



Apollo Bay P-12 College

P12 Information Handbook



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Early Years education at Apollo Bay P-12 College. This handbook is designed to provide a brief insight into the workings of years Prep, One and Two (P12).

All of us; parents, teachers and children, working as a team, will result in the best outcome for your child, and a lifelong set of skills that will prepare them well for their future.

Multi-aging

We have four P12 Home Groups working in two open spaces. Classes are divided into combinations of Prep, Year 1 and Year 2. This approach is based on an educational philosophy that is child centred and developmentally based. It allows students to progress at their own speed. There are also many social and emotional benefits. Class sizes are smaller than required in P12 to ensure maximum learning opportunities for students.

Red Room

- Katie Knothe (Monday - Friday): katherine.knothe@education.vic.gov.au
- Cara Hudson (Monday - Friday): cara.hudson@education.vic.gov.au

Orange Room

- Cam Smith (Monday - Friday): cameron.smith@education.vic.gov.au
- P12 Team Leader - Jade Kent (Monday-Thursday): jade.kent@education.vic.gov.au
& Michelle Carney (Friday): michelle.carney@education.vic.gov.au

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Attendance

Children are expected to come to school on time, but not before formal yard supervision that starts at 8:40am.

Children in P12 do not line up; they go inside when the music is playing and get ready for their first lesson.

Classroom doors open at 8.35am for children to put their bags inside.

HOMEGROUP	8.55am
Lesson 1	9.00am
Lesson 2	9.55am
Break #1 30 mins	10:50am
Lesson 3	11.20am
Lesson 4	12.15pm
Break #2 50 mins	1.10pm
Lesson 5	2.00pm
PM Homegroup	2:55pm
END of Day Dismiss	3.00pm

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD ARRIVES AT SCHOOL BEFORE THE BELL RINGS TO START THE DAY AT 8:55am.

Lateness causes your child to miss important information about the day and also the initial focus of our lesson. It also causes a disruption to the teacher and other members of the classroom.

- If your child is absent or late on a given day, please make note of it on Compass or contact the Office. This is also the case for extended holidays.
- Frequent absences from school can cause significant disruption to your child's learning and social interactions. Please try to plan appointments, haircuts, shopping trips and birthday outings on weekends and school holidays when possible.

Uniform

- The Uniform Policy is clearly stated in the student diary and is also available from the office.
- **Terms 1 and 4 are our 'HAT terms'**. Children **MUST** wear a school logo hat when outdoors. We also encourage students to place hats in tubs when not wearing them and leave overnight at school to avoid forgetting them.
- Our uniform policy requires children to wear **BLACK** closed toe shoes with **NO LOGOS** and good support for playground activity. **Socks should be navy blue.**
- Please ensure that students can tie laces if you intend on sending them to school with lace- up shoes. Your child's teacher is very busy and it is time consuming to repeatedly tie several pairs of shoe laces.
- All items of clothing **MUST** be clearly labelled. Finding an owner is much easier if items are labelled. It can be difficult to label navy blue items, so we suggest sewing labels on or using light coloured permanent markers, puff paint or silver sharpies.
- There are '**Lost Property**' tubs in your child's classroom and a '**Lost Property**' box on the BER deck (opposite the General Office entrance). Please check both places for lost items. Other good places to check for missing items are: the Library, Music Room and Leisure Centre.

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School bag, Food & Drinks

- We encourage children to own a school bag large enough to carry their lunch box, water bottle, home book pouch, library bag and bathers or other necessary sports gear. The school office sells bags that will do this job and see them through to the middle years.
- We encourage children to carry their own water bottle to school for use during class and at lunchtime. We strongly discourage a drink containing sugar or food colouring as this affects concentration time and if spilt causes a sticky mess. Pop-top water bottle lids are also strongly encouraged to avoid spills.
- Each day, children require a substantial morning snack (**Break 1, 10.50-11.20am**) and packed lunch (**Break 2, 1.10pm-2.00pm**). Please pack what your child will eat. Staff encourage children to eat most of the food in their lunch boxes. We strongly encourage lunches to be nutritious (fresh is best); low in added sugar, salt and food colouring. Also, including a small piece of fruit and/or cut up veggies each day is advised as we often have mid-morning fruit brain breaks. We encourage minimal wrappings or 'nude food' to reduce landfill.
- Each Wednesday, we have a **canteen** service available to the children.
- Some of our students have allergies and severe reactions to certain foods. Therefore, we do not allow the sharing of food between students and encourage them to wash hands before and after eating.
- Canteen has changed in 2025. Please refer to Compass notifications for more information.

