



Heathcote Primary School

News

Telephone: (03) 5433 3090

heathcote.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Issue No. 38

18th December 2025

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 11 | Monday 15th December to Thursday 18th December | Junior Swimming (Foundation, Grade 1 & 2 students) |
| | Thursday 18th December | Grade 3-6 Wacky Splash |
| | Friday 19th December | End of Term 4. Early Dismissal @ 1:30pm |
| 2026 | Tuesday 27th January | Office reopens 11am—1pm, 3pm—4pm (no students onsite) |
| Week 1 | Wednesday 28th January | Partnership Meetings (details shared via Compass) |
| | Thursday 29th January | All students onsite (all day) |
| 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) |
| 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) |



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Principal's Report

With the school year upon us, it is a time to reflect upon, and celebrate all the wonderful things achieved in 2025. We've had a very full year filled with new learning, incursions and excursions. We've celebrated stronger results in literacy and numeracy along with increased positive student attitudes to school survey responses. We've enjoyed incursions and excursions, shared special events with families, enjoyed spending time with friends and finished the year with an action packed couple of weeks—photos and reports are in the newsletter.

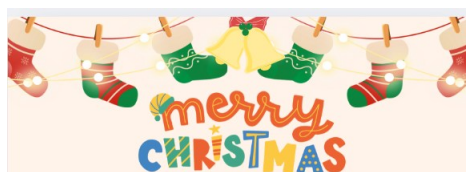


Last week we held not one, but two graduations (reports pages 5 and 6). At Grade 6 Graduation, students each spoke about their primary school memories and hopes for the future. There was laughter, a few tears and many very proud families and staff. Thank you to our Grade 5/6 staff team for arranging a memorable graduation and also to Brooke for working more magic in the kitchen preparing afternoon tea. We wish our Grade 6s the very best as they head off into Year 7 and look forward to hearing about the amazing things they achieve in the coming years..



We will also be farewelling some of our families who are relocating out of the area and staff who are moving onto new adventures. We congratulate Kristy Balic who has accepted a position at a primary school closer to home. As it is a 12 month position, we look forward to welcoming Kristy back to HPS in 2027! We will also be saying goodbye to Jess Rumble, our leading teacher for wellbeing, inclusion and support. Jess is moving closer to family and the commute to HPS is too long. With a change in the Department's funding for small group tutoring, we also say goodbye to Jodie Leechman who has led our small group learning program (SmGL). We will still see Jodie at HPS as a casual replacement teacher. Christy Ferguson joined us as a casual replacement teacher in 3/4HS for Fridays in Term 4 and will be moving to a full time role at another school in 2026. There will also be changes in our Education Support (ES) team. Paige has accepted a Permission to Teach position at the school she completed her last teaching placement at earlier this year. We will also be farewelling Dani, Tara, Taygen and Tyler. On behalf of Heathcote PS students, staff and families, I thank Christy, Kristy, Jess, Jodie, Paige, Dani, Tara, Taygen and Tyler for their dedication, compassion and the support they have provided our students. They leave big shoes to fill and we will miss them greatly. At the same time, we are also happy for them as they embark on the next new and exciting chapter of their education careers.

As this is the last newsletter for 2025, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our staff for the commitment, care and expertise they bring to school each day and our families for partnering with us to make sure students have the best school experience possible. Thank you to School Council for your support, time and working together with every decision made focusing on what is best for students. And, to our students, thank you for your cheery greetings, the many waves when we see each other in the yard, endless energy, kindness and hard work. There isn't a day that goes by where you don't make me smile. I hope everyone has the happiest of holiday breaks and I look forward to seeing you in 2026. Merry Christmas Heathcote PS!



Zooper Dooper Fundraiser Update from the F-2 Team

Wow! We don't even know where to begin with our 'thank you'..

The Junior Unit thought selling Zooper Doopers would be a fun and interesting way to support our Money unit in maths and raise funds to continue growing our decodable reader collection. The fundraising idea was generously kickstarted by the Wheeler Family, who arranged for Coles McIvor Road to donate a supply of Zooper Doopers. We thought it would be enough to last the three weeks of fundraising. Little did we know!

Each of the junior classes led the sales for one of the three weeks.

