Merrijig Primary School
No. 1379

- Skiing
- Music
- Tennis
- French
- Swimming
- Unique
- Small Class Sizes

- Excellence in Education
- Secure and Caring Environment
- Extensive Extra-Curricular Programs
Dear Parents and Students,

On behalf of our rural school community, I would like to welcome you to Merrijig Primary School.

We hope you enjoy your time with us as you take your first steps on your educational journey.

We aim to set high academic standards, enhance social skills and offer a variety of extra curricula activities to give your child/children the very best opportunities for success.

We have established a caring, supportive environment that we believe your child/children will enjoy being a part of.

I look forward to your involvement with our school.

Yours in Education

Carole McCluskey

Principal
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Principal: Carole McCluskey
Teaching Staff: Carole McCluskey, Andrea Cousins, Bethaney Young
Specialists: Jocelyne Drysdale, Libby Ahern, Monica Sketcher
Teaching Support: Sheena Daykin, Lucinda Hutchins, Colette Clark and Beth Revell
President School: Donna Tremmel
Council:
HISTORY

Merrijig Primary School is a small rural school in the Delatite Valley, metres from the Delatite River. The school has beautiful views of the Victorian High Country framed by Mt Buller and Mt Timbertop. The school is 18 kilometres from Mansfield and close to Mt Buller and Mt Stirling.

There has been a Merrijig Primary School since 1874, so we have a strong history of heritage and tradition. Descendants of some of those first students are at our school now. The school now consists of the original timber building, a recent BER building with three classrooms and a project space.

The school has a long tradition of excellence in sport including skiing, athletics, and swimming.

Many students from Merrijig Primary School have achieved academic excellence going onto tertiary study, successful careers and successful private businesses. All students have a very strong community commitment.

1999 saw the 125th anniversary of continuous education provided at Merrijig Primary School, which provided a chance to reflect on the past, and look to the future. As a small rural school we continuously celebrate our heritage, whilst ensuring we keep up with the times!
SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

2015 TERM DATES

Term 1  28th January (school teachers start) to 27 March
Term 2  13 April to 26 June
Term 3  13 July to 18 September
Term 4  5 October to 18 December

School Council Holidays for 2015

Melbourne Cup Day, the first Tuesday in November is the traditional School Council holiday.

Curriculum Days for 2015

Each year the staff have professional learning days, sometimes involving staff from other schools and regions. These days will be arranged at a later date.

School Hours

School begins at 9am and concludes at 3.30pm. Lunch usually starts at 1.30pm.
**SCHOOL PROFILE**

Merrijig Primary School is a multi-aged school from P-6 with P/1/2 in the one classroom, and 3/4/5 and 6 in another. The school’s enrolment currently stands at 24.

**The High Country Cluster**

The Cluster consists of Merrijig, Jamieson, Mansfield Primary and Mansfield Secondary College. We work together in professional matters as well as educational activities involving children from our schools. As well as more interaction between children from these schools, there is strength in numbers of teachers when dealing with issues of common concern, for example Drug Education and bullying. We also work closely with non-government schools, Mansfield Steiner School and St. Mary’s Primary.

**More Information**

More information about the school, our policies, and the Strategic Plan can be obtained by contacting Sheena Daykin at the school, or Carole McCluskey, Principal.
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Skiing

Merrijig Primary School runs an extremely successful skiing program throughout the winter on Mt Buller. Usually the entire school participates in skiing lessons. The program varies to reflect the needs and abilities of all students. A beginner can expect to participate 1 day a week for 6 weeks in downhill ski lessons. For intermediate to advanced skiers the program can include additional race training for students competing in Interschool Skiing Championships.

Students are transported to Mt Buller on the public bus (parents are asked to cover this cost) and spend the entire day at Mt Buller with two 2 hour skiing lessons. Ski equipment is hired, and students must provide their own ski clothing. A subsidy exists to assist families experiencing financial difficulty to ensure all students have equal access to skiing opportunities. It is distributed at the discretion of the Principal.

Victorian Interschool Snowsports Championships

Merrijig Primary students are all given the opportunity to participate in the Victorian Interschool Snowsports Championships (Interschools).

Parent Assistance with Skiing

Parent assistance is essential for the skiing program to run. An all school meeting will be held at the end of Term 2 for parents and students. The skiing program will be discussed and parents given the opportunity to offer their assistance. A meeting will also be held prior to Interschools (for participating families) to discuss the program and give parents the chance to offer their assistance.

