



The adventure begins...

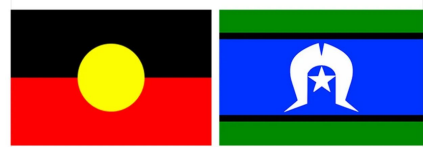


Starting Prep at Leongatha Primary School 2025

BE A LEARNER

BE RESPECTFUL

BE RESILIENT



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and water on which we work and live, the Bunurong/Gunai Kurnai people, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome to Leongatha Primary School

A message from our Principal

Leongatha Primary School is a dynamic school that strives to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students. We provide an inclusive, respectful, caring and creative environment for students, teachers, parents and the wider community.

As you enter our school you are met by our school vision and values and a friendly atmosphere that we work hard to achieve. We pride ourselves on providing engaging learning environments, optimistic and caring professional staff and a belief that all students can learn. We encourage personal interests, collaboration, resilience and creativity. Our motto is “Learning for Life” and our values are Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Resilient.



The Prep Transition program provides an excellent introduction to our school not only for your child, but also for you. We provide the children with an opportunity to become familiar with the school environment and the staff they will be working with when they begin school. We also provide you, the parents, with information about our school and how best to support your child as they embark on a new stage in their lives.

Our students enjoy a wide variety of learning programs including Physical Education, Play Based and Inquiry learning, Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Multimedia, Learning Specialists, Language (Auslan), STEM, Library and many others. Literacy and Numeracy are core learning areas explored daily.

We strongly believe that education is a partnership between the school and home. We encourage you to work closely with the school to motivate and support your child. You may also support our school through fundraising efforts and school activities. Parent participation on the School Council is always welcomed. Your continued support helps to provide stimulating learning spaces for students to grow.

A good start at school is extremely important for all children. We hope that this handbook provides you with the information you need in order to help you and your child make an excellent start at our school.

***Dot Coghlan,
Principal.***

Our school values



Our school environment has been designed to be safe and stimulating for all students. Tolerance, and acceptance of the rights and points of view of others are considered to be necessary to a student's all-round development. We emphasise respectful relationships and cooperation between staff, students and parents. There are many opportunities for positive reinforcement which promote these behaviours. Leongatha Primary School has a clear set of values and expectations which support students to feel safe at school.

These school values are displayed in each classroom as well as throughout the school. We foster and guide all students to be learners, to be respectful and to be resilient.

Leongatha Primary School <i>Learning for Life</i>	
BE A LEARNER	
BE RESPECTFUL	
BE RESILIENT	

LPS PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS <i>Learning for Life</i>	
BE A LEARNER	<i>My play time is for fun, friends and fresh air. I am organised – in the right area, with everything I need. I listen, think, question and communicate.</i>
BE RESPECTFUL	<i>I follow <u>all</u> staff instructions. I care for myself and <u>all</u> others. I look after school property and our physical environment.</i>
BE RESILIENT	<i>I work through problems when things get hard. I seek help from a yard duty teacher when things are out of my control. I stop and think about my options.</i>

LPS EXPECTATIONS <i>Learning for Life</i>	
<i>My class time is for class work. I am organised – mind, body, tools. I listen, think, question and communicate.</i>	
<i>I follow <u>all</u> staff instructions. I care for myself, others and the environment.</i>	
<i>I don't give up when things get hard. I ask for and accept help. I stop and think about my options.</i>	

Our school vision

Our school vision was developed in 2019. Students, staff & parents worked hard to create this vision which is displayed proudly around the school.



LPS Vision

To foster kindness, curiosity, confidence and inclusion.
Our students are lifelong learners who set high expectations,
accept challenges and contribute to a global community.

Starting school

Starting school is an exciting and happy time for parents and students. The children have heard and talked about school at kindergarten and have had several opportunities to visit Leongatha Primary School. Now it is finally their time to start!

We would like to join with you in making your child's transition to school as smooth as possible. The staff at Leongatha Primary School will work hard to ensure that your child receives the best educational opportunities.

Included in this booklet is information that you will need to know about starting Prep at Leongatha Primary School. Please have a read to ensure a smooth transition to school.