Week 7 was led by the Foundation students, who very quickly learned the value of "goldies and silver" (coins) as sales skyrocketed. Monday started with selling 31 Zooper Doopers and, by Thursday, it had jumped to selling 111 in just 15 minutes—completely selling out of stock within days! The total for the first week was \$403.

The Zooper Dooper reins were proudly handed over to 1/2SJ who also worked incredibly hard in Week 8. Their total was \$497. Week 9 saw 1/2M finish off the fundraising efforts with a total of \$496. The grand total was \$1396 Plus, a very kind \$50 donation from a family to buy the last of our supplies to hand out to the students that didn't receive a Zooper Dooper.

The overall total raised was a whopping \$1446.

The Junior Unit cannot thank our HPS staff enough for going above and beyond purchasing more Zooper Doopers, using spare car coins, and jumping in to help when our line was stretching across the turf area with nearly the entire school lining up to buy a Zooper Dooper. A huge thank you also goes to our wonderful student helpers for cutting, organising, taking orders, and helping wherever needed.

We simply couldn't keep up with the freezing, supplying, and selling demand! It has truly been a whole-school effort, and thanks to the incredible generosity of our HPS families—especially at such a busy time of year—we have raised more money than we thought possible.

The HPS community effort raised enough money to purchase an additional 150 new books and 2 decodable reading games!

Your support has absolutely blown us away, and we are incredibly grateful. A massive thanks from the Junior Unit staff and students.



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Funfields



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On 3rd December, the Grade 6s went to Funfields to celebrate the end of Year 6. We went on crazy rides and there was delicious food. There was a giant splash park, a relaxing river called The Lazy River and a wave pool. There were dry rides too, like Voodoo, a giant swing that does a 360 degree turn. The end where you sit, spins. It's crazy! It was sooo fun. I would recommend it to any family. It's for everybody!

Alex, Grade 6



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Grade 6 Graduation



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This year's graduation was special. Brooke and some Year 6s helped cook some food that was absolutely, amazing and delicious. We made some decorations and some Year 5s helped.

We had a red carpet as we entered and exited the ceremony. All the girls were wearing wonderful, beautiful, unique dress and the boys wore fancy button up tops.

We caught some of the teachers tearing up when we gave our graduation speeches because they care about us and are very proud of us. By Indie and Masie



Congratulations to the Class of '25!

Foundation Graduation



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Foundation students heard that their Grade 6 buddies were graduating and also wanted to do something special to celebrate completing their first year of primary school. So, they had their very own graduation!

Students spoke about their goals for the future, sharing what they'd like to do 'when they grow up', including becoming a nurse, a monster truck driver, a diamond miner, a VicRoads worker and a cattle truck driver.

An excerpt from Miss H's graduation speech:

I am so incredibly proud of each and everyone of you all today, and everyday.

To all of the families and loved ones of these wonderful little individuals, I know what a privilege it is to share these little people with you everyday and I don't take that privilege lightly. Some days I get called Mum, sometimes Dad, on the odd occasion, Nanny or Poppy. Being likened to any of these people who are incredibly special, always warms my heart and fills me with a sense of pride. So, Foundation, although Miss H won't be Mum or Dad or even Nanny next year, I cannot wait to see what your future holds for each and everyone of you because you will always be my super-stars!

Congratulations to the Foundation class of 2025. Hip, hip, hooray!



Congratulations to the Class of '25!

F—2 Swimming



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Our favourite things...

- Going in the big pool! (Zoe)
- That I don't have to jobs at school and sitting next to my bus buddy! (Johnathan)
- Blowing bubbles, having a tea party under water and playing with the sinking toys! (Charlotte)
- Diving in to the pool! (Jaimee)
- Staying under water! (Lucas)
- Playing with the sinking toys! (Aldane)
- My teacher and sitting with my bus buddy (Leo)



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Wacky Splash



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This morning, the 3/4s and 5/6s went onto the oval for Wacky Splash Play. There were sprinklers, water squirters and an obstacle course. At random times, some students got a bucket of water and poured it over people. It happened to me a couple of times and it was great. Miss Matthews was the main target when the 5/6s had a turn. She was soaked! She had to put her socks in the sun to dry!
By Alex, 5/6SB



My favourite parts were dumping water on Miss Matthews and getting water dumped on myself. There was a lot of water and at the start we were using the water to squirt each other and then at the end we poured the water over each other. We forgot how hot it was because we were freezing after playing in the water. It was really fun and we should do it again! Miss Matthews ended up having to get new clothes and her shoes are still sitting outside drying.
By Hailee, 5/6MG



