditions are outlined in the Enrolment Policy, which is available on the school website.

Concerns and Complaints

Clear Communication is essential for maintaining a safe and harmonious space for children to learn and play. For this reason, everyone needs to be clear about how to communicate concerns and complaints, and the school's process for responding to concerns and complaints.

Please refer to the school's Complaints Policy, on the school website for our complaints management procedure. A copy of this policy can be printed for you at the Administration Office. The "Who do I talk With?" poster at the back of this booklet outlines who to approach for different questions and concerns.

All members of our community, including all staff, students and families have accepted the School Community Code of Behaviour, as part of enrolment or employment. The Code

protects everyone's right to be treated with respect. This Code can be found on the school website.

Health and Safety

Carpark and Parking

Our carpark and driveway are high-risk areas for children and adults alike. We urge all families to show extreme caution and park and drive in a safe and cautious manner in and around the school. For the safety of all, please observe the following rules:

- Walking-pace speed limit in the school at all times and a maximum 40km limit on McIntyres Road (outside the school gate) at all times.
- Park only in designated parking spots. For safety, parking along the roadside is reserved for staff, who arrive early in the morning before the children do.
- Please always keep your children by your side and use the designated crossing areas. It can be difficult to see a small child when reversing.
- No vehicles are to be driven onto the school grounds without expressed permission and accompaniment by a staff member.
- Give way to traffic **exiting** the school grounds.

Bushfire Threat School Closure

Freshwater Creek Steiner School is on the Department of Education's Bushfire At-Risk Register, as high bushfire risk. Inclusion on this register is a trigger for the school, kindergarten and playgroup to pre-emptively close on days declared Catastrophic or Extreme Fire Danger, in the South West region. Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four days' notice of closure due to Catastrophic or Extreme Fire Danger advice, through letter and SMS message/phone tree. A Catastrophic or Extreme fire danger day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure. Once we are advised of the confirmation of the Catastrophic or Extreme fire danger day, we will provide you with advice before the end of the school day.

Once confirmed, the decision to close *will not change*, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child. It is also important to note that no staff will be on site on Catastrophic or Extreme fire danger days.

The School's Emergency Management Plan is available for download from the school website.

Extreme Heat

If the temperature reaches 35 degrees parents may choose to collect their child from 12.30pm. On collection of the child the parent must inform the Class Teacher and sign the sign-out book in Reception. Teachers will be at school for the remainder of the school day and those children who remain at school will be given a modified afternoon program.

Heavy Rain (wet day timetable)

On days when there is heavy rain during the lunch or recess break, the bell will be rung and children will be supervised indoors.

Lightning Storms

In the event of a lightning storm, when the time between lightning and thunder becomes less than three minutes, the bell will be rung and children will be supervised indoors, as per the wet day timetable. The children will be allowed back in the yard 20 minutes after the last thunderclap.

Accidents and Illnesses

All class teachers at Freshwater Creek Steiner School are trained in Level 2 First Aid. Most teacher's aides, specialist teachers and administration team members are also trained in First Aid.

In the event of an accident while a child is in the school's care, on or off campus, the child will be treated in the first instance by one of our first aid qualified staff members. If the school deems it necessary, an ambulance will be called, and your child will be taken to the nearest hospital. Parents will be called as soon as we are able; attending to the child will be our first priority.

Parents/Guardians will be liable for any medical, dental and/or ambulance costs.

No child is permitted to participate in an excursion or camp without the signed consent of a parent/guardian indicating agreement to calling an ambulance in case of emergency.

If your child becomes ill while at school, they will be sent to Reception to rest, and parents/guardians will be notified. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted within a reasonable timeframe, we will phone the emergency contacts and request that the child be picked up.

First Aid

Basic first-aid procedures are administered at the school. The school sometimes uses topical natural and homoeopathic remedies. If you do not want these remedies used, please advise us in writing.

COVID-19

Requirements of schools regarding the management of positive cases of COVID-19, can be subject to rapid change. The school will follow the current Department of Education School Operations Guide and communicate the requirements to parents via email.

COVID restrictions may lead to some aspects of school life being different from the description in this booklet.

Medication

No medication will be administered at school unless it has first been lodged at Reception and a signed medical administration form has been completed. If your child needs prescribed medication to be administered at school, please lodge written notification from your doctor with Reception. This must state the prescribed dosage and medical condition of your child. Medication must be provided in its original packaging.

Staff members do not administer medications such as Nurofen, Panadol or other pain relievers, unless there is written permission and directions from the parents.

Allergies/Asthma

Parents must advise the school if children have, or develop any serious medical conditions such as Anaphylaxis, Asthma or Epilepsy, usually during the enrolment process.

Parents of any child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis, must provide the school with an ASCIA (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) Action Plan that has been signed by a medical practitioner. For serious food allergies, parents need to ensure that those people preparing food for children are aware of their child's allergy or advise the child not to eat any foods prepared at the school.

Parents of any child diagnosed with Asthma must provide the school with an Asthma Foundation (VIC) Asthma Action Plan that has been signed by a medical practitioner.

The Class Teacher will be provided with a copy of the enrolment form and any accompanying medical action plan and emergency medication. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the school holds an up-to-date Medical Action Plan for any child with a serious medical condition. It is also the parent's responsibility to provide a clearly labelled, in-date, personal Adrenalin Auto Injector/Asthma Reliever for their child if required.

Children identified as having a serious medical condition are recorded on the Emergency List held in the office and on Yard Duty boards, for quick access.

Headlice

Headlice are the most tenacious of creatures and can be a common and persistent problem in schools unless a consistent school-wide approach is taken. We ask that all parents conduct weekly checks of their children's hair for headlice. Please note that health regulations require that where a child has head lice, that child *should not return to school until appropriate treatment has commenced*. Information flyers regarding natural and effective treatment of headlice are available from the school office. If you find live lice in your child's hair, please notify the school office – we are aware that this can be a sensitive issue, but we need to alert other parents whilst maintaining student confidentiality.

Parents and School Partnership

Freshwater Creek Steiner School owes its existence to the inspiration and dedication of a group of committed parent founders and many hours of voluntary service provided by parents over the years.

We warmly encourage parents and friends to be involved in school life. For children, the sense of belonging and connection that is brought through their family's wider participation in school life helps to lay the foundations for developing a life-long love of learning, resilience and a sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

The parent community at Freshwater Creek is strong, vibrant, welcoming, and integral to the school's success. Giving freely to community is very enjoyable and rewarding! Not only does it bring benefit to the children, but parents themselves often form lasting bonds of friendship and fellowship.

We value the generosity, vitality, warmth, and many creative gifts that parents and friends bring to the school.

As a community, we have a responsibility to the children to model our school values and the behaviour we would like them to emulate. With this in mind, we always strive to communicate respectfully. Even with the best of motives, sharing unsubstantiated information (hearsay or "gossip") can damage relationships and may have far-reaching, unintended consequences. If you have any concerns about a class or school issue, we sincerely ask that you follow the

school's clearly defined communication process, which is detailed on the 'Who do I Talk With' poster at the end of this booklet.

Some of the ways to become involved are outlined below, and the weekly newsletter has regular updates and call-outs.

Study Groups and Parent Education

For those interested in deepening their understanding of the philosophy behind Steiner Education, study groups and presentations by guest speakers take place regularly throughout the year at FWCSS. The parent Education calendar and other events are advertised in the school newsletter.

Parent Craft Circle

This group is led by a wonderful parent group. As well as teaching craft skills for making things at home and helping the children with their handcraft program, this group makes things for the school. We welcome all parents to join this social group as it is both rewarding and practical. No crafting experience is needed, you can even just come along for a cuppa and share parenting stories! Young children are welcome as there is much for them to do whilst their parents' hands are busy elsewhere. Meeting times and locations are advertised in the Newsletter.

FWCSS Community Choir

The Community Choir has been a continuous feature of the school since the community singing group in Geelong (Geelong Rudolf Steiner School). The group learn a repertoire of international, soul rich and joyful songs together. Many are connected to the music the children are learning in class so the different groups can sing together at assemblies, festivals or in the car! Parents and friends from near and far are welcome to join in. The group consists of skilled musicians to shy beginners, and is in essence safe, supportive and all about singing together. Times and locations for practices are advertised in the Newsletter.

Buildings and Grounds

With our large site, the wetlands and extensive garden and orchard, there are many ways to be involved in this area. Apart from the working bees, there are other opportunities to volunteer in the garden and grounds, as well as to be involved in larger projects relating to the school's development. Talk to Sarah Olliff (Operations), about how you can help.

Participation in formal Working Bees offsets your Site maintenance levy at the rate of 25% per term. More information about working bees and the Site levy will be included in the newsletter and is available on request from Reception.

Chai Café

Chai Cafes, are hosted by each class and their parents and are usually held once or twice per term on a Friday, from 2.45pm to about 4 pm. They are a pop-up café selling healthy treats and chai, and are a lovely way of connecting to our school community, welcoming new families, and generally relaxing after a busy week.

Prices are kept low, and any proceeds from the cafes are added to fundraising initiatives of the FWCSS Parents and Friends and used to the benefit of our children. We are very lucky – our school community is full of talented people who whip up such an amazing variety of delicious and nutritious food. Everyone looks forward to Chai Café!

Class Carers

Class Carers fulfil a very important supportive role to the Class Teacher and their class community.

The Class Carer works closely with the Class Teacher and mostly under their direction. The role is primarily about supporting the teacher in developing social cohesion within the class group and being “aware” of the social health of the class community, both children and families. It is a valued and rewarding role and it is hoped that parents consider being Class Carer for at least one year during their children’s journey through the school. Please see your Class Teacher if you would like to become a Class Carer. Class Carer’s are usually the Autumn Fair liaison/organiser for their class activity, but may choose to delegate the role.

Autumn Fair and Open Day

Our Autumn Fair and Open day is a wonderful community occasion that attracts many visitors to the school. In addition to offering school information, tours and display of children’s work, visitors are treated to delicious food, live music, an artisan’s marketplace and a fun day of activities for the children. Classes are allocated a stall, activity or job for the Autumn Fair and Open Day by the Autumn Fair Committee. The Autumn Fair Committee is led by the Fair coordinator, assisted by parents and friends volunteering from within the school community. It may also include one or two staff members in the capacity of school representatives/liasons. With the Autumn Fair and Open Day being the largest single fundraising event on the school calendar, every school family is asked to participate to their fullest capacity.

Parents can also be involved in other fundraising ventures, grants and community liaison, school cookbook, school calendar, and newsletter. If you would like to be involved in any of these areas or if would like to propose a new project, please see your Class Teacher or speak with a member of the Administration team.

In General...

Visiting the School

Parents of children at FWCSS are afforded many wonderful opportunities to be involved in school activities. If you are on school grounds for any purpose other than drop-off or pick-up of children, we ask that you sign in and out of school grounds in the Visitor book, which is held at Reception.

Lost Property

A lost property box is located outside Reception. Any items that are unnamed and unclaimed at the end of term are washed and donated to a local charity. Please check regularly during each term for any of your child’s items. Labelling your child’s belongings increases the likelihood that they will find their way back to their owner!

Communication (use of parent emails/mobile numbers)

Care should be taken with the use of fellow community members’ contact details. For privacy reasons, it is imperative that you use the BCC field whenever sending emails to other families in your class group. If you are sending information to organise an event for your class, the Class Teacher should be copied into emails.

Photographs of Children

Permission to photograph children is given, or not, on enrolment. If permitted, we might photograph students at work and play during the school day. These photos will be used for

promotional and publicity purposes such as displays at school events, media releases or on our website. No child will be photographed if unwilling, or in state of distress or undress.

As not all children in the school have photo permission, at festivals and class performances please take care to *only photograph your own child/ren*. Please bear in mind during class plays, that photography can be distracting to the children and detract from the audience experience. If in doubt about the appropriateness of photography, please check with your Class Teacher prior to the occasion. Photographs of other children *must not* be posted on social media without first obtaining permission from their parent/guardian.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the school grounds at any time. This includes in the car-parking and Wetlands areas, or when participating in any school events such as local excursions, festivals, or camps.

Dogs

Dogs are not permitted on school grounds. Accredited Assistance Dogs are excepted.

Television, Media and Computers

Steiner schools aspire to provide an education that fosters the individual's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

How television and digital media affect the development of children can often create emotionally charged debate and if you have not met the idea of a screen-free childhood, it can come as a surprise, as most children in our society spend quite a lot of time in front of screens. Our emphasis is on encouraging a creative, imaginative childhood with plenty of time and space to explore experiences with all the senses, and feelings, and we believe that the negative outcomes of watching television and other digital devices at a young age far outweigh the positives.

Children who watch television and videos are more likely to play out images they have seen. This is a very different process from the child creating their own images, which requires inner cognitive and imaginative activity. This activity helps to develop the imagination.

There is significant research with respect to the effect of computer games and digital media on the healthy development of the child. Many mainstream schools are now reviewing their use of digital devices in schools. As a Steiner Early Childhood and Primary School, we do not use digital or electronic media in our normal educational practice until the senior classes, when computers are introduced as a specialist subject. We believe that children develop most healthily through engagement with the physical world, sensory experiences, cognitive skills development, and opportunities for imaginative exploration. Authentic relationships with their teachers, fellow students and the wider community are fundamental to a child's wellbeing and these are experienced in the real, rather than cyber, world.

If television and computer games form part of your family culture, we request that this experience be kept to a minimum and preferably not at all during the school week. When considering what children watch, please consider the values, rating and age appropriateness of the programme, and be conservative as to the content.

There are many positive alternatives to 'screen time'. If you would like suggestions please ask your child's teacher, other parents, or visit the school library for helpful resources.

Family Lifestyle

Enrolling your child at Freshwater Creek Steiner School is a decision that is not only an inspired educational choice, but may be also about lifestyle. We have found that success for children at our school is enhanced by a home life that is compatible with the principles of Steiner Education.

- **Rhythm, routine and regularity**, in children's lives builds healthy life force; regular sleeping, bathing and meal-times, appropriate boundaries and structure help the child feel more relaxed and secure.
- **Goodness, beauty and truth**: modelling behaviour and creating an environment where children experience the world as a good place, a beautiful place, a place they can trust. This lays the foundations for a profound sense of wellbeing.
- **Wonder, awe and reverence**: these enlivened moments provide children with a sense of reverence, purpose and meaning and can come through an unhurried childhood, sensory-rich experiences and connection to nature.

We ask that our families choose lifestyles that cherish the developmental stages of childhood, as childhood is a relatively short, and crucially important part of life.

Room Hire

Whilst the school facilities exist for the purposes of operating the school, some of our facilities can be hired to raise funds or loaned as an act of goodwill to the broader community. Such arrangements should never disadvantage the School. Facilities are not available during school holiday periods and the proposed use of the room must be in line with the ethos of the school. Please enquire at Reception for full terms and conditions.

Library

The Asteya library is located in Wirrin room. The library is open to both parents and children and houses a good selection of parent resources. Children in classes 2-6 enjoy regular library sessions and can often be found lounging on the shady deck in the warmer months or nestled into a cosy library nook in Winter. The library hours of opening are advertised in the school newsletter. Book-coverers are gladly welcomed – please speak with the librarian if you are able to help. Each year, families are invited to make a donation to the school's tax-deductible Building and/or Library Funds. Details are available from the Business Manager.



Map of the School



Administration areas:

- 1 Reception/Administration/
Business Manager — Wurrwurr
(All visitors please report to
reception)
- 2 Head of School—
Karrung Karroong

Who do I talk with?

Maintaining a positive partnership requires open and honest communication with each other.

Quickly addressing concerns helps minimise the risk of a breakdown in partnership that can arise if matters are left unaddressed.

Knowing who to communicate with is as important as what is communicated.

FWCSS has a simple procedure for our parents/ caregivers to follow:

1 If you have any concern about a child's safety, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of our Child Safety Officers:
gabby.brennan@fwcss.vic.edu.au
mandy.toohey@fwcss.vic.edu.au
lisa.anderson@fwcss.vic.edu.au

2 For all concerns about your child's education, make an appointment with the Class Teacher. If the issue is not resolved, make an appointment to meet with Class Teacher, together with the Head of School
gabby.brennan@fwcss.vic.edu.au

3 For any school site concerns, contact the Operations Manager sarah.olliff@fwcss.vic.edu.au
To discuss fee payments, contact the Business Manager, emily.galang@fwcss.vic.edu.au

4 For any other issues, email the Administration Office unless it is of a serious nature then email the Head of School. Either will be able to advise you of the appropriate path to take, or help: info@fwcss.vic.edu.au

If, having followed the appropriate steps above, you are not satisfied with the outcome of your discussions, the school's governing body, FWCSS School Council may be contacted by emailing the Secretary: secretary@fwcss.vic.edu.au to arrange the appointment of an independent mediator.

FWCSS Policies and Procedures are available on the website: fwcss.vic.edu.au or on request from the Administration Office: info@fwcss.vic.edu.au

03 5264 5077
info@fwcss.vic.edu.au | fwcss.vic.edu.au
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