

ELC HANDBOOK



FIRBANK GRAMMAR



FIRBANK
GRAMMAR



'VINCIT QUI SE VINCIT'
one conquers, who conquers oneself



OUR STORY

Firbank Grammar School has always been committed to providing an education for students that is contemporary and progressive. The school motto, 'Vincit qui se vincit' - commonly translated as 'One conquers, who conquers oneself' - is a reminder of the ability that all Firbank students have to strive to achieve their best and the responsibility that they have to make a commitment to society.

There is an indelible link between our current Early Childhood Education model and Firbank Grammar's history. Evidencing remarkable vision and enthusiasm by the founders, kindergarten and primary schooling have been offered at the Brighton campus since Firbank's foundation, initially on the main campus until 1966, when the Turner House Junior School opened on the other side of Middle Crescent, and subsequently at the Sandringham campus from 1932.

A kindergarten program, known now as our Early Learning program, had been offered from Firbank's inception in 1909, which was quite a new thing at the time, in Victoria. As a result, kindergarten classes have provided stimulating and inspiring early education at Firbank for more than a hundred years. Due to the school's commitment to early learning, the St Andrew's parish gave Firbank permission to also build a kindergarten facility on church land in 1918. This charming timber one-room building remarkably survived two moves from the time of its construction. By 1922, there were 50 kindergarten children - one class at the main school site and one in the branch kindergarten at St Andrew's. In 1935, the two kindergarten programs were consolidated into one on the main site.

Over the years, our kindergarten teachers have been noted for their warmth, kindness and for their ability to inspire. One such example was Miss Court, who, in the 1920s, inspired Diana (Ding) Dyason, who went on to become a notable historian of science. Diana remembers, "Miss Court fired my lifelong interest in science with her expositions of how things worked. Her description of the function of the root hairs of a carrot was a masterpiece." Another notable educator was the inimitable Miss Hancock, whose love of and concern for children, led to decades of service at Firbank's kindergarten. The overarching values of these early educators became embedded in the school's fabric: loyalty, service and a sense of belonging.

We know how early memories and interactions can shape a child's future. This inspiration by teachers of our students continues now and into tomorrow.



WHO WE ARE

Firbank Grammar School is an independent, Anglican, day and boarding school, educating students from our 3-year-old program through to Year 12. We have three campuses located in Melbourne's Bayside suburbs.

Why Firbank Grammar Early Learning Centre?

We understand the significance of choosing the first school for your child. By bringing your child to Firbank, you join a community with shared high expectations and one that promotes the realisation of the potential of all children. Our Sandringham campus Early Learning Centre (ELC) offers a co-educational experience and the Turner House Early Learning Centre is part of the Brighton girls campus. The two vibrant campuses share common approaches, with each learning space reflecting the care and dedication of the highly qualified educators, to make school a special place for your child.

Program Options and Long Day Model

Flexibility for families lies at the heart of our program offerings, with two-day, three-day and five-day options for 3-year-olds and a five-day program for 4-year-olds. We also provide a 'Stay and Play' playgroup opportunity for families with younger children (0+ months to 3-years) to connect with the school community, develop relationships and explore all areas of the Early Years curriculum. We appreciate the demands of modern life, and, since 2019, have supported our families by providing a convenient Long Day Education model commencing at 7.00 a.m. and finishing at 6.00 p.m.

Our Long Day Education model allows for smooth transitioning of children between it and the ELC program at 8.45 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.

This model supports opportunities for critical planning, programming and reflection, and promotes collaboration in ways that seek to strengthen and support each child's continuous learning journey.

Opportunities

Current educational research indicates that the foundation for success in life is laid with children in their early years. Every child comes to school with their own gifts and talents. We see the role of Firbank Grammar Early Learning Centres as providing a rich environment for students to discover their strengths and passions. It is also a place for children to learn how to learn and to build a toolbox of knowledge and skills that will set them up for a smooth transition into their more formal years of schooling.