Special Requirements / Materials

- Every P12 student is given a new **diary** at the beginning of the year. Preps and new students will also receive a **pouch** from the school. Pouches are to be reused from year to year.
- A class timetable will be sent home once the whole-school timetable is finalised. A copy will also be placed inside your child's diary.
- **Library** days may vary from term to term and class to class. Children must have a library bag in order to borrow. We strongly encourage all students to borrow books from our incredible library on a weekly basis.

Prep Specific

- We advise parents to make drop off to school run smoothly by creating a routine that you have discussed and agreed upon together.
- The classroom teacher will be in the classroom most mornings during Term 1.
- Preps have one day off per week (**Wednesdays**) until the **12th of March**. For the remainder of Term 1, it is optional for Preps to attend on a Wednesday. Often Preps get quite tired when they first start to attend school, so by having Wednesdays off, the week is broken with a rest day in between. Prep Transition/Assessment Interviews will take place of these days early in the year.
-  **Sound Cards** and a **decodable text** will be sent home with Prep students once skills have been explicitly taught (around week 4 to 5). Please take care of these cards and books as we like to reuse them the following year and they are expensive to replace. You will receive specific information about any resources like this via Compass once they are sent home.

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2.5 Communication

- If your child is a **bus traveller**, please notify the school if they will not be using the service in the afternoon or following morning. This can be done by note, phone call or email. If you wish to collect your child from school during school hours, please come via the office. Office staff will collect your child from class. This procedure causes minimal disruption to the class if followed.
- If you wish to deliver your child's lunch, drop off a hat or home books or simply pass on a message, please go via the office and not directly to your child.
- Every third Friday, a **news sheet** is distributed to the youngest or only child attending school. Please check your child's bag! The paper news sheet that you receive is only the first 2-4 pages of the news sheet. The rest of the news sheet will be delivered online via Compass. Be sure to check the online version for lots of extra information, photos and student work.
- If you wish to speak to your child's teacher, please make an appointment to do so through the office. Formal parent-teacher interviews will be held early in Term 2 and possibly later in the year as well.
- Appointments are made through the office or online for a time suitable to you.

2.6 Transition

- Our new Preps have class buddies assigned. New Preps are monitored in the playground and in the classroom. Regular discussions between P12 teachers take place regarding their welfare. Prep students also have a Year 6 Buddy.



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General

- Please encourage independence and organisation at home. Your child should be able to open lunch boxes, do up buttons and zips, tie their own shoelaces, put their belongings away and pack and carry their own school bag to school.
- Children learn best when they are well rested, well fed, comfortable and happy. We encourage children to go to bed at a reasonable hour so that yawning and sluggish performances do not occur throughout the day.
- Children in P12 participate in a whole **school athletics** carnival in Term 1 with activities suitable to them and their interests. We love to see parents and grandparents there to cheer on their children/grandchildren.
- Throughout the year, your child may be invited on a school excursion. The excursion will be chosen to suit the theme being studied. A note with details will go home with your child when the occasion arises. The note will include all the details of the day, departure and arrival times, transport, costs and food and clothing requirements. You will also receive a reminder on COMPASS.
- **Year 2 students participate in their first school camp/sleepover this year.** This is a wonderful opportunity to build resilience, independence, nurture friendships and sleeping at school is very exciting too! Staff will notify you of sleepover dates, once they have been finalised. This usually takes place in Term 4.
- **Head lice** are a common predicament at school. Contact the office immediately if you suspect your child has head lice. You will be given simple directions to follow. If hair is long enough to be tied back, please do so. If hair is still a little short for tying back, hair clips and headbands are recommended. This will help lessen the spreading of head lice and will allow your child to work and focus without hair in their eyes.

