



Heathcote Primary School

Newsletter

Telephone: (03) 5433 3090

heathcote.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Issue No. 1

30th January 2026

At Heathcote PS we value... Respect Learning Teamwork Responsibility

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Taungurung people and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

What's Happening?

Week 2	Wednesday 4th February	Foundation Rest / Assessment Day (no Foundation students at school unless attending assessment)
Week 3	Wednesday 11th February	Foundation Rest / Assessment Day (no Foundation students at school unless attending assessment)
	Thursday 12th February	F-2 Literacy Family Information Session @ 3:15pm
Week 4	Wednesday 18th February	Foundation Rest / Assessment Day (no Foundation students at school unless attending assessment)
Week 5	Wednesday 25th February	Foundation Rest / Assessment Day (no Foundation students at school unless attending assessment)
Week 10	Thursday 2nd April	End of Term 1 (early dismissal @ 2pm)

Whole School Assembly

Fridays, 9:05am—9:25am, astroturf area

Please join us to celebrate achievements and milestones from the 'week that was'

In the event of inclement weather, assembly will be online (meeting link will be sent on the day)

2026 - What's Due?

Friday 6th February	Video Permission Slip
Friday 6th February	Award Certificate Creation Challenge (optional)



Heathcote Primary School
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Willow, Angelo

Jessica, Ana, Ira

Mark, Tauri, Sienna

Fatat, Emily T, Aldane,

Neleyah, Nathan,

Yahya



*Students have the option of wearing casual clothes to school on their birthday
(or the closest school day to their birthday if their birthday falls on the weekend
or in the school holidays)*



From September to April, everyone needs to wear a plain coloured, broadbrimmed hat when they are outside. This is part of our SunSmart policy. If you need a hat, the office has got you covered...literally! School hats can be purchased from the office for \$10.

Office Hours

Monday to Friday

8:30am—4pm



Principal's Report

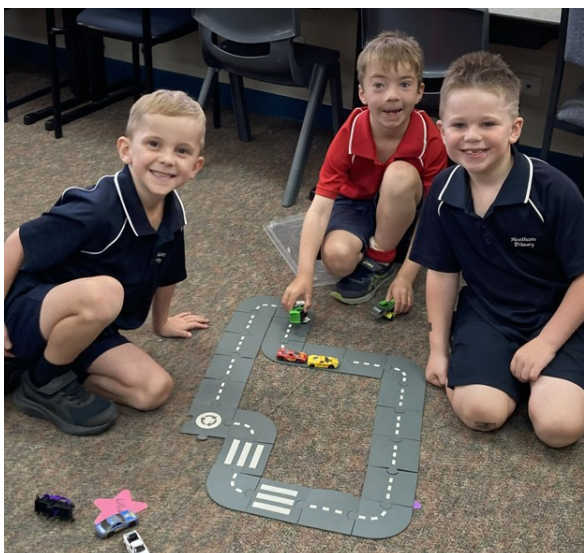
And, just like that, we are back for what is shaping up to be a terrific year!

Welcome back to our returning staff, students and their families and welcome to our new staff, students and their families. This year, 21 Foundation students start their primary school adventure at Heathcote PS. Four new students and their families across other year levels join us, along with two new teachers, Christy Pryor (wellbeing and inclusion leader who is also teaching 3/4HP two days a week) and Isabella Foley (5/6F's classroom teacher).

It has been lovely catching up with everyone. There have been lots of cheery hellos, waves, smiles and stories from the holidays shared. It has been a joy to see everyone settling back into the rhythms and routines of school life, the excitement as everyone greets each other in the morning and to see our school values throughout the day.

The partnership meetings provided the perfect opportunity to gradually transition back into school life. Thank you for the high level of engagement and attendance with these meetings. They form part of our transition program and alongside the transition activities completed across the school in Term 4 2025, the 2026 school year is off to a smooth and exciting start.

Once again, we are kicking off the year with our 'Ready to Learn' program, investing time building connections, teaching routines, practising transitions, revisiting expected behaviours, school values and establishing a solid foundation for the year ahead. The 'Quote of the Day' on the first day back goes to a Grade 3 student with a big smile on her face as she reflected it was, "The best day of my life!" as she headed home at the end of the day. I often ask students how their day has been out of a score of ten. Not only does it often lead to a bigger conversation about the reasons behind the score and how to make it an even higher score, it gives me valuable feedback about how we are travelling as a school through the eyes of our students. I loved hearing that it had been a "10 out of 10 day because everything had been so fun!" from a Grade 4 student and the mathematician in me has a little smile when I hear scores with decimals, including a 9.5 out of 10 from a Grade 6 student.