Swimming

Swimming programs are conducted in summer at the Mansfield Swimming Pool and Mansfield Aquatics. All students participate.

Athletics and Cross Country

Merrijig Primary School and Jamieson Primary School students compete as one house, Chapel Hill, in the Mansfield Primary School Sports Day. Our individual results are often excellent, with our small team taking the trophy home on several occasions. Training opportunities are provided at school, and at the oval prior to the event. Some of our children have been successful at the North East and Zone Championships.
**Intervention—Reading Recovery, Speech Program**

Each Government school is allocated funds for Student Services. At Merrijig we utilise these funds to provide a Speech Therapy service and additional literacy support. The school provides a Reading Recovery program for any child who is not reaching the minimum standard set by the DEECD at the end of Year Prep.

We also have a teacher trained in Numeracy Intervention to provide additional support.

**Library—MARC Van**

The MARC van visits the school fortnightly providing a mobile library and education in library skills. Ms Libby Ahern is the current MARC teacher.

**Music**

A music teacher provides weekly lessons for the school in a range of instruments.

**French**

A French teacher provides lessons twice weekly in the French language.

**ADDITIONAL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

**Camps and Excursions**

We want our children to know as much as possible about their local environment and also experience the world beyond Merrijig and Mansfield. We combine with other schools for some camps, group days and outings. In the past we have included:

- Camps with the following themes—bush skills, urban experience, seaside discoveries, discovering democracy and gold.
- Group days with other schools
- Excursions based on school themes.

**Tennis**

A local tennis coach works from the school during Terms 1, 2 and 4. Students are able to participate in lessons with the costs covered by the parent. This is not a compulsory activity, and students not participating will remain in the classroom. Our schools has two full sized tennis courts.
LEVYS AND ALLOWANCES

School Contribution Levy

Government provides money on a per capita basis for the provision of student supplies. However as this amount is insufficient to cover actual costs a levy is placed on each child which is payable during first term. School Council determines the amount and in 2014 this figure was $150 per child. This covers all requisites for school including books and pencils (not including excursions).

Conveyance Allowance

Parents who travel in excess of 4.8 km to board a school bus or travel to school by roads not on a bus route, are entitled to apply for a conveyance allowance. If you believe you are entitled to this the form is available from the Office.

SAFETY

Most accidents and injuries which occur in the school are of a minor nature. A teacher is on duty during all recesses. However accidents do sometimes happen and it is important that the office has up to date contact information for you, so that you can be contacted.

School Rules and Safety Considerations

Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school time without the permission of a parent or teacher.

⇒ Students should be aware of stranger danger and not accept lifts from strangers
⇒ Keep your child at home if they show any signs of approaching illness
⇒ Bikes safety must be known and understood. Bikes are not to be ridden in the school grounds. Helmets must be worn.
⇒ Enclosed is a handout of infectious diseases and their exclusion times.
⇒ Children must not bring to school any item that may cause injury including skateboards, guns, matches, toy weapons, shanghais, projectile weapons, knives and project knives.
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Newsletters
The school’s newsletter is distributed to the oldest child in each family in the school. It contains important dates, educational issues, stories on the children’s activities and lots of important news and information.

Please make it a habit to look for the newsletter in your child’s bag.
The newsletter will be emailed if requested, but does not always contain important attachments. At the start of the year each family is supplied with a plastic envelope which is meant to be returned to school so that any attachments can be sent home. Each family has a pigeon hole located in the foyer. Please check this frequently.

Parent Involvement and Participation
At Merrijig we encourage parents to become involved in all aspects of the school and their child’s education. There are many opportunities for parents to join in and express an active interest in their child’s schooling. The nature of our small rural school means parents will become involved in many ways, enhancing our community and the children’s school experience.

Parents are encouraged to share in the school program by:

⇒ Working with teachers in the classroom—speak directly to your child’s teacher about how you can help.
⇒ Assisting with the skiing, swimming and other programs.
⇒ Helping with excursions
⇒ Working with teachers and the School Council to improve school resources.
School Council

School Council consists of elected parents, Department of Education representatives and the Principal. School Council meets at least 8 times per year. The School Council oversees the finances of the school, helps in decisions about the running of the school, is informed about the Department’s policies and might be asked to vote on some issues. School Council liaises between parents and what is happening at school, and between school and government. School Council meeting are open to all parents.

Fundraising

The School Council appoints members of the Council to manage fundraising activities for the school. The funds raised support identified areas of need. Parents are often asked to assist in the planning and delivery of fundraising, and to participate in the planned activity. Council will give any ideas or proposals consideration.