WHAT **WE** BELIEVE

Our Values

As a School we value

- compassion
- courage
- curiosity
- integrity
- respect

Philosophy

Guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework and Development and influenced by the principles and practices of the Reggio Emilia approach, Firbank's Early Years program also draws on the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB-PYP) which is a framework designed for students aged 3 to 12 years.

The Framework draws on conclusive international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development. The overarching premise is that all children are competent, capable and sophisticated thinkers, and that they have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Our Early Years Program places a significant emphasis on play-based inquiry learning and intentional teaching. It recognises the importance of communication, social and emotional development.

Learning and Development Outcomes	
Identity	Children have a strong sense of identity
Community	Children are connected with and contribute to their world
Wellbeing	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
Learning	Children are confident and involved learners
Communication	Children are effective communicators

Driving our educational philosophy are Firbank's four strategic pillars:

- **achievement**
- **wellbeing**
- **strong community**
- **sustainable organisation**

Image of the Child

We value and respect the individuality of each child. By drawing on a rich repertoire of practices; teachers and co-educators foster children's learning and challenge their thinking. We support and promote the notion that children learn through:

- play and imagination
- exploration, creativity and creation
- inquiry and explicit teaching
- questioning and problem solving
- sharing knowledge through social interaction

The Hundred Languages

The child is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.

A hundred.

Always a hundred
ways of listening
of marvelling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds
to dream.

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

- Loris Malaguzzi

Founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach



YOUR CHILD

Wellbeing

From ELC right through to Year 12, wellbeing plays a pivotal role in Firbank's philosophy. It is not confined to a building, but rather permeates everything we do. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment in which students are central to our decisions, and are able to learn and grow. We acknowledge the critical importance of children, parents and educators, as partners in a learning community that promotes the wellbeing, education and development of all children.

We believe that:

- children need a strong sense of wellbeing for good physical health, feelings of happiness and a positive sense of self
- promoting positive mental health through physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing will make a significant difference to the lives of the children in our care

Relationships

Since 2017, Firbank has been collaborating with the Department of Education and partner schools to build and sustain a culture of respect and gender equality in relation to learning spaces and the workplace. This involves the implementation of a whole-school approach to respectful relationships. At both our Brighton and Sandringham campuses we believe that a positive school community is one in which relationships are built upon friendship, respect and kindness.

Environment

It is our responsibility to ensure that each child develops a strong sense of belonging, and feels safe and secure in our environment. The places and spaces in the Firbank Early Learning Centres are designed as 'zones of thinking'. They are flexible, stimulating, inviting, and purposefully arranged to capture children's interests and ideas and to cater to their individual needs. We use natural resources and materials to provide open-ended play spaces for children to imagine, create and discover. We strive to support children in the ways they connect with the natural environment, to promote their awareness of environmental and sustainable practices.

Community

Our Firbank community is where students, parents, Old Grammarians and the wider community come together to connect. We believe that school doesn't finish when you leave Firbank – you are a Firbank student for life.

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Our Dynamic Curriculum

Our programs are designed to tap into the natural curiosity of all children, whilst ensuring their creativity and inherent sense of fun are nurtured. Exceptional resources, facilities and specialist offerings ensure that children are provided with endless opportunities to express themselves. In addition, digital and multimedia resources are embedded across the curriculum to help foster student independence and encourage a love of learning. Ultimately, our collective aim is to ensure children