It's been a hot start to the year, with the state experiencing heatwave conditions. On extreme heat days, our inclement weather policy sees us spend break times inside with our friend the air conditioner. The value of teamwork was on full display as students collaborated to build a race-track, taking turns, sharing equipment and including each other's ideas.

Our first whole school community assembly for 2026 is on Friday 6th February at 9:05am. We hope you can join us!

Carolyn

E: carolyn.crowther@education.vic.gov.au

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support

Our expected behaviours matrix is displayed in all learning areas and the main office. As part of our 'Ready to Learn' program, all classes are revisiting the matrix. Throughout the year, students will participate in sessions where they focus on each behaviour explicitly.

Our values cards are earned by students when they demonstrate expected behaviours. When a student earns a values card, they also earn a Dojo point and families receive a notification.



Often students demonstrate multiple expected behaviours at once. For example, during imaginative play at break time, students demonstrated the behaviours:

We share, we use manners and kind words, we use an appropriate voice, we take turns, we are inclusive and we look after school property



HEATHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL RESPECT • LEARNING • TEAMWORK • RESPONSIBILITY

	LEARNING		
	ALWAYS	INSIDE	OUTSIDE
RESPECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use an appropriate voice We use manners and kind words We follow instructions We keep our hands and feet to ourselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We follow classroom expectations We walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We leave nature in nature We share our spaces
TEAMWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are inclusive We share We wait our turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We pack up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We choose teams fairly We determine and play by the rules
RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use equipment for its intended purpose We arrive on time We look after school property We place rubbish in the correct bin We use our 'calm down' strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use materials for their intended purpose We participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We return our sports equipment

You are invited to participate in our

Award Certificate Creation Challenge!

We are updating the design of the award certificates presented at assembly and inviting students and their families to help us design our new certificate template!

Channel your inner graphic designer and create an A4 template that can be used for our weekly 'Values Award' certificates. We need a space for the student's name, the school name, the reason the award is being presented, the date and the teacher's name/signature. The rest is up to you!

Please email suggestions to carolyn.crowther@education.vic.gov.au. Students will vote to determine the final design. We cannot wait to see what our new certificates will look like!

Thank you for the designs already received. **Submissions close on Friday 6th February.**

Examples below are included only as prompts (noting that they do not contain all of the specific HPS criteria required)