Working Bees

We need parents to help with general working bees to tidy and maintain the school.
HOUSEKEEPING

Absences
Following an absence a child must bring an explanatory note signed by the parent. Teachers should be notified of anticipated absences as soon as possible. If the child is absent on a day with special activities planned such as an excursion or group day, please ring the school so that the excursion is not delayed.

Bank Day
Monday is Bank Day. Money sent to school in the bank book is processed by school office staff. Information on banking is distributed to Prep parents early in the year.

Book Club
Scholastic Australia operate a nation wide book club through schools. They supply good quality children’s books and computer software at a very reasonable price.

The Book Club operates on four levels:
“Wombat” for the youngest children
“Lucky” for unior grade children
“Arrow” for middle grades
“Star” for senior grades

Books are offered around six times per year and are advertised on a brochure which the children bring home. There is no joining fee or obligation to buy. To order books, please enclose the order form on the brochure and return the correct money in a sealed envelope (named) before the due date. OR you can order online. All purchases earn points for the school by way of vouchers. These are used to supplement the school’s literature resources.

Buses
The bus arrives at school from Mt Buller, Sawmill Settlement, Alpine Ridge, Merrijig and other identified safe stops at approximately 8.20am. There will be a teacher on duty from this time. The bus departs the school at 4.00pm. Please ensure that an adult is at the bus stop to meet the alighting child. If you wish your child to catch the bus please obtain a permission form from the school. This will then be passed onto the Bus Co-ordinating school—at this time the Mansfield Secondary College. Children who live in Mansfield arrive by private car each day.

Camps
These are usually held each year. The school is conscious of the costs to parents and tries to keep costs down. The camp is not a “holiday” for children. Preparation and follow-up work, as well as the camp itself, are important parts of the education curriculum. Payment for camps and excursions should be made to the school prior to the activity or late payments may be negotiated with the principal.

Electronic Games
Electronic games are not permitted on the school grounds. Games brought to school will be confiscated, and returned at the end of the day.

Head lice
Parents must check their child’s hair at least once a week for head lice. We give you a reminder in each newsletter—Wednesday night is lice check night!!!

If your child has head lice you must notify the school so other parents can be alerted. When the child’s hair has been treated they may return to school.
Illness

As the school does have facilities to nurse sick children it is important that if you are concerned your child may be unwell that you keep him/her at home. If your child becomes sick at school every effort will be made to contact you. Instructions for the administration of medicines are to be put in writing by the parents and delivered to the classroom teacher by an adult.

If your child has an Asthma Management Plan a copy must be given to the school office.

Lunch

Lunch is eaten in the classroom, under teacher supervision. In Term 3 we have pie days. We also offer lunch orders one day a week, and sushi on another day of the week.

Medical Service

The Child and Family Health Program offer all Victorian children a health assessment in their first year at school. The program is delivered by school nurses. It gives parents/guardians, teachers and nurses an opportunity to work together for the well being and educational progress of children. In order to carry out a health assessment, the nurses need to know information that only parents or guardians have about their child.

Prior to the school nurse’s visit, parents will receive a School Entrant Health Questionnaire which will assist them to provide this information. Parents are encouraged to consult the school nurse at the time of her visit to discuss any concerns. All information is confidential. The health assessment is not intended to replace your normal source of health care. School nurses are also available to see children from other grades whose health is causing concern to parents or teachers.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not permitted in classrooms. Where it is considered essential that a child bring a phone to school the phone must be left with a teacher, who will contact the child as and when required.

Punctuality

Parents are asked to make every effort to have their children at school at least 5 minutes prior to 9.00am as it is felt that training in punctuality is important. At the end of the school day children need to be collected as soon as possible. If you are running very late please contact the school.

Uniform, Shoes, Name Tags, Lost Property

- The school has a uniform and the children are strongly encouraged to wear a uniform each day.
- Merrijig Primary uniform consists of a pale blue polo shirt, navy blue school windcheater, navy polar fleece, royal ski vest, royal beanie or a royal wide brimmed hat. These are matched with navy blue shorts, skorts, skirts or pants. A blue school dress is also available. Most items are through the office, order forms are available prior to purchase.
- As a Sun Smart school, Merrijig students are required to wear a wide-brimmed hat in Terms 1, 2 and 4 for all outside activities. No hat, no outside play.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Sandals and thongs are not acceptable.
- PLEASE ENSURE THAT EACH AND EVERY ITEM OF CLOTHING INCLUDING SHOES AND ALL OTHER BELONGINGS INCLUDING BAGS, DRINK BOTTLES AND LUNCHBOXES ARE NAMED.