Helping your child to Read, Write, Speak and Listen

Here are some fun activities that may help to develop early literacy skills: Dressing up and imaginative play, sharing rhymes, singing songs (and encouraging your child to join in), pointing out words and letters all around you e.g. number plates, cereal boxes and street signs. We encourage you to provide a range of drawing and writing materials - for example, textas, pens, pencils, card, paper. Engage your child in storytelling about favourite books and toys. Have some fun by using different voices when reading or playing with puppets. Other suggestions are re-reading favourite stories, looking for rhyme and repetition and listening to recorded/audio stories.

ORGANISATION

Literacy - Teaching Reading F-2

Reading is a foundational life skill and a source of pleasure and wonder. It provides access to information, generates imagination, builds knowledge, enables creativity and shapes opinions. This statement outlines the approach to teaching reading in the early years of school that is supported by the strongest evidence and is part of the approach we take when teaching your child to read.

The essential elements of reading are the 'Big 6' (Konza, 2014), each of which should form part of a structured literacy approach:

- Oral language – knowing and using spoken words to express knowledge, ideas and emotions
- Phonemic awareness – which is the knowledge of sounds (phonemes)
- Phonics – knowing the sound (phoneme) and letter (grapheme) relationships
- Fluency – reading accurately and at an appropriate rate with expression
- Vocabulary – understanding words in isolation and in context
- Comprehension – making meaning from text which includes developing knowledge of grammar.

These are the foundational skills that have a reciprocal relationship and are all necessary to enable students to independently read and respond to increasingly complex fiction and non-fiction texts. In the early years of school, the development of decoding skills is best developed through a program that includes a minimum of 25 minutes of daily explicit teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness using a systematic synthetic phonics approach. This means teachers use a clear scope and sequence of increasingly complex grapheme-phoneme correspondences and morphology. Students first learn to pronounce single letters and sounds and then blend them to form words. It also involves teaching students to segment sounds and spell words to make the link between reading and writing. Decodable texts are used to practice the letter-sound combinations that students have been taught. This builds students' skills so they develop automaticity and so they can read words quickly and accurately. Rich authentic texts (mentor texts) are also carefully chosen by our teachers and read to children on a daily basis to help teach the essential components of reading.

ORGANISATION

Reading



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Example of what might be included in a Prep Pouch

Your child will use a 'reading pouch' to keep their reading resources organised. The reading pouch is one of the most used resources in P12. It consists of one large pouch that is used to store notes, student diary and home reading books. A smaller pouch is stored inside the larger pouch and usually contains coloured word cards, the weekly decodable and/or sound cards. Please ensure the two pouches stay together and check the pouch each day for any notes/ information or student work that is being sent home.

Reading pouches will be sent home at the end of each day, so that they can be used for reading, sound and spelling practise. **Please ensure that all books, diaries and other resources are packed up and put back in schoolbags to be returned to school each day.** Pouches are used by your child each day and a forgotten pouch can cause a huge inconvenience.



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Example of what might be included in a 1/2 Pouch

Prep students will initially change books on a weekly basis at the beginning of the year. As their skill and fluency progresses you will notice the inclusion of more books and even the type of book they are taking home.

Year 1 and Year 2 students will have a book changing day as set by their homegroup teacher. All students will have a weekly decodable book to read either exclusively or they may have extra books selected carefully by their teachers. Diaries will be checked on this day. We encourage you to ask your child to hand their diary to their teacher if you have a communication you would like checked, as staff do not always have time to check diaries on a daily basis. We don't want to miss any important information from you!

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Spelling - Explicit Teaching of Phonics - Sounds Write

- P12 students participate in 5 x 30 minute spelling lessons per week in flexible groups or mixed-age groups, depending on their needs and abilities.
- Sounds-Write is an expertly structured synthetic phonics program based on the science of reading. This multisensory, code-oriented, comprehensive approach to literacy, has been designed by teachers, for teachers.
- Students learn the concepts necessary for proficient reading and writing. They master most common spellings of the 44 sounds in English through reading and writing polysyllabic (more than one syllable) words, as well as following our two code programs; the Initial Code (Prep) the Extended Code (Year 1 and Year 2).

What can you do at home to help with Reading?