The transition to school requires children to learn many new skills and can bring a lot of exciting changes to their life. This will include:

- first steps to independence
- separation from home
- new feelings
- new friends
- new learning experiences
- new settings and routines

We will work closely with you to make sure you and your child feel comfortable with these changes.



Important dates & times



Term dates for 2025

Term 1

- ❖ Wednesday 29th January- Friday 4th April

Term 2

- ❖ Tuesday 22nd April- Friday 4th July

Term 3

- ❖ Monday 21st July- Friday 19th September

Term 4

- ❖ Monday 6th October- Friday 19th December



Special times for Preps

Children will have their snack and lunch at school within these times.

Week 1 of First Term

- Wednesday 29th January 9.15- 2pm
- Thursday 30th January 9.15-2pm
- Friday 31st January 9.15-2pm

Weeks 2 to 6

- All full days: 8.55am – 3.15pm
- PLEASE NOTE: Preps will not attend school on Wednesdays on the below dates. PEAP testing occurs on these Wednesdays
No school for Preps- February - 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, March 5th

Week 7 (First full week of school)

- First full week Tuesday 11th March



Daily bell times

- **8.55am-** Music plays to signal heading into class
- **9.00am-** Bell to commence class
- **11am-** Bell for recess play
- **11.30am-** Music for children to head into class
- **1pm-** Bell for lunchtime play
- **1.45pm-** Music plays to signal heading back into class
- **3.15pm-** Bell to signal end of day



The First Day



It is natural if your child has some reservations about starting school. Parents may even find the first day very hard, be **positive** and **happy** about your child starting school and they will be too. Talk to them about all the exciting things to look forward to, including; new friends, games, books and friendly teachers. Don't forget to draw on their experiences from the transition days.

On the first day of school, students will need to take off their shoes and wait on their coloured line. Please wait outside the Prep building until the Prep teachers open the door and invite you in. Please proceed to your Prep classroom and help your child unpack their bag. You will need to help them put their name tag on, put their drink bottle in the drink bottle tub, put their named art smock and library bag in the appropriate tubs and then find their named locker and put their bag in there.

When your child is settled and happy at an activity say farewell and please go off and enjoy your day.



First day reminders

Starting time is **9.15am** for the first week of term 1 for Prep students. Children should be dressed in LPS uniforms.



Children will need to **bring with them:**

- A green LPS hat. It is compulsory to wear a Sun Smart legionnaires or wide brimmed hat in Term 1 & 4.
- A 30cmx40cm bag approx for the library. Bags of this size will hold the largest picture book and will help protect the books. If you don't have one, the Department of Education provide a showbag to Prep students in their first week of school and this is a great Library bag.
- Fruit/Vegetables, lunch and morning snacks in named containers.
- Water in a plastic bottle- no glass bottles or cans please.
- Spare set of underwear, socks, pants/shorts and t-shirt to be left in the school bag for an emergency (toilet accidents, slips & spills).
- Art smock: Every child needs an art smock, which needs to be roomy. An adult's old shirt with the sleeves cut to size and elasticised with the child's name on the back, is cheap and ideal. Art smocks will be kept at school.

Preparation for school

Children who find it difficult to separate from their parents, quickly adjust to being in the classroom environment. Please feel free to visit the school over the summer to have a play and explore the yard, as this will further increase your child's confidence around starting school. Some parents have asked about the school expectations of beginners. We have created a list of helpful suggestions which are important for children just beginning school.

It is helpful if your child can:

- Say and recognise their first name
- Recognise their named belongings
- Go to the toilet independently
- Dress & undress independently
- Take turns during conversations
- Put on/take off jumpers
- Put on art smocks
- Put on shoes quickly and promptly
- Separate from Mum & Dad
- Use a tissue
- Follow through with 1-2 step instructions
- Share with others
- Have a regular bedtime & routine
- Wait their turn to speak
- Put things away when they are finished
- Carry their school bags and unpack/pack them



- Develop the idea of going to school as an enjoyable thing for them to do.
- Positive talk about your child's day.
- Show an interest in what they do at school.
- Be enthusiastic about the things they bring home.
- Avoid criticism - be positive.
- Avoid comparing your child with other children.
- Listen to your child if they want to read to you from a book.
- Become involved if you have the time. We love having parents in the classroom!