Valuables

Do not send along anything that is fragile or of great personal or actual value. No responsibility for theft or dame is taken other than the usual supervision of children and school rules about leaving other people’s possessions alone. Do not allow children to bring money to school.
War Toy Free Zone
Merrijig Primary School promotes itself as a War Toy Free Zone. This means bringing to school of any toys relating to war will not be accepted. War Toys must be left at home.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Students have a right to:

⇒ Work in a secure environment where, without intimidation, bullying (including cyber-bullying) or harassment they are able to fully develop their talents, interests and ambition
⇒ Participate fully in the school’s educational program

Students have a responsibility to:

⇒ Participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also be expected to display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.
⇒ Demonstrate respect for the rights of others, including the right to learn, will contribute to an engaging educational experience for themselves and other students.
⇒ As students progress through school they will be encouraged and supported to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation as members of the whole school community. This involves developing as individual learners who increasingly manage their own learning and growth by setting goals and managing resources to achieve these goals.
⇒ Students should, with support, be expected to participate fully in the school’s educational program and to attend regularly. Students should also display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and all other members of the school community.

Student Code of Conduct
*We believe a positive approach to behaviour is desirable to foster a school climate where personal responsibility and self discipline is developed.*
⇒ Respect for self, Respect for others, Respect for environment is our mantra.

Breaches and Code of Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviours, including irregular attendance, will be responded to through a staged response, including:

⇒ Understanding the student’s background and needs
⇒ Ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
⇒ Scaffolding the student’s learning program.

Broader support strategies will include:

⇒ Involving and supporting the parents/carers
⇒ Involving the student wellbeing coordinator, managed individual pathways or careers coordinators.
⇒ Tutoring/peer tutoring
⇒ Mentoring and/or counselling
⇒ Convening student support group meetings—the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
⇒ Developing individualised flexible learning, behaviour or attendance plans
Providing broader educational programs, for example experiential learning, work education, camps/outdoor education/creative arts

Involving community support agencies.

**Discipline procedures—suspension and expulsion**

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**STARTING PREP**

**Attendance in Prep**

Prep children come to school for four days per week for the first term.

**Difficulties to expect and solutions**

Young children tire easily during their first month at school. If your child is finding the full day too much discuss this with the teacher. It is better to pick them up early than allowing them to become over tired and stressed. Don’t be surprised if there are difficulties even after you have done all you can to prepare your child for school. If you child cries when you are leaving it usually will only be for a short time as he/she will quickly become interested in classroom activities. Your child may expect too much from school and be disappointed when he/she cannot read after two or three days and he/she may become very tired and want to stay home. These are common difficulties, which are quickly overcome after the first week or two.

Going to school is an important milestone in your child’s life and it is a major events for parents too. To make your child feel comfortable

- Make cheerful and positive comments about school
- Encourage and praise your child’s work
- Read or listen to your child read each night
- Teach your child to say his/her name, address and telephone number
- Your child should be able to dress, undress and tie his or her shoe laces

**Immunisation**
MERRIJIG PRIMARY SCHOOL
Parent Payment Policy
2015

AIMS

⇒ To conform to the guidelines from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
⇒ To provide a clear distinction between the three categories of payment and to be accountable for the use that payments and contributions are put to.
⇒ To collect the maximum revenue in payments and contributions.
⇒ To provide fairness in terms of program options and payment methods for parents.

Ratified by School Council: Annual
Review date: Annually

RATIONALE
Merrijig Primary School offers a rich and varied program to students. In order for this to continue and to expand, contributions from parents are necessary to meet funding shortfalls.

DEFINITIONS

Free Education - Victorian legislation provides that instruction in the standard curriculum program must be provided free to all students in Victorian government schools. Free instruction includes the provision of learning and teaching activities, instructional supports, materials and resources, and administration and facilities associated with the standard curriculum program. The costs associated with the administration and coordination of the standard curriculum program are considered to be part of free instruction and must not be passed onto parents.

Standard Curriculum Program - The standard curriculum program is made up of the eight key learning areas agreed to by all the States and Territories and the Commonwealth. These are the arts, English, health and physical education, languages other than English, mathematics, science, studies of society and environment and technology.

The standard curriculum program includes the core learning and teaching activities associated with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and senior secondary certificates such as VCE.