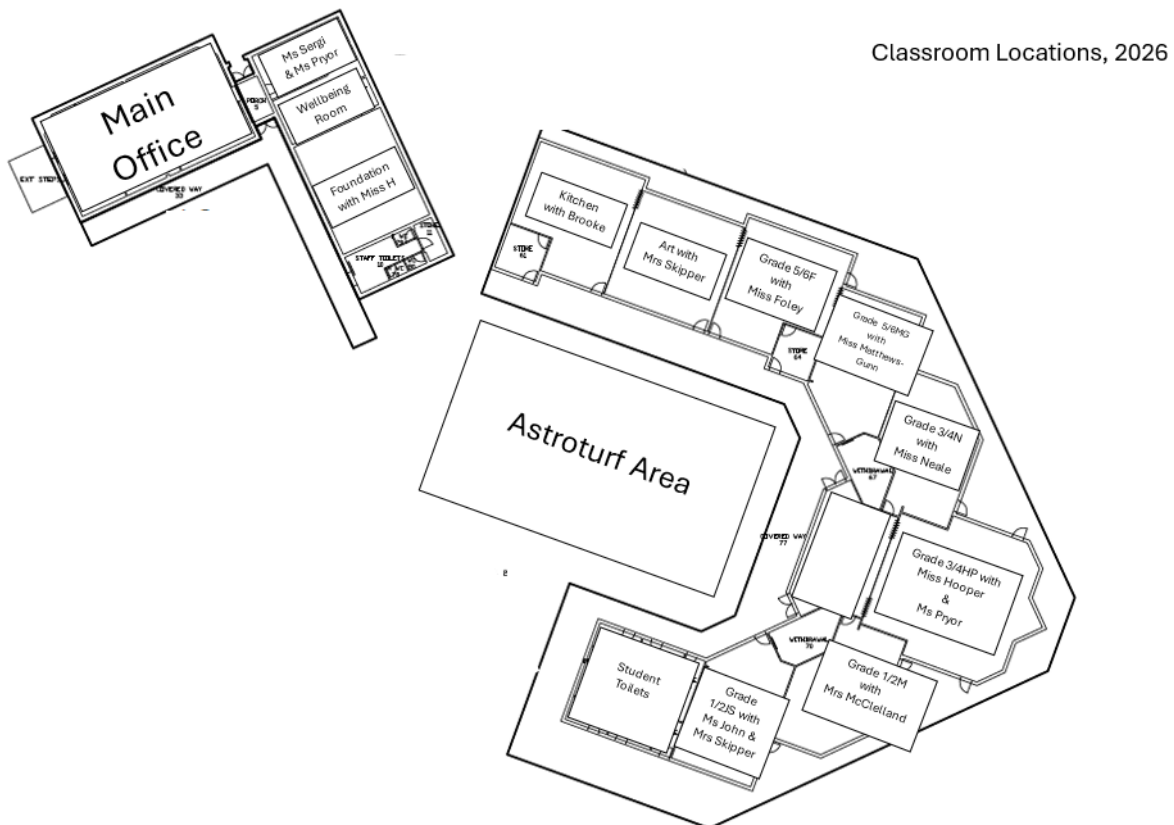




What to pack in school bags?

- **Fruit and/or vegetable snacks.** Students have healthy snacks during class time to help maintain focus and concentration.
- **Lunch.** Students tend to eat their bigger meal at Break 1 to provide energy and brain power for the rest of the day's learning.
- **Snacks.** Students tend to eat their smaller snack/s at Break 2 to boost energy levels for the last part of the day.
- A **broad brimmed, plain hat.** Ideally, it will have the school logo on it but any plain (no patterns or logos) hat is still okay.
- A **drink bottle** filled with water (can be refilled at school)
- **Spare clothes** if you think your child might need them. Eg. Due to a toileting accident or from slipping over in a puddle (more applicable for winter time)

Where is everyone in 2026?



Daily Timetable



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Daily Timetable

8:45am	Classroom doors open <i>Students take their bag inside and unpack for the day ahead. After doing so, students can go outside to play.</i>
8:57am	Music begins followed by school bell <i>Students make their way to their classroom via the toilets and drink tap (if needed)</i>
9am - 11am	Learning time <i>Includes a healthy snack of fruit or vegetables at approximately 10am and lunch eating time at 10:50am</i>
11am - 11:30am	Break 1
11:30am - 1:30pm	Learning time <i>Includes lunch / snack eating time at 1:20pm</i>
1:30pm - 2pm	Break 2
2pm - 3pm	Learning time
3pm	Home time

Students are encouraged to confirm after school pick up arrangements before starting their school day. For example, will they walk home? Meet a parent/carer in the yard/at the office? Meet a parent/carer at the car park? Will they catch the bus to after school care or catch it home?



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Classroom Satchels

Every classroom has a red satchel. These are used to transport notes to and from the office. For example, as part of a student's routine when they enter the classroom at the start of the day, they place any notes for the office into the bag. Class monitors take the satchel to the office and return at the end of the day to collect it. If the office has any notes that need to be sent home, the notes are in the satchel when it is picked up by the class monitors.



Late Arrivals & Early Departures

If students arrive after 9am or need to leave before 3pm, they need to sign in or sign out at the office. This is done using the Compass portal. This week, 5/6MG visited the office to practise the process.



Mobile Phone Policy (student use)

Department policy requires that students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours, including break times.

All schools are required to have a local school policy on mobile phones that reflects this requirement and which provides details for the implementation of the policy at their school.

Our school's mobile phone policy (student use) is available on the school website [HERE](#).

In a nutshell, mobile phones are to be:

- switched off during school hours
- dropped off at the office for secure storage upon arrival. Eg. Not kept in school bags.
- collected at the end of the school day.



Communication Channels

There are multiple ways information is shared. If you have any questions about accessing Compass or ClassDojo please speak to your child's classroom teacher.

1. Compass
2. Class Dojo—new in 2026!
3. Email
4. Newsletter
5. Website

If you have a question about your child, the first point of contact is their classroom teacher.