I really liked squirting people and I liked it when I had water poured over me. The sprinklers were a little strong but still fun. I got drenched. My shoes are soaking wet and in the sun. We should do it again because it was fun! We lost one of the balls in the obstacle course because it blew away. It would be fun if we did it every year as an end of year celebration and make it a tradition.
By Lilah, 3/4HS

My favourite thing was the squirters because you got to squirt people. I also liked the sprinkler because you could put your face in it and I got very wet. I felt cold and that was a good thing because it was so hot.
By William D, 3/4HS



Wacky Splash continued



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Community—Cricket



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On Wednesday 10th December, we played a game of cricket against Holy Rosary PS. We (Cailen, Freddie and Indie) have been organising it since the start of the term. It was a great competitive game that everyone enjoyed.

By Cailen, 5/6SB

A highlight of the game was the terrific sportsmanship demonstrated by both teams.

Mrs Lawson



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LODDON CHILD HEALTH AND WELLBEING LOCALS SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM FOR JANUARY 2026

The Local is offering school holiday sessions as part of our Parent Program. The sessions are interactive and fun on topics related to mental health. Sessions are one hour long, and open to age groups noted below. During the session parents will work with their child on activities which will help you have conversations about your child's wellbeing and offer some new ideas to help you both.

Each group is made up of 4-5 children; each child needs to be accompanied by their parent/carer during the session.

BENDIGO SESSIONS

Monday 12th Jan 11am-12 Handling Big Feelings 7-11-year-olds

What are big feelings? How can I help with them?

Monday 12th Jan 2pm-3pm Dealing with worry 7-11-year-olds

What is worry, and how can I get on top of it? Including transitions.

Wednesday 14th Jan 11-12am All about Anger 7-11-year-olds

Anger is something we all feel but learning ways to not get taken by it is very helpful.

Wednesday 14th Jan 1-3pm Dealing with worry 4-6-year-olds

Worry is common and it can run your life, learn about how to get on top of it. Including transitions.

Monday 19th Jan 11-12am Building Social Skills 7-11-year-olds

What are the skills that help you make and keep friends? How do you deal with people who are not kind?

Monday 19th Jan 2-3pm Magnificent me 7-11-year-olds

Learning to love and appreciate yourself builds self-esteem and the ability to be connected in life.

To book please call 1800 433 977 or email icfhwlocals@bchs.com.au. We need your name, phone number and email address please, your child's name and date of birth.



Mental Health Supports for Students Over School Holidays

As we head into the summer school holidays, we want to make sure that students and families know where they can find mental health support while school is closed. Even when we're not at school, help is always available if you need it.

24/7 Crisis Support Services:

- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800 - Free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5-25
- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 - 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services
- **Beyond Blue:** 1300 22 4636 - 24/7 support for anxiety, depression and suicide prevention
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467 - 24/7 telephone and online counselling
- **13YARN:** 13 92 76 - 24/7 crisis support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **MensLine Australia:** 1300 78 99 78 - 24/7 telephone and online support for men
- **Life:** 1800 184 527 - Anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral (3pm-midnight daily)

Online and Chat Support:

- **eheadspace:** Online and telephone support for young people 12-25 years (9am-1am, 7 days)
- **ReachOut:** Online mental health resources and peer support forums for young people
- **Headspace:** Find your nearest headspace centre for in-person support
- **Youthbeyondblue:** Online mental health support specifically for young people

Family Support:

- **Parentline:** 13 22 89 - Telephone counselling and support for parents and carers (8am-midnight, 7 days)
- **Relationships Australia:** 1300 364 277 - Support for families and relationships

Social Media Age Restrictions - Starting 10 December 2025

From 10 December 2025, some social media platforms will prevent Australians under 16 from creating or keeping accounts. Platforms likely to be age-restricted include Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, X, and YouTube.

eSafety Commissioner Resources:

- Social media age restrictions hub with comprehensive guidance [[eSafety hub](#)]
- Free 30-minute webinars for educators and families - multiple sessions throughout December [[eSafety webinars](#)]
- Social media delay inserts for school newsletters [[Kids Helpline Schools resources](#)]

Key Resources for Different Audiences:

- **For Families:** Complete guide, FAQs, and conversation prompts [LINK: [eSafety parent guide](#)]
- **For Young People:** Get-ready guide for under 16s [LINK: [eSafety youth guide](#)]

Community



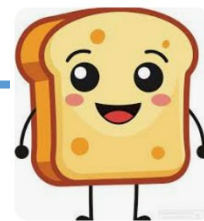
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Yard Supervision

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)



Breakfast Club

Tuesday & Friday

8:40am—8:55am

HPS Kitchen

Toast, cereal, milk, fruit available

Holiday Office Hours

Closed

Monday 22nd December 2025
to Monday 26th January 2026

Open with Reduced Hours

Tuesday 27th January 2026
11am—1pm, 3pm—4pm

Open—Normal Hours

Wednesday 28th January 2026
8:30am—4pm

The school email account will be monitored intermittently during the holiday period



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.

Community



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Thank you for supporting the Christmas Auction!



Total raised: \$2051



Thank you to the businesses below for their kind support. If you have an opportunity to do so, please support the businesses that support us.



HEATHCOTE



HEATHCOTE
ESTATE



**Ironstone Park
Nursery**

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.

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Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) Goal 2: To improve student engagement and wellbeing outcomes

Action: Strengthen the school wide approach to communication with parents/carers/kin, with a focus on communicating how individual learning and wellbeing needs are being identified and supported.



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.



Heathcote Primary

Admin



Top contributor

· 5 December at 22:56 · 🗨️



We launched the Christmas season today with our Christmas Assembly. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us, including Santa and his CFA friends!



Community



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LEARN TO SWIM

ENROL FOR SUMMER

\$43
FOR 5 LESSONS!
*An additional entry cost may apply at some Pools.

VICSWIM Summer Kidz is making a splash near you this summer! We're coming to your **local pool, beach, or waterway** to help kids learn to swim & stay safe around water.

Visit www.vicswim.com.au for dates, locations and times



2026 Program Dates:

Week 1 – Monday Jan 5 – Friday Jan 9

Week 2 – Monday Jan 12 – Friday Jan 16

Week 3 – Monday Jan 19 – Friday Jan 23

Nearby-ish participating venues:

- Bendigo East Swimming Pool (Weeks 1, 2 & 3)
- Golden Square Pool (Weeks 1, 2 & 3)
- Kilmore Leisure Centre (Week 2)

Woolworths CRICKET BLAST

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!
Play Cricket

PROUDLY PRESENTED BY Woolworths CRICKET AUSTRALIA

POOL

Heathcote Residents

Obtain from Heathcote visitors info centre or pool

Bring ID

FREE POOL PASSES **FREE entry to**

- Greater Bendigo pools
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre in K/Flat
- Heathcote pool when open!

FREE bus passes between Heathcote & Bendigo

SHOW your summer pass

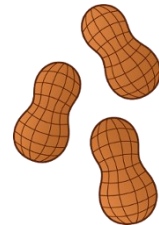
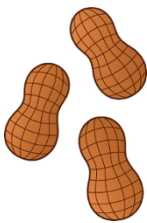
FREE ENTRY ALL 25/26 SUMMER SEASON

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.

DRINK BOTTLE



**Remember,
only WATER
in your drink
bottle at school.**

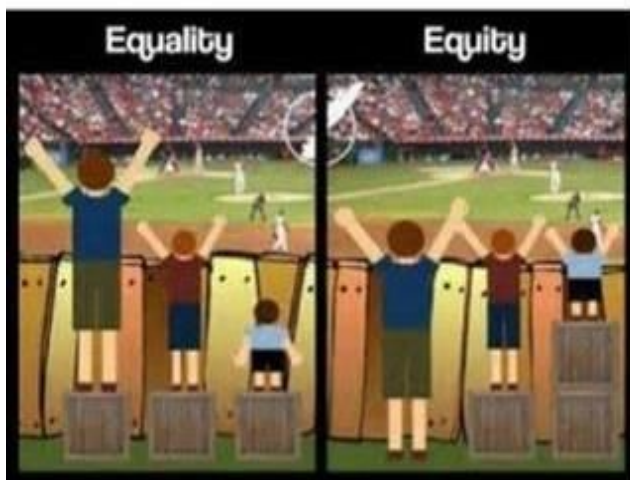


SCHOLASTIC
Book Club LOOP
for Parents

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:

