

BALLARAT SPECIALIST SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS HANDBOOK 2021



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SPECIALIST
SCHOOL

Welcome

The Early Years is made up of the Kindergarten, Prep and Grade One classes where students are grouped according to their year level. Together, the Early Years and the Junior School (Years 2 - 6) are collectively known as the Primary School. Students in Early Years use the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and structured play based programs to facilitate student development of core skills such as personal hygiene, feeding, toileting and developing social and play skills.



The Early Years classes have an emphasis on educators, parents and the school community collectively designing a program that meets the individual needs of our students to ensure their continual development. They use the indoor and outdoor learning areas to create physical and social environments that expose children to learning experiences and physical activity.

In the Early Years, there is a strong emphasis on beginning to build relationships with educators and peers, establishing new school routines and determining classroom expectations. With this, students have the opportunity to mix across the Early Years cohort to build relationships with unfamiliar educators and peers, while focusing on explicit teaching to suit the needs of individual student's.



Students engage in the Respectful Relationships curriculum to promote respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. Our students are taught strategies to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence that can be transferred between the classroom, specialist lessons and everyday life.



As a community, our aim is to have all students learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Curriculum



The VEYLDF has 5 structured Learning Outcomes that enables Early Years educators to design learning opportunities to extend children's knowledge and capabilities. These are:

1. *Identity* - identifying who people are and what shapes them.
2. *Community* - reflecting on values and traditions of their family and the community.
3. *Wellbeing* - developing basic motor skills.
4. *Learning* - discovering how to learn and developing dispositions for learning.
5. *Communication* - using gestures, sounds and assisted communication to form relationships.

The VEYLDF curriculum adopts a comprehensive holistic approach to learning and development for children aged birth to 8 years old.

The Early Years lesson structure includes:

Adult Led Play and Learning:
Explicit teaching of curriculum content.

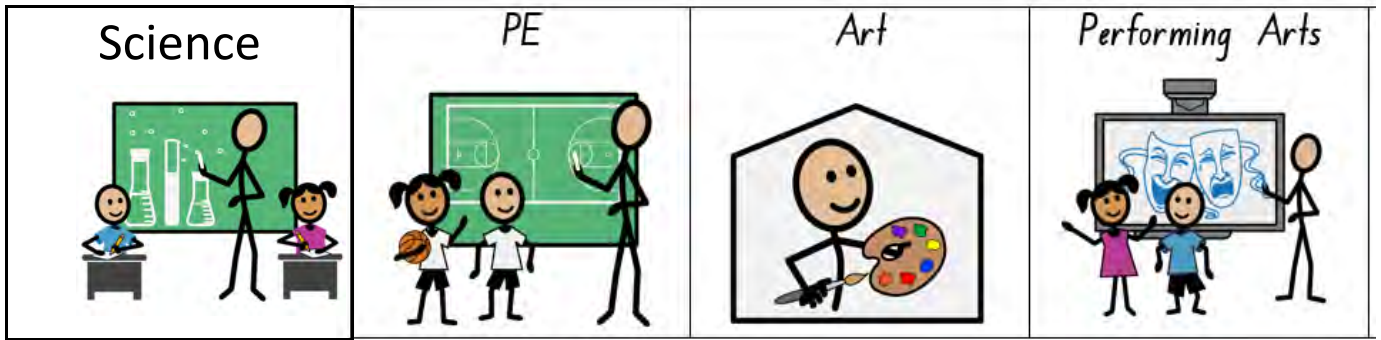
Guided Play and Learning:

Students and educators learn together.

Child Directed Play and Learning:
Children lead their own learning through play.



Specialist Subjects



Junior School students participate in weekly sessions of Art, Performing Arts, Science and Physical Education where they participate in activities catering for each specialist. Students also have the opportunity to participate in choir, instrumental music and various therapy programs according to their individual needs. These include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy or hydrotherapy sessions in the pool.

Zones of Regulation

We use the 'Zones of Regulation' to allow students to identify and communicate how they are feeling in a positive way. The Zones approach uses four coloured zones to help students identify how they are feeling in that moment and provides a guide to support regulation.