We encourage daily reading in P12. Reading every night/day for 20-30 minutes is a way of ensuring that your child makes progress with reading. Reading will be important in all subject areas and students that are confident readers usually carry this confidence with them into other subjects and situations. Daily reading also instils a love of reading, confidence, routines and extra rehearsal of what they have already learnt. They also relish the opportunity to show you what they know. The holidays and weekends are the perfect time to reinforce reading strategies and show that reading is not 'homework', but rather a pleasurable activity valued by all the family. Make listening/reading, a special time every day and don't forget to retell and talk about what you are reading.

What books best support beginner readers?

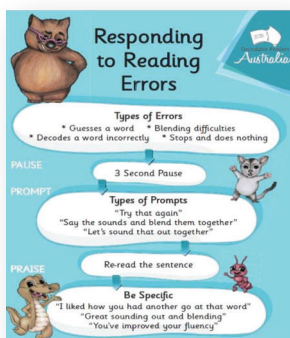
The decodable books that are sent home with your child should be read **BY** your child. These texts carefully align with what students have been explicitly taught in class. Practising these short decodable texts each day or many times will improve blending and segmenting skills.

Library books and other authentic rich texts should be read **TO** your child by **YOU**. These books are an excellent selection for bedtime reading and provide a fantastic opportunity for you to demonstrate what effective readers sound like and how they think (understand). They also stimulate rich conversations and introduce your child to new vocabulary.

Once your child is a fluent and confident reader, reading can be all kinds of texts...Comics, Magazines, Cards, Diaries, Newspapers, Atlases, Maps, Recipes, Instructions, Picture Books, Letters, Emails, Poetry, Signs, Library books.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO READ A DECODABLE TEXT

* BE PATIENT * It's tricky at first for a prep to say the sounds and read the word. When helping students we often encourage them to point under the tricky word and to 'say the sounds and read the word'.



If you notice errors whilst reading advance or a levelled text encourage your child to think about the story, slow down or try that again.



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Comprehension

Students struggle to comprehend information if they cannot fluently decode and encode text. Once fluency is achieved, comprehension becomes the next area of focus for us in P12. After reading together you can help by having rich discussions and asking plenty of questions. For example:

- Did you enjoy the book?
- Which character did you like best?
- Why did that character do or say that?
- Why did that happen at the end?
- Which illustration do you like best?
- Would you like us to read that one again tomorrow night?
- Why did the character...?
- How did you feel when...?
- What might happen next?

More tips

Beginning readers may want you to read first. Take turns to read parts or pages of the story.

Try leaving out the last word in an occasional sentence, so your child can anticipate what the word might be.

Talk about the book after reading. Make it FUN!

Don't worry about reading levels or comparisons to other students. Each child is different and they learn at different rates and the literacy journey is a marathon not a sprint. We are focused on how the reading sounds, can your child blend and segment and that it is easily understood. It is best to focus on these things, rather than the level that your child is reading. Don't compare your child's performance with that of other children, they all develop at their own pace.

Children may bring home 'favourite' books many times. Encourage re-reading of books in their pouch or ones they have had before. Show enthusiasm for these familiar texts, even though you may have heard them numerous times!

*** If your child sees you reading every day, this will help develop lifelong positive attitudes to reading ***

ORGANISATION

Helping your child to Read, Write, Speak and Listen

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Speaking and Listening - Oral language

When children begin school, much of their language is about familiar topics of things they can see and are happening now. This 'home' talk is often short with immediate responses and to a familiar audience i.e. mum, dad or siblings. As they progress through the Early Years, language becomes more often about things outside the immediate time and place. 'School' talk becomes increasingly lengthy, is more challenging for the listener and involves a less familiar audience.

A broad vocabulary and experience with language, through books, experiences and conversation will assist in developing a child's speaking and listening skills and ultimately reading and writing. For example; A child who has heard and used the words exciting or amazing, will have a better chance at reading them, than the child who has only experienced words such as good.

Mispronounced words (hostile = hospital & awound = around), incorrectly formed sentences (she go to the park), incorrect grammar (I done a drawing), may sound cute, but in fact are often responsible for creating some reading and writing difficulties, both now and in the future.