Avoid building anxiety and fears

- Instead of telling them "I am going to miss you so much" say, "You are so lucky to be going to school. You will have the best time!"
- Avoid being over anxious about your child, they will pick up on your anxiety and in turn it will make them anxious.
- Children's fears can be relieved by parents who are willing to discuss these fears with their children.

What you gain from being involved

- A better understanding/appreciation of school life, curriculum, programs, organisation, teaching strategies, learning styles.
- Get to know your child's friends, school staff and other parents.
- Develop strong communication links.
- Your presence can provide your child with increased confidence and support in tackling school tasks.
- A feeling of belonging as an integral part of Leongatha Primary School.



Develop helpful habits

Habits that will help at school include:

- **Putting things away:**
Establishing a regular routine of picking up and putting items away helps to develop a sense of responsibility and care for property.
- **Listening skills:**
It is vital to listen carefully in order to be able to follow instructions. Communication is dependent upon a two-way flow of information. Therefore, encourage your child to listen to others whilst expressing their point of view.
- **Relating to others:**
Sharing and helping are important skills required for gaining acceptance and friendship.
- **Develop independence:**
Allow your child to complete small tasks and simple chores, for example, fill their water bottle, pack/unpack and zip their bag, put their socks on, dry dishes, wipe down items.
- **Creating a predictable weeknight routine:**
Regular bedtime and meal times contribute to a child's feeling of security and help to maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Speaking:**
Encourage your child to speak in full sentences, avoiding 'baby talk'.

Health/Welfare

- At first your child will find school very tiring. Therefore, they will need plenty of rest & early nights.
- Participating in after school activities during the first term isn't recommended due to the children finding school tiring.
- When your child is ill, they need to remain at home to allow a speedy recovery and to prevent further spread of illness.
- You are required to lodge your child's absence on Compass.
- Unfortunately all schools experience spates of head lice. Please regularly check your child's head for any signs of eggs/lice. Please notify your child's teacher if you find lice on your child. If your child has head lice, they are not permitted at school until they have been treated.

Child safety at school:

- Children are supervised by staff between 8.30am- 3.30pm.
- If you wish to collect your child within school hours, please go to the office and complete our sign out procedure.
- All visitors to the school need to report to the general office to sign in.

School Therapy Dog

In 2022 we were fortunate to have received funding through the Mental Health Fund, a new initiative to support mental health reforms in schools. The department has organised a Mental Health Fund Menu that supports schools to deliver programs, staff and other support to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of students.

From this menu LPS decided to fund a school therapy dog. Millie is a Golden Retriever who will be trained and be visiting all classrooms around the school. The benefits of having a School Dog are huge especially when you think about the emotional pressure that our students have been under the last few years due to the pandemic. School dogs help reduce student stress and anxiety. A dog helps provide social and emotional support for our students.



Punctuality

Parents are requested to drop off and collect their children on time from **outside** the Prep building. In the morning, students will line up on their room colour line and enter the building when the teachers collect them. In the afternoon, teachers will bring the students out to the front of the building and stay with them until someone has picked them up.

The morning bell goes at 8.55am. If late, children miss out on important tuning in and preparation for the day ahead. It also causes children great distress and creates unnecessary anxieties about coming to school. The home time bell goes at 3.15pm. If you are going to be late, please let your child's classroom teacher know.



At Leongatha Primary School, our aim is to create lifelong readers and writers. We follow a structured Literacy block from P-6. Our staff are regularly involved in professional development to ensure they are up to date with educational research and practices. The classroom programs are rigorous and comprehensive to ensure all students are developing the skills required to be literate. We have numerous support programs in place to develop the potential of all students.



Reading

As part of our reading instruction we use the Sounds Write program. This program focuses on a systematic approach to reading underpinned by the core skills of reading which include blending (pushing sounds together), segmenting (hearing the sounds in words) and phoneme manipulation (swapping sounds in words). Every day students participate in a variety of revision activities, they practise new skills they are learning and they apply learnt skills via reading text or through dictation.

We ensure that students begin their reading journey with decodable books. These are books that contain the sound spelling correspondences that children have already learnt, ensuring that we build our students confidence in their ability to read. Our take home reading program consolidates this learning.

Students are also exposed to rich literature as part of our text based units, where we focus on applying comprehension skills and strategies to help us better understand books.



Writing

In our writing sessions students participate in dictation, letter formation, syntax and grammar lessons, and text based units.

Text based units involve explicit instruction in the many components of writing, including text structure, parts of speech, phonological awareness, genres, reflections, and vocabulary. Students are encouraged to imitate and innovate on texts.

Letter formation involves explicit lessons on forming all of the letter sounds of the alphabet.

Syntax and Grammar lessons assist students to understand the parts of a sentence and how they work together.

Dictation is a part of the Sounds Write program and involves students writing a dictated sentence based on sounds that they are currently working on in Sounds Write. Students are encouraged to edit their own work.



Numeracy at LPS



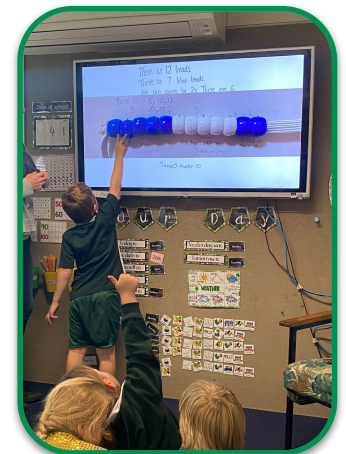
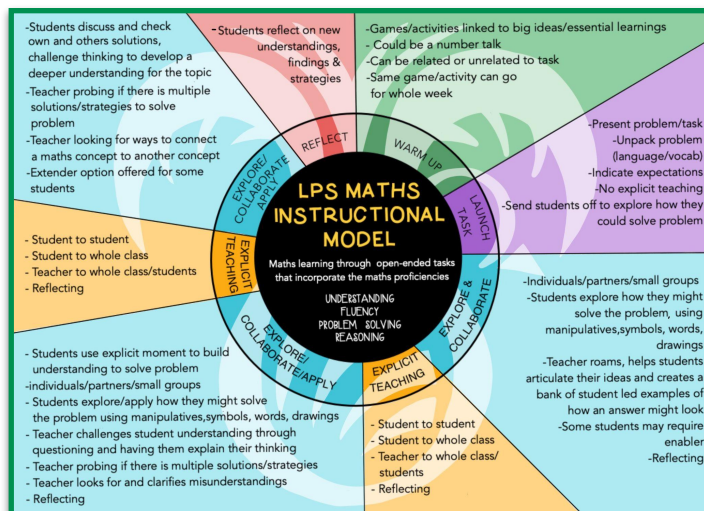
The LPS Maths Instructional Model sets high expectations and beliefs about the teaching and learning of Mathematics. Teams of teachers meet weekly to plan and discuss the co-ordinated teaching of numeracy. Problem solving, the use of concrete materials, finding multiple solutions to problems and children explaining their thinking are all valued and promoted in our maths lessons.

The Mathematics Program is delivered with a focus on the Mathematical areas of Number, Measurement, Space, Statistics and Probability. Algebra is also taught from Grade 3 onwards. At Leongatha Primary School each student participates in at least four 60 to 90 minute Mathematics lessons each week.

At Leongatha Primary School we teach maths through Open Ended Tasks, incorporating the Maths Proficiencies of Fluency, Problem Solving, Reasoning and Understanding. An Open Ended Task is a maths activity where there is more than one way to solve the problem, and often more than one solution. This is where the term 'Open' comes from. For example, instead of asking a student what is 3×8 (which is a closed question because it has only one answer of 24), we flip the problem to become 'the answer is 24, what could the multiplication problem be?' (this is now an 'Open Task' because there is more than one way to solve this problem).

We recognise that when we provide students with an Open Ended Task, some students might find it a little difficult, whereas some students might be eager for a further challenge. This is where we use Enabler Tasks and Extender Tasks when presenting an Open Ended Task. An Enabler Task is a similar task to the Open Ended Task, but it has been modified slightly to allow an easier entry point. Some students may be required to complete the Enabler Task to help them become more ready to complete the Open Ended Task presented. An Extender task, on the other hand, is an extension task that builds upon the original Open Ended Task. So, once a student completes the Open Ended Task, they can be challenged further by completing the Extender Task.