The **ZONES** of Regulation®

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | | |
| BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly | GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn | YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control | RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control |

Camps, Excursions and Special Events

Students in the Early Years have a variety of opportunities to attend excursions and school based special events. These are an important part of the curriculum as they develop an integral component of personal growth. Excursions are sequenced with the curriculum to provide opportunities for a diverse range of experiences.



Classrooms also develop a Community Access program where students go into the community to experience and participate in a range of activities. These include; travel on the public bus, shopping in the supermarket and attending fun activities such as ten pin bowling or the movies.

These experiences support the curriculum while increasing teaching opportunities to focus on essential life skills such as money handling, transportation and personal safety whilst out in the community.

Seesaw



The Seesaw parent app (free) is how we share your child's learning at Ballarat Specialist School. Each child gets their own digital journal and teachers add photos, videos, drawings, or notes to your child's digital journal. You will only get notifications about your child's new journal posts such as photos and videos or messages from your classroom teacher intended for all students.

Journals are only accessible by your child, their teachers and yourself.

Journals are not public on the web and information is never shared with third parties.

How do I get Seesaw?

The **Seesaw Parent app** is **free** to download.

Step 1: Seesaw can be downloaded on your phone, iPad/tablet and laptop from the Apple App store, any android app store and Google Play store.

Step 2: Once the Seesaw Parent app is downloaded on your device you will need to add your email address to set up your account.

Step 3: Your child's classroom teacher may give you a QR code to scan which will add you into your child's journal. If you have supplied your email address to the school, you may be added via email.

If you have any questions or queries please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher for further information.

School Wide PBIS and Our School Values

Our school values are:

- *Responsibility*
- *Respect*
- *Safety*



We explicitly teach these values and expectations in our classrooms for use around our school, in the community and online.

We teach expected behaviours as part of the curriculum in the same way we teach English and Mathematics.

These behaviours are reinforced with tickets, given by staff to students, for showing these values as a part of our Positive Behaviour and Support Program.

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These tickets are then added to our weekly classroom and school wide raffle draws that see our students gain \$\$ to spend in our “Vintage Soul” OpShop.

Special Treats Cafe

Our onsite café gives students the opportunity to experience what it is like to order and purchase items at a café. Students can choose from a range of milkshakes, juices and slices during visits with their classrooms. Special Treats Café is open to the public, staff and students where students can purchase lunch orders via the school app.



Our school's newest program 'Vintage Soul' is our school based Op- Shop! It is located at the Gillies Street Campus, next to the main bus port in the school carpark. The purpose of the Op-Shop is to offer our students opportunities to learn work related skills in a retail environment.

Vintage Soul Op Shop



We are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9.30 - 2pm.

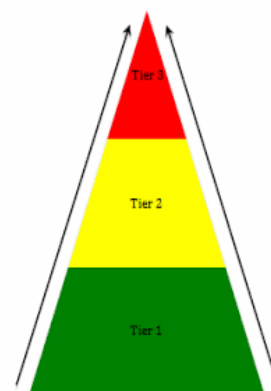
Integrated Services Team

This team offers a multi-disciplinary and child-centred approach. The **Allied Health Team** (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, music therapist, physiotherapist, nurse and allied health assistants) and **Wellbeing & Engagement Team** (psychologist, engagement learning specialist, student welfare officers, behavioural occupational therapist, wellbeing & engagement assistant) **collaborate with the class staff** to offer integrated and coordinated supports based on student's individual needs.

Referrals for integrated services support can be made by teachers, parents/carers or students. Parents/carers can **contact their child's teacher** or the IST administration officer (Ph. 5334 1302). Students can self-refer by contacting the Wellbeing & Engagement team or Allied Health Team.

A three-tiered response-to-intervention model supports all students.

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|--------|---|
| Tier 3 | Individualised, intensive supports (e.g. physiotherapy hydro sessions, counselling sessions, specialised assessments, mealtime plans) |
| Tier 2 | Targeted, supplemented supports through group programming or adapted timetabling (e.g. sensory gym, Drumbeat, Seasons for Growth, Pride group) |
| Tier 1 | Whole school programming supports, integrated into the curriculum and classroom (e.g. PBIS, Zones of Regulation, use of visuals) |



The Integrated Services Team also coordinates all **NDIS** related queries. All requests made by external therapists or agencies are processed by the Integrated Services Team.

Please contact the IST Administration Officer about any NDIS related questions.