Yard Supervision

The school yard is supervised from 8:45am until 9am. There is an announcement at 8:45am to signal classroom doors are open. Students are able to put their bags in their room, complete any before school routines and monitor jobs before heading back outside to play. The hospital end of the oval and playground are out of bounds before school.

After school, staff are on bus and crossing duty (which includes carpark duty in the main carpark). The main yard is not supervised. Any students who have not been collected by 3:15pm are taken to the office.

After school care is available through Trinity Academy. A bus from Heathcote PS drops after school care passengers at Trinity. For bookings, please contact Trinity Academy on [\(03\) 4411 6803](tel:0344116803)

Main Car Park

The pick up/drop off zone is not a parking space. Please keep the engine running, drop off or collect your passenger/s and continue on your way so the traffic keeps flowing (and does not bank up onto the road).

When parking in the other section of the car park, please pull all the way into the car park spaces – as close as you safely can to the bollard marking the front of the car park.

Please travel slowly through the car park and check for students crossing between the sections/bays.



Personal Accident & Property Insurance

The Department (which includes our school) does not have personal accident insurance for students.

If a student is injured at school or while participating in a school activity (including offsite) and requires medical treatment, parents/carers are responsible for all of their child's medical expenses. This includes transport costs such as ambulance costs (which may include an air ambulance if considered necessary)

The Department (which includes our school) does not have personal property insurance for staff and/or students.

Items of personal property that are lost, stolen or damaged at school or during school excursions are not the responsibility of Heathcote Primary School or the Department. Staff and students are reminded not to bring items of value to school or on school excursions.

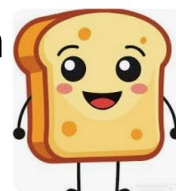
Heathcote Primary School encourages parents/carers to consider obtaining their own accident insurance for students and property of value that may be brought to school.

Breakfast Club*

Tuesday & Thursday

8:40am—8:55am

HPS Kitchen



Toast, cereal, milk, fruit available

**Starts in Week 2*

Settling into a new class

6 tips for parents, carers and families to support your child to settle into a new class.

1. Acknowledge their feelings

- **Validate emotions:** Let your child know it's okay to feel sad, anxious, or disappointed. Acknowledging these emotions can reduce anxiety by making them feel understood (Beyond Blue, 2021). You might say, 'I know it's hard to leave a class where you felt comfortable, and it's normal to feel a bit nervous about what's coming next.'

2. Focus on positives and familiarity

- **Highlight exciting aspects:** Emphasise the positive opportunities that come with the new class, like meeting new friends, trying different activities, or having a fresh start with a new teacher. This reframing can help children start seeing change as an opportunity.
- **Identify familiar faces:** Point out any friends or known peers who might also be in their new class. Familiar faces can help ease the transition (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

3. Encourage problem-solving and independence

- **Plan for success:** Brainstorm strategies with your child to help them feel more comfortable, such as introducing themselves to new classmates, joining group activities, or asking for help when needed.
- **Build coping skills:** Teach your child positive self-talk, like reminding themselves, 'I can handle new things,' which research shows can reduce anxiety and build resilience (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2021).
- **Model a positive outlook on change:** Show a positive attitude toward change yourself, sharing times when you successfully handled transitions or new experiences. This can set a model for them and show that they can handle new situations too. Let them see that you are confident in their ability to handle the change, which can help them feel more secure.

4. Set and maintain predictable routine

- **Consistency and structure:** Establishing a daily routine, including consistent bedtimes, meal schedules, and even homework times, helps children feel secure. Familiarity with routines can help them feel more in control amid changes in their school life (ARACY, 2018).
- **Transition preparation:** If possible, practice aspects of their new routine, such as packing their school bag or visiting the new classroom, to help them feel prepared and ready.

5. Encourage open communication with teachers

- **Connect with educators:** Let your child know they can approach their teacher with questions or concerns. Building rapport with the teacher early on can help them feel supported. Communicating with the teacher yourself may also help establish support for your child if any specific anxieties arise.

6. Promote friendships and social skills

- **Arrange playdates or social time:** If possible, arrange for your child to meet some classmates outside of school. Positive social interactions help children build confidence in their social skills and see their new class as a space for friendships (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

Supporting a child through a class transition takes time and patience. You can make the adjustment more manageable by recognising their feelings, setting positive expectations, and helping them prepare for the change.