Research shows that Open Ended Tasks provide students with the opportunity to problem solve, think deeply about a problem and communicate their thinking to peers and teachers, allowing them to develop more in depth understanding.



Investigations at LPS

At Leongatha Primary School we implement **Investigations** in our afternoon sessions. This involves inquiry/play based learning with hands-on experiences and collaboration between students. Investigations recognise the importance of oral language skills and student engagement in early learning.

It involves children exploring their own interests, along with learning stations planned by the teachers to assist children in deepening their understanding of concepts covered during the day.

Teachers are integral to this process as they scaffold, extend and interact with your child in order to promote engagement. The teachers are committed to providing all children with the opportunity to succeed to the best of their ability.

We understand and respect that all children are different and learn in a variety of ways.

Through Investigations, we concentrate on developing social and personal skills to build their confidence, develop self-esteem, foster a love of learning. This is achieved through collaborating with others and developing critical and creative thinking, whilst investigating something they are interested in.



Learning Specialists



At LPS we have 2 Learning specialists; 1 in Maths, Crista Davies and 1 in Literacy, Sarah Coolidge. Learning specialists are also referred to as our Maths and Literacy coaches.

The learning specialists are all experienced classroom teachers, as well as their roles of leading literacy and numeracy across the school to ensure all teachers are supported to build their practice.

They attend external professional development workshops to stay up to date, and provide regular professional development to the teachers at LPS. They have some time each week out of their classrooms where they work with and support other teachers by attending their teams planning meetings, along with working with teachers and students in different classrooms. This could include modelling a lesson, team teaching or coaching a teacher.

Intervention



Across the school we are lucky to have qualified tutors, trained to target the specific needs of students by implementing programs such as MultiLit & MacLit.

In Prep, once data is collected in various forms we are able to decide what the students need and with the help of Educational Support staff and Parent Helpers implement targeted one on one and small group intervention to support students to achieve the best they can. This intervention is consistently monitored and altered to meet the changing needs of the students. We have seen great progress from our programs and will continue to implement new ways to track students' incredible progress

Specialist classes

Physical Education

In PE children focus on developing their fundamental motor skills through games and explicit lessons on skills. Students develop their team work skills, collaboration, sharing and spatial awareness.



Performing Arts

In Performing Arts class, students practice rhythm, dance and signing. Students get to perform and experiment with instruments.



Art

In Visual Arts students experiment with textures, colours and mediums to create pieces of work. They explore lines, complete self portraits and create 2D and 3D artwork.



Languages- Auslan

Children learn about Deaf culture, when and how Auslan is used and who uses it, and explore signs used in Victoria. They engage in games and activities that aim to expose them to the signs for sports, colours, numbers, family members and foods.



STEM

STEM is an approach to learning and development that integrates the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Through STEM, students develop key skills including: problem solving, creativity, critical analysis.



Transport



There are two types of buses, Country Buses which take children outside the township of Leongatha and are coordinated by the school. The second, is the Town buses which are privately run to collect children from the Leongatha township. Country bus travellers need to fill in the appropriate forms, which are included in the enrolment pack.

Town bus travellers need to contact the bus service, Winbus PTY LTD on **0428 551 145** to organise pick up. Please make sure your child knows their bus number/lane. It is handy to write this information on a bag tag and attach it to your child's school bag.

Each country bus traveller will be given a bus buddy by the school to help walk your child down to their bus stop and walk up to the Prep building. Town bus travellers will have to organise their own. For any queries regarding buses or to arrange a bus buddy for **Country Bus** travellers, please contact the school's Bus Coordinator: Sharon Hooper on **5667 4600**.



Uniform

We expect children to be dressed in appropriate LPS uniform. Our school colours are green and white, with a yellow emblem. Our uniform is now available to purchase online from Buxwear. <http://buxwear.com.au>

You can also purchase plain green pieces of clothing from local Department stores eg: Kmart, Big W, Best & Less or visit the local op shop and pick up a second-hand uniform.