Children who may have a speech difficulty, can be referred to the Visiting Speech Therapist for extra tuition, however, due to our location this service is limited.

2 ORGANISATION

Writing

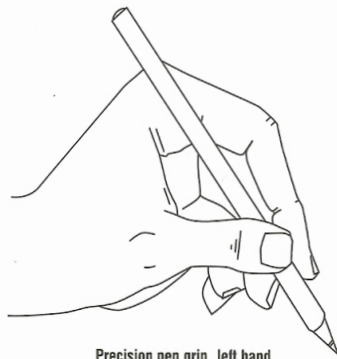
Handwriting

Handwriting is an important skill. The goal is for children to develop neat, legible handwriting that is achieved quickly and comfortably, and is easy to read. Children's writing should be produced using natural movement of the arm, hand and fingers. We practice handwriting in class on a daily basis and emphasis is placed on the correct formation of letters.

A wide variety of writing tools should be used, maintaining the correct grip.

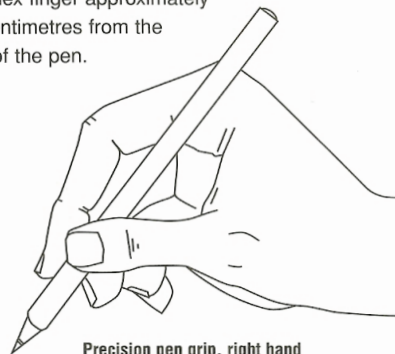
- Children should use standard, adult implements. Large barreled crayons, textas and chalk can make it very difficult to develop a precision pen grip. Letters should be spaced evenly with larger spaces occurring between words (a pinkie finger space between words is recommended).
- Writing implements should be held comfortably in the hand, with normal pressure being applied to paper in order to make an impression. If a child presses too hard, this should be discouraged immediately, as muscles and tendons can tighten and cause injury in the long term.
- A range of paper, card, lined and unlined paper is used in the classroom. Dotted thirds (18mm) guide the child to form letters in the correct size – first third for lower case letters, second third for capital letters and the top third is used for letters on the previous bold line that have a tail;

ie: p, y, f, j.



Precision pen grip, left hand

The hand should form a question mark shape with the index finger approximately two centimetres from the point of the pen.



Precision pen grip, right hand

When writing, the paper should be sloped according to the angle of the arm. Placing the paper correctly helps the writer to see clearly what is being written and enables more freedom of movement when writing.

Children should sit with their bottoms tucked back in the chair, both feet on or pointing towards the floor and back in a relaxed, yet straight position. The right or left hand should hold the paper lightly, below the actual line of writing. Holding up the head, using a hand or slouching/bad posture in the chair will cause early fatigue. Correct posture should be practised at home, at the dinner table or kitchen bench, as this will continue to develop the required posture.

When writing or reading at home, children should have access to a table or desk suitable to their size. A table that is too high causes strain; a table that is too low causes slumping. From the beginning, children should be encouraged to adopt a good posture at all times. At school we notice that many children like to tuck their feet under their bottoms – we strongly discourage this and ask that you support us in this at home as well.

ORGANISATION

Writing (Cont)

The chart below outlines correct starting points and letter formation. Please refer to this chart when helping your child with writing at home. Your classroom teacher may have also sent home one of these charts for you to practise with.

a Around, up, down, around.	b Down, up, around.	c Around.	d Around, up, down, around.	e Around, around.	f Around, down, around, lift, cross.	g Around, up, down, around.	h Down, up, around, down, around.	i Down, around, lift, dot.	j Down, around, lift, dot.	k Down, up, around, down, around.	l Down, around.	m Down, up, around, down, up, around, down, around.
A Down, lift, down, lift, cross.	B Down, lift, around, around.	C Around.	D Down, lift, around.	E Down, lift, cross, lift, cross, lift, cross.	F Down, lift, cross, lift, cross, lift, cross.	G Around, up, lift, cross.	H Down, lift, down, lift, cross.	I Down, lift, cross, lift, cross.	J Down, around, lift, cross.	K Down, lift, down, down.	L Down, cross.	M Down, lift, down, up, down.
n Down, up, around, down, around.	o Around.	p Down, up, around.	q Around, up, down, up.	r Down, up, around.	s Around, around.	t Down, around, lift, cross.	u Down, around, up, down, around.	v Down, up.	w Down, up, down, up.	x Down, lift, down.	y Down, around, up, down, around.	z Cross, down, cross.
N Down, lift, down, up.	O Around.	P Down, lift, around.	Q Around, lift, cross.	R Down, lift, around, down.	S Around, around.	T Down, lift, cross.	U Down, around, up.	V Down, up.	W Down, up, down, up.	X Down, lift, down.	Y Down, lift, down, down.	Z Cross, down, cross.