Teachers and school leaders have generally seen it all and will be well-placed to support and provide advice. Contacting your child's school to understand what supports are available, and how other students who may have experienced similar concerns in the past have gone on to excel is often a great way to draw on the experience and expertise from those who are also committed to seeing your child flourish in the new year.

While there's no one size fits all approach, here are 6 tips from Sharon Baker, Principal in Residence at the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, informed by Australian research and the general principles of child psychology.



Newsletter and website article: Schools in Category 3 on the Bushfire At-Risk Register and the Category 4 List

This article has been developed by the Department of Education for schools to publish in their newsletter and school website.

This information has been developed to answer frequently asked questions regarding the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) and Category 4 list and our school's closure on a Catastrophic fire danger day in your fire weather district.

School preparations for the bushfire season

Each year, we undertake a range of activities to ensure the safety of our school and to prepare for bushfires and grassfires.

An important part of this process is communicating to parents what will happen when certain fire danger ratings are issued to help ensure the safety of students and staff.

Our school has been identified as being at risk of bushfire or grassfire and is a **Category 3 school.**



Our school will **close** on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in **Northern Country fire district**.

Closure of the school due to a Catastrophic fire danger rating will be enacted when the Bureau of Meteorology forecast and related public safety messaging are confirmed. Due to uncertainties in the forecast, the timing of this confirmation may vary. Information regarding potential or confirmed Catastrophic fire danger days will be communicated to you by **Compass and post on the school's private Facebook group**.

It is also important to be aware that:

- No one will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Catastrophic day.
- All bus routes that travel through the Catastrophic area will be cancelled.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast for fire weather district in which the camp is located, or if the travel involves passing through areas that have Catastrophic fire danger.

As part of preparing our school for the fire season, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan which includes an identified 'Shelter in Place' location if needed. We have also continued to maintain the school grounds to reduce the fuel load.

What can families and the school community do to help us prepare?

- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers.

- Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, checking our [website](#), by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff about our emergency management plan.
- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements if our school is closed due to Catastrophic fire danger. Further information can be found on the [CFA's website](#).
- Action your family's bushfire survival plan if your own triggers are met. Our school community may be spread out across many areas and some families may be at higher risk than others. Your family's safety is critical, so please let us know if you are actioning your bushfire survival plan and if your children will be absent on these days.
- If your child is old enough, talk to [them about bushfires](#) and your family's bushfire survival plan.

Families are encouraged to action their [Bushfire Survival Plan](#) on Catastrophic fire danger rating days in their district. The safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Catastrophic day. **On such days, children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.**

You can find more information on emergencies, warnings and preparedness actions here:

- [VicEmergency](#) app – that can be downloaded on your android and iOS mobile devices
- [VicEmergency](#) Hotline (1800 226 226)
- Website <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>
- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/vicemergency>)
- ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the department's policy?

The Department of Education annually assesses the fire risk of all schools and early childhood services with the support of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). They are allocated a category of risk (categories 0 to 6). Schools and services that are Categories 0-3 are published on the [Bushfire At-Risk Register \(BARR\)](#). Schools at some risk of bushfire and grassfire are published on the [Category 4 List](#).

The department's [Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy](#) requires all schools and early childhood services on the BARR and the Category 4 List to close when a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast in their fire weather district. All school bus routes which travel in or through a district with Catastrophic fire danger must also be cancelled.

The policy also requires that schools at the highest risk of bushfire (those in Categories 0, 1 and 2 of the Bushfire At-Risk Register) enact pre-emptive action plans based on the fire danger forecast for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Who issues fire danger forecasts?

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides public fire danger rating forecasts each day of the fire danger period using fire weather district areas. In Victoria, there are 9 fire weather districts, which are based on Local Government Area boundaries.

The department uses these forecasts when supporting schools to enact their pre-emptive bushfire actions plans.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government's commitment to breaking the link between a student's financial circumstances and their outcomes.

CAMPS, SPORTS and EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

School camps provide children with inspiring experiences in the great outdoors. Excursions encourage a deeper understanding of how the world works while sports teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. All are a part of a healthy curriculum.

CSEF is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school excursions, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or support an out of home care student you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families. The allowance is paid directly to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child

The annual CSEF amount per student is \$400 for all school students.

