Welcome to Serpell Primary School! This is an exciting time to start your Prep at our school. Our school is formally accredited with the Council of International Schools and parents will be reassured that their child is receiving an education meeting worldwide standards in philosophy, curriculum, governance, staffing, student support services, resources and community life.

The 2014 Preps will be accommodated in the new Early Learning Complex. This complex comprises classrooms, toilet facilities, kitchens, meeting rooms, computer areas and play spaces specifically for Prep children. It provides a secure and supportive learning and playing space for our youngest students. There will be 7 classes of Preps next year, with an average of 21/22 students in each class.

The Prep Transition Program

We have planned an extensive program to familiarise your child with school and to make him or her feel confident, safe and secure. We have attempted to spread the program across different days and times in the week, so that your child’s very important kinder experience is maximised.

The Prep 2014 transition to school program is as follows:

Class Lists class lists will be posted out to parents in the week commencing 28th October 2013. This will allow you to become familiar with the classroom location and teacher names prior to the transition program. If parents have any placement concerns, there is then plenty of time for us to attend to them.

An Information Evening for Parents will be held on Wednesday 6th November at 7.30pm in the Early Learning Centre. At this meeting you will be able to meet your child’s teacher, be given specific information relating to the transition program and school arrangements for 2014, and meet with representatives from School Council, OHSC, the Uniform Shop and the Parents’ Association. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and participate in general discussion.

The Serpell Storyland Afternoon will be held on Monday 11th November 2013 from 2pm – 3pm in the new Serpell Stadium precinct. All Prep 2014 students are invited to attend with a parent, to experience the joy of story and imagination through theatrical performance and play. The afternoon will provide children with a non-threatening school experience during which they can enjoy several presentations, experience a happy school context and play games in the stadium very close to mum, dad, grandma or grandpa.

The 1st Classroom Experience Morning for 2014 Preps will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2013 from 9.30am to 10.30am in the Early Learning Centre. At this initial classroom session, your child will be introduced to his or her teacher and meet with classmates. You are invited to attend with your child. The teacher will take everyone on a familiarisation tour of the Early Learning Complex and Prep play spaces. There will be an opportunity for informal play.

The 2nd Classroom Experience for 2014 Preps will be held on Thursday 28th November from 9.30am to 10.30am. The children will attend their class for next year, again meet with their teacher and friends, and take part in formal school written activities. Parents are invited to leave their children for a short time and have coffee with other Prep parents in the staffroom.

On this day the Uniform Shop will be open from 9:30 – 11:30 for you to purchase you child’s new uniforms.

You are more than welcome to come to school any Tuesday between 9.30am and 10.30am
to purchase uniforms at the Uniform Shop if you wish.

The 3rd Classroom Experience - Buddy Day will be held on Tuesday 3rd December from 9.30am to 10:45am. On this day, your child will be greeted by his or her 2014 Year 5 "buddy". The buddies will establish a caring connection with the children and then take them on a tour of the school facilities, including the library and art room.

Parents are invited to leave their children for a short time and share morning tea and chat with other parents. It will also allow your child to experience a short time of independence, knowing that you will be quite close by.

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<tr>
<th>TRANSITION DIARY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Lists mailed out</td>
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<td>Information Evening</td>
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<td>Storyland</td>
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THE SERPELL PREP EDUCATION PROGRAM 2014

Whilst most families have taken advantage of a personal school tour over the past few months, the experience is often quite overwhelming and questions about programs and facilities may arise. The following summary is provided to ensure that parents are well informed.

TEACHING STAFF

Teachers allocated a Prep class at Serpell have specific high-level skills and attributes to support your child in the vital first year. These include an in-depth understanding of young children and the way that they learn, an ability to engage children in active learning, the capacity to engender feelings of confidence and success in students, and an outstanding ability to make strong student/home/school relationships.

CLASSROOM PROGRAM

In 2014, the class teacher will provide your Prep child with classroom teaching and learning programs each week in the key areas of:

- English 10 hours
- Mathematics 5 hours
- Science 2 hours
- History/Geography 2 hours

English is taught in a literacy block each day from 9am - 11am. After a 20 minute recess, Mathematics is taught from 11.20am - 12.20pm. This decision has been made on a school wide basis to allocate the time when children are most alert in the day to the most important subjects.