Students can wear any type of comfortable footwear, as long as their toes are covered. Students are required to remove their shoes independently when entering the building, velcro is the best option for school shoes. Please make sure shoes are easy to put on and take off. Preps have shoe racks outside their building and a special shelf for each grade.

Our Sunsmart policy requires compulsory wearing of school hats in Term 1 & 4. The students wear a wide brimmed green hat. These can be purchased from Kmart or Buxwear.



Meals

Children are always hungry at school and therefore require substantial and healthy meals. They have three food breaks throughout the day. **Recess is at 11.00am.** Some ideas for snacks you can include are: fruit cut into manageable pieces, dried fruits & nuts, popcorn, muesli bars, or a small cupcake/muffins. **Lunch is at 1.00pm.** Some ideas for lunch are: a sandwich, roll, wrap, biscuits and cheese, crackers, salads or veggies. Every morning the Preps have 'Fruit time'. Children are allowed to eat **fresh** fruit or vegetables at this time.



In an effort to combat rubbish at our school and reduce the amount of waste contributing to landfill, LPS encourages families to consider a **Nude Food** approach to lunch boxes. That is, including food with no packaging, which is usually less processed and a healthier option or removing food from plastic packaging at home, and putting it into containers/lunch boxes. All containers (top and bottom) need to be clearly labelled with your child's name and grade. A drink bottle (with water) is vital each day, but especially during hot weather or sports events. Children need to stay hydrated and are permitted to drink in the classroom during the day.



Please have regular conversations about the food you place in your child's lunchbox. Check if they like the food you are putting in there. The teachers ask the students to put all unfinished or disliked food back into their lunchbox, so you know how much they have eaten. Alternatively, food can be purchased through our school canteen every day. During the first five weeks we suggest that Preps bring their lunch from home rather than use the canteen service. Lunch orders can be purchased online via Compass. Lunch orders will then be picked up at lunchtime by a classroom monitor.

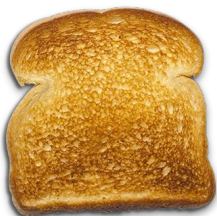


For health and hygiene reasons we encourage you to support our policy that children do not share food or drink. This is vitally important for the children who have severe allergies and reactions to certain foods. Our school canteen is unable to heat up meals that your child brings in; due to the Food Safety Standards.

Please note: We are NOT a nut free school.

Breakfast Club

We are also fortunate to have Breakfast Club run 3 mornings a week from 8.15am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Students can choose from a range of breakfast foods including toast, cereal, fresh fruit, porridge and milk.



Contacting your child's Teacher

At times, you will need to contact your child's teacher to discuss important information, concerns or queries. The best way to contact teachers is via email. Teachers are contactable during work hours, Monday to Friday, via their emails.

A regular school newsletter is also uploaded to Compass & Facebook once a fortnight to keep you updated with what is happening in the school.



Parent Helpers

We love having parents and grandparents help out in the classroom, the more the merrier. There are several ways you can help:

- Daily literacy and numeracy activities in small groups
- PMP (Perceptual Motor Program - movement and motor experiences)
- Excursions
- Fundraising (BBQ's, Colour Run, Disco, Mother's/Father's Day stalls)
- School council

Please keep an eye on Compass for requests for helpers.



Compass



Compass School Manager is a whole school administration package. It is used by Leongatha Primary School to streamline many school operations, from attendance, communication to and from teachers, excursion management and student school reports. When your child is enrolled and the system activated you will be able to login using your secure password through the school website or on the app.

As a Parent you have access to...

My news-

- Displays attendance information
- View the grade and school newsletters
- Lets you know of special events and excursions concerning your child



COMPASS
School Manager

Student Profile-

- **Attendance** - lets you review your child's attendance record and allows you to 'write a note' for absences.
- **Student schedule** - allows you to view your child's schedule/timetable and pay for events
- **Communication** - allows you to email your child's teachers and book parent/teacher interviews.
- **Reports** - past and present school reports issued each semester.

Learning Tasks

This allows you to view your child's learning tasks. These are observations on your child's progress and how your child is doing in a number of key subjects. These learning tasks occur on a regular basis throughout the term.

Get the Compass mobile app

Access student information on the go with the Compass mobile app for iPhone & Android phones.