HOW TO APPLY

New applicants should contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from the website below.

If you applied for CSEF at your child's school last year, you do not need to complete an application form this year unless there has been a change in your family circumstances.

You only need to complete an application form if any of the following changes have occurred:

- **new student enrolments:** your child has started or changed schools this year.
- **changed family circumstances:** such as a change of custody, change of name, concession card number, or new siblings commencing this year.

Check with the school office if you are unsure.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about CSEF visit:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund>



Community



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Heathcote Primary School

Private group · 120 members

Heathcote Primary School has a Private Group page on Facebook. If you would like to become a member of the group, search for Heathcote Primary School and request to join. Please answer the questions.

Each request is approved individually. For the safety of our students, there are three questions to ensure that only people directly connected to HPS become members. Requests are usually approved within 72 hours. However, if we are unsure of the connection to the school, there may be a delay whilst we do some research. We may also decline the original request and seek further information. Please don't be offended—our intention is to make sure we can identify each person is directly connected to the school.





the **Mariah's**
Musicians

facebook.com/mariahsmusicians



MUSIC LESSONS AVAILABLE WITH MARIAH MCCARTHY

Guitar, piano, ukulele and voice lessons
Private & shared available

Enquire now -
mariahsmccarthy@gmail.com



FUN IS IN FULL SWING!

Join Woolworths Cricket Blast
A safe way to have fun and stay active for kids of all abilities.

HEATHCOTE CRICKET CLUB BLAST SESSIONS
Session 1 – 9/11/2025 Session 2 – 16/9/2025
Session 3 – 23/11/2025 Session 4 – 30/11/2025
Session 5 – 7/12/2025 Session 6 – 8/2/2026
Session 7 – 15/2/2026 Session 8 15/2/2026

SIGN UP TODAY!

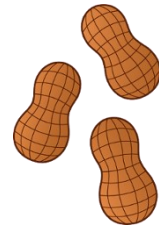
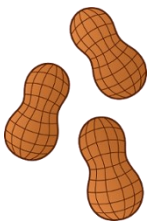
PROUDLY PRESENTED BY Woolworths CRICKET AUSTRALIA

School Bank Details

Account Name: Heathcote Primary School Official Account

BSB: 083 001

ACCOUNT: 71 938 5618



School and Department policies
are available on the
[school website.](#)

School Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF)

If you hold a current Healthcare card or a Centrelink pensioner card you may be eligible to apply for CSEF. CSEF provides financial assistance for families to use for camps, excursions and school sports.

If you think you may be eligible, please contact the school office.



**Remember,
only WATER
in your**



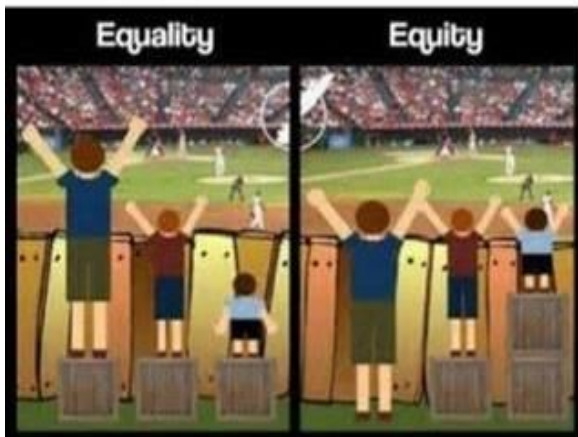
drink bottle at school.

SCHOLASTIC
Book Club LOOP
for Parents

LOOP is the Scholastic Book Club
Linked Online Ordering & Payment platform for parents.
To order and pay for Scholastic Book Club by credit card visit:
www.scholastic.com.au/LOOP

GET IT ON Google play

Download on the App Store



PROTECT

Everyone has the right to be safe and be protected from abuse. No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community. Tell a teacher or any adult at your school if you feel unsafe.



Please check your child's hair for any unwelcome visitors. If hair is shoulder length, please be sure to tie it up as a preventative strategy.



FOUR STEPS TO LICE-FREE LIFE:

- 1: INSPECT**
If you suspect head lice, check
- 2: TREAT**
Use lice treatment product as directed.
- 3: REMOVE**
lice into by combing the hair with the comb provided.
- 4: CLEAN**
rooms and personal items.