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Specialist teaching and learning programs of one hour’s duration, with a specialist teacher, will be provided for Preps in:

- Visual Arts
- Music (Singing)
- Physical Education
- Language Other than English (LOTE)

LANGUAGES

In the area of Languages Other than English (LOTE), Prep parents may choose from Mandarin or Greek. If your family speaks one of these languages at home, then your child will attend first language speaking classes in this language. You will be asked to select a language for your child early in the school year.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Serpell offers 30 minutes of religious studies each week. These are provided in:

- Christian Studies
- Islamic Studies
You may also elect for your child to have no religious studies. In this case, they will have additional tuition with their class teacher.

**CLASSROOM HELPERS**

Our Early Years Leaders, Sue Young and Barbara Bell, will conduct several programs each year to prepare parents to assist in classrooms. This program is called “Classroom Helpers” and it fulfills two objectives. Firstly, it enables parents to work supportively alongside teachers and children in classrooms, and secondly, it empowers parents with skills to help their children with reading, writing and maths at home. Information about day and evening training sessions will be sent home in February.

**GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAMS**

All Serpell teachers have been trained in programs which identify and support the wide spectrum of student talent and abilities. Additional programs which identify and develop the abilities of gifted and talented students have been developed in our “Infinite Possibilities” program. This reaches from Prep to Year 6 and includes writers’ workshops, theatrics, mathematics, robotics, geology, global classrooms, medical science workshops and academic competitions.

**SWIMMING**

A Prep swimming program will be held in Term 4 at the Bulleen Swim School. Each swimming session is of 30 minutes’ duration and develops the skills of the Aqua-pass standards.

**PREP EXCURSIONS / incursions**

During the Prep year, an excursion is undertaken each term. These include visits to the Zoo and the Botanical Gardens. In addition, the school will arrange for performers and exhibits to visit Serpell during the year.

**PLAY & EATING FACILITIES**

The Prep students have newly constructed playgrounds adjacent to their classrooms to provide them with secure, safe and stimulating recreation time. At the commencement of the year they will have separate lunch and play times from the rest of the school. From Prep to Year 6, students eat lunch in their classrooms under teacher supervision. The school canteen operates every day for lunch orders and counter sales. We implement healthy eating policies.

**SUPPORT & SERVICES**

**OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE**

The Out of School Hours Care Program (OSHC) is run by Camp Australia and operates during school terms every morning from 7am to 8.45am and every afternoon from 3.30pm to 6.30pm. During February, Preps may use the service from 3.00pm each afternoon. Please contact the school office during the transition program to register your child.

**THE SCHOOL NURSE**

If your child has any medical needs, please make an appointment with our school nurse during October or November to discuss the management of the condition. This may include medication routines, an asthma plan, allergies, or an awareness of a specific medical condition. The nurse will document your child’s needs so that we are well prepared to support your child’s health and safety at school.

**INTEGRATION SUPPORT**

If your child experiences a medical condition or disability which may require the support of an aide to assist him or her at school, please ensure that you notify the school immediately, since the applications for funding need to be lodged with the Department prior to commencement.

**TWINS & TRIPLETS**

If you are the parent of twins or triplets, please ensure that you send us a letter about your views on placement. In this important first year of schooling, we will be totally guided by parents on whether your children are together or separated. After Prep, the decision is made each year depending on the views of the parents, the children and the class teacher.

**GENTLE START PROGRAM**

We will make provision for special starting and schooling arrangements for Preps at the younger end of the year level, i.e with birthdays in March or April. This could include giving them a shorter day at the beginning of the year or special placement arrangements. Please telephone me...
COMMENCEMENT TESTING
Whilst students in Years 1 to 6 will commence school on Wednesday 29th January, the Preps will not commence until Wednesday 5th February. This is to enable the individual testing of your child in English and Mathematics prior to commencement. You will be given a time for the one hour test by your child’s teacher later this year. You will be able to accompany your child during the test, to make them feel safer. Please do not be concerned about the results as it is just a starting point to make their learning appropriate and meaningful.

PREP TERM DATES 2014

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<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>Wednesday 5th Feb - 4th April 2014</td>
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<td>Book Sales &amp; Uniform Sales Tuesday 28th January 8am - 5 pm</td>
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<td>Term 2</td>
<td>22nd April - 27th June 2014</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
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MORE INFORMATION
Parents can keep up to date with school events by visiting www.serpellps.vic.edu.au Each week, the newsletter is posted on the site and student achievement is celebrated there. It might help to place it in your favourites file. This is certainly a very exciting time for your child and your family. We look forward to meeting with you during the Prep transition stage and developing a strong school community learning relationship. Please telephone me if you have any questions or concerns.

WILMA CULTON