All students must have access to the standard curriculum program. This policy will ensure students are not treated differently, denied access to the ‘standard curriculum program’, or refused instruction on the basis of payments not being made for essential education items, optional extras or voluntary financial contributions.

All records of payments or contributions are confidential. The public identification of students or their parents or guardians who have or have not made a payment or contribution is unacceptable and must not occur in any circumstances.

What are parents and guardians required to pay for?
Parents can be asked to pay for essential education items including:
- items which students take possession of, including text books and student stationery
- materials for learning and teaching where your child consumes or takes possession of the finished articles
- school uniform (where applicable)
- travel costs incurred in the course of receiving the instruction from a teacher or other person
- essential services associated with, but not considered to be part of, 'instruction' in the standard curriculum program, such as costs associated with camps and excursions which all students are expected to attend (for example, transport and entrance costs).

What are the optional extras that parents may have to pay for?
Optional extras are those that are provided in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’, and which are offered to all students. These optional extras are provided on a user-pays basis and if you choose to access them for your child you will be required to pay for them.
These items include:

⇒ instructional supports, resources and administration beyond the provision of the standard curriculum program (for example, student computer printing for personal use, internet access for recreational or non-school use, and religious education materials)

⇒ extra-curricular programs or activities offered in addition to the standard curriculum program (for example, instrumental music tuition)

⇒ entry fees for school run performances, productions and events

⇒ materials and services offered in addition to the ‘standard curriculum program’ (for example, school magazines or school photographs)

⇒ school facilities and equipment not associated with provision of the ‘standard curriculum program’, and not otherwise provided for through the School Resources Package (for example, student accident insurance.

Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for the following:

⇒ contributions to a building or a library trust fund (ATO approved and tax deductible)

⇒ contributions for a specific purpose identified by the school (for example, equipment, materials or services in addition to those funded through the Student Resource Package. This may include additional computers or student-related services)

⇒ general voluntary financial contributions or donations to the school.

**Implementation:**

On correspondence to parents, it has to be clear if the charge is:

For essential educational items which parents are required to provide or pay the school to provide such as stationery, books, school uniforms, programs provided by outside specialist (eg. visiting artist, speakers, performers) compulsory excursions which are part of course work; also for subjects where the student consumes or takes possession of finished products

For optional extras which are offered by invitation on a user-pays system. This may include camps, optional excursions, extra materials costs for elective subjects (not covered above), Instrumental Music, Drama productions and extra-curricular activities.

Voluntary contributions for which parents are asked to contribute a set sum to the school for additional capital works and provision of equipment.

**The schedules set should take into account:**

To keep charges to parents relative to the costs of school programs

The fact that parents may be on welfare benefits

The fact that parents might have more than one child in the school

A. That parents should be able to discuss, individually and confidentially, alternative schedules for payment in hardship cases and that it is possible to negotiate these alternative schedules.

B. That students can be excluded from activities that are optional or extra- if there is no payment or subject elective fees are outstanding.

C. That no student can be excluded from the school program for non-payment of voluntary contributions.

D. That parents be notified early with requests for payment – no less than six weeks.

E. That parents may be required to pay a deposit towards their child’s enrolment before the commencement of the school year.

F. That the payment schedule should coincide with EMA payments but that signing over the EMA is not compulsory.
G. That assessment, reporting and promotion not be affected by payments and their confidentiality is maintained.

H. That communication with parents, including CASES 21 invoices should make the School’s policy clear.

I. That while more than one request to parents for essential and optional charges is allowable, only one request and one reminder are permitted for requests for voluntary contributions. Personal follow-ups for non-payment of essential and optional fees are to be made by the School.

**RECEIPTING**

As per DEECD requirements receipts must be issued to parents immediately upon making payment.

**SUPPORT OPTIONS**

Parents who have difficulty paying for essential items may have access to a range of support options including:

- Access to *State Schools Relief Committee* support via the principal to assist with clothing/uniforms.
Minimum period of exclusion from schools and children's services centres for infectious diseases cases and contacts

The following table indicates the minimum period of exclusion for schools and children's services centres required for infectious diseases cases and contacts as prescribed under Regulations 13 and 14 of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 – Schedule 6. This schedule 'medical certificate' means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Exclusion Period</th>
<th>Exclusion of contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute diabetes</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concussion</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creptone</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutaneous</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhoea</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastroenteritis</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumps</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubella</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarlet fever</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typhoid</td>
<td>Unexclude</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: After the infectious period, asymptomatic cases may return to school or child care while asymptomatic.*