- Proofreading, self-editing, correcting and conferencing skills are taught and supported. Differentiated whole class activities in literacy time, teach and extend these skills also.
- In P12, we teach children correct language terminology for example: noun, proper noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, and adjective. We teach correct sentence structure and encourage children to speak and write in the correct tense.
- If your child is keen to write at home, try getting them to help write a shopping list, keep a white board in a family area where they can leave messages, plan and write a weekly menu together, write letters to friends and family members.
- A creative writing piece always has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning introduces the characters and setting, the middle works with all the information which builds the story up, including the problem. Finally, the end includes the solution to the problem. This simple formula will guide your child to writing a successful story at home.
- During writing focus, teachers teach a specific skill for the children to practise. We frequently write sentences and practice on whiteboards. Each child is taught to sit in 'Listening Position' – legs crossed, hands in laps, eyes on the speaker and whiteboard markers placed beside their boards.



ORGANISATION

Maths/Numeracy

- P12 students participate in 5 x 55 minute Maths lessons per week.
- Teachers follow a specific instructional model which includes daily fluency, a launch into what is being taught, time for the students to explore the day's skill or topic and then a summary at the end of the lesson.
- Students mainly work in age-based groups and students are supported at their point of need.
- We incorporate the Big Ideas of Numeracy that is evidence-based. In P12, these mainly involve having confidence in counting (Trusting the Count) and place value.
- Our curriculum is divided into areas of Mathematics. These cover topics such as Number, Algebra, Measurement, Space and Statistics.
- Practising number writing and counting are the first encounters with Number. Children do lots of counting, making, drawing and talking about Maths in the early years.
- Students are taught to touch each object as they count, known as 1:1 correspondence. We also place emphasis on subitising skills and developing number sense.
- The Preps celebrate their 100th day at school with a special Maths lesson where parents and carers are invited to share the celebrations.
- Students who are experiencing specific difficulties e.g. reversal of numbers, may be given extra work to complete at home with parental assistance.
- Other homework activities may be given, as required, to revise topics.

You can encourage a love of number and other mathematical concepts at home by creating situations where your child can:

- Listen and participate in nursery rhymes e.g. Five Little Ducks, Ten Green Bottles
- Play "shop" and labelling packets with prices
- Help to pay for items at the shops with cash
- Make and use play money
- Play Card games
- Count everyday objects e.g. how many apples in the bag? How many tyres on a truck?
- Cook and weigh ingredients
- Awareness and recognition of numbers in the environment e.g. road signs, street numbers
- Look for patterns in the environment i.e. stripes on footy jumpers, window designs
- Make patterns from blocks, cutlery, beads
- Play games involving dice e.g. snakes and ladders
- Build and measuring towers of blocks
- Count forwards and backwards



ORGANISATION

General Studies and Specialist Sessions

- During periods 4 and 5 students participate in 55 minute periods involving a range of specialist and General Studies lessons. This involves them moving to different parts of the school with a range of different teachers.
- Specialist Classes include: French, Art, Physical Education, Library, Music, ICT and STEM.
- All other General Studies sessions follow an Integrated Studies approach. Integrated Studies topics are the focus of afternoon sessions but also form the basis of planning for Literacy and some Maths sessions as well.
- Integrated Studies topics are taught as part of a three-year cycle, so that during their three years in P12, students will learn about a wide range of topics.
- Afternoon sessions also cover personal and social awareness and wellbeing.
- At the end of the day we have a short Home Group. In this time the class comes back together with their Home Group teacher, packs up, discusses important upcoming or events of the day, receives notes and play some games.



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