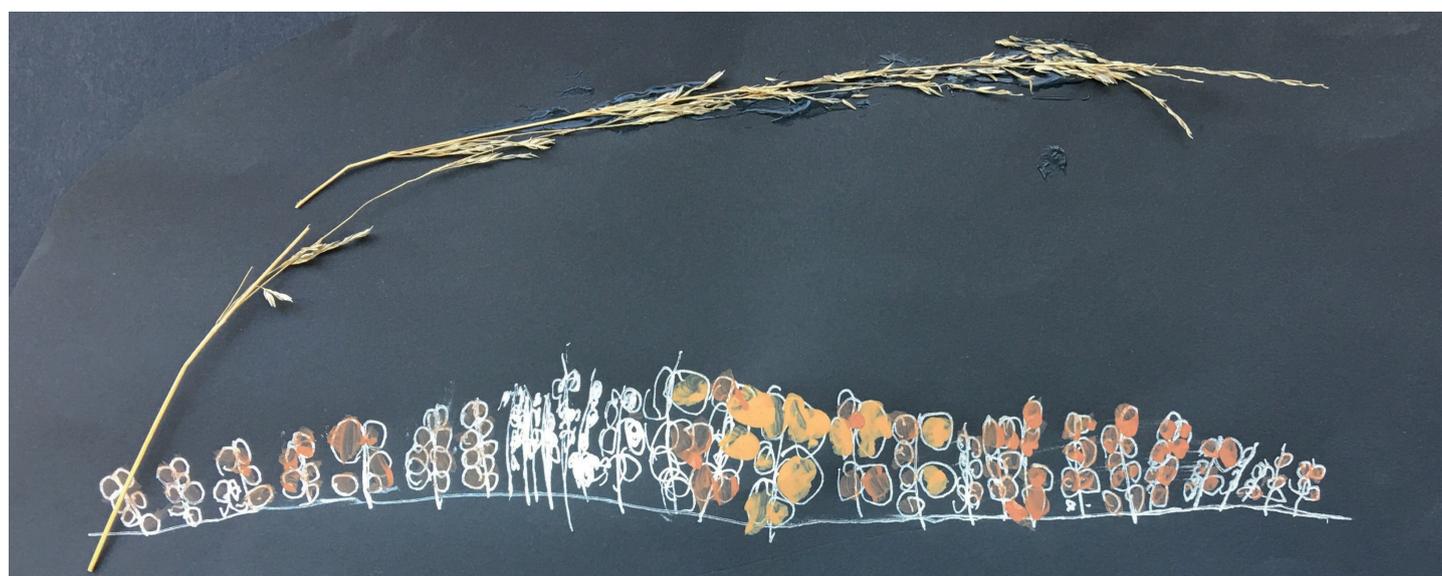
in our early learning environments are well prepared for the Junior years of schooling, with a solid foundation in literacy, numeracy and social skills. We see this as a crucial role; one that supports and guides a child's individual journey through the school.

Curriculum Area	Responsible Educator	School Facilities	Description	Impact / Benefits
Literacy Experiences Blend of incidental learning and intentional teaching.	Classroom teacher	Early Learning Centre	The use of language is vital for literacy development. Students interact in an environment rich in literacy opportunities embracing all forms of communication. This includes the visual and performing arts as well as talking, listening, dramatic play and storytelling. Sandringham Campus: Use of 'Talk for Writing' program to learn stories and rhymes to develop vocabulary and have access to rich literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By providing children with regular, ongoing opportunities to use literacy and numeracy throughout the day, we help to establish knowledge and positive dispositions as well as the ability to apply knowledge in practical and meaningful contexts. - Develops children's sense of themselves as effective communicators and is likely to lead more naturally to an interest in reading, writing and mathematics. - Engagement with children as they are learning helps to support, extend and challenge their thinking. - Teachers can provide language to describe what is happening and help the children to understand.
Numeracy Experiences Blend of incidental learning and intentional teaching.	Classroom teacher	Early Learning Centre	Students engage in mathematical thinking that contributes to numeracy development, including recognising patterns, sorting and categorising objects, talking about time and the patterns of the day, measuring and calculating amounts, arranging objects in space, and identifying shapes.	

Curriculum Area	Responsible Educator	School Facilities	Description	Impact / Benefits
Creative Arts through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) (Brighton Campus)	Atelierista-Creative Arts Teacher	'Studio of Possibilities' Atelier	Students are encouraged to explore a variety of creative art techniques, music and movement. Students use STEM techniques in new and imaginative ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposes students to the creative process - Meaningful collaboration - Increased critical thinking - Unique problem solving method - Learning activities that invite intentional play and risk - Hands-on learning experiences - Encourages girls to explore STEM fields - Different approach to valuing the Arts
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) (Sandringham Campus)	Classroom teacher	Early Learning Centre	Students are encouraged to explore a variety of design and technology principles, understandings and techniques. Students will interact with both digital and hands-on technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposes students to the design process Meaningful collaboration - Increased critical thinking - Unique problem solving method - Learning activities that invite intentional play and risk - Hands-on learning experiences - Encourages students to explore STEM fields
Bush Kinder (Sandringham Campus)	Early Learning Centre teaching staff	N/A	The aim of our Bush Kinder is to create a space beyond the classroom, where children can engage with nature. It is an opportunity for children to develop a deep and meaningful connection with the natural world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Led by the children and based on their discoveries - Open-ended activities - Opportunities for unstructured play - Explicit and intentional teaching moments using science and sustainability concepts
Chinese Language (Brighton Campus)	Junior School Chinese specialist teacher	Early Learning Centre classroom	Students are instructed in Chinese in our 3- and 4-year-old program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarity with the largest growing global language - An early start to this tonal language has proved to be beneficial - Research shows that learning Chinese helps stimulate cognitive growth in young children - Development of motor skills when employing the skills required for Mandarin character writing

Curriculum Area	Responsible Educator	School Facilities	Description	Impact / Benefits
Specialist Program (Sandringham Campus)	Junior School music teacher	Junior School music Room	Specialist programs that introduce the students to Junior School teachers and facilities.	- Musical experiences that incorporate movement, voice and instruments
	Junior School physical education teacher	Junior School sporting facilities		- Physical experiences designed to develop the students fundamental motor skills as well as their personal and social skills
Perceptual Motor Program (PMP)	Junior School physical education and sport teacher	Junior School PE room	A movement based program to assist students to improve eye-hand and eye-foot coordination, fitness, balance, locomotion and eye-tracking skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved perceptual motor performance and neuromuscular coordination. - Enhanced academic success and/or progress in school
Library	Classroom teacher and Librarian	Junior School library	Students are engaged in a love of literature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to a variety of texts - Opportunities to read which aid brain development - Book recommendations that lead to broadening of tastes and vocabulary - Introduction to the formal research process - Access to digital technology
Zones of Regulation Social Thinking and Wellbeing Approach	Classroom teacher	Early Learning Centre classroom	A communication and wellbeing approach, focused on self-regulation and emotional control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common language used across the ELC and Prep - Provision for mindfulness - Gives children a forum and appropriate language for expressing their emotions

***Please note that specialist classes take place on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays**



FUTURE FOCUSED

Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Priority

The learning and doing of STEM help develop technical skills and prepare students for a workforce where success results not just from what one knows, but what one is able to do with that knowledge. Thus, a strong STEM education is becoming increasingly recognised as a key driver of opportunity, and data shows the need for STEM knowledge and skills will continue to grow.

Our Early Learning Program, provides opportunities for children to have practical and relevant STEM precepts embedded throughout their educational experiences. Our goal is to continue to develop programs within the Early Learning Centre that encourage the participation of all children in STEM education, and results in an increased confidence and predisposition in all our students to consider STEM opportunities for future career pathways.

Atelier (Brighton Campus)

An Atelierista is a teacher with an arts background. Our atelier, The Studio of Possibilities, is a space where opportunities abound for aesthetic expression. The Atelierista responds to the children's ideas and facilitates learning invitations that enable the girls to make connections to the world around them, through the lens of The arts and STEM. The Atelierista explores both tools and materials with the children and provides possibilities for them to encounter different forms and to express their thinking, in new and individual ways. It is a place of wonder, curiosity and creativity.

Outdoor Learning

– Bush Kinder and Garden to Kitchen Programs (Sandringham Campus)

Firbank believes that it is imperative for children to develop a relationship with the natural world. We feel that students should physically experience nature to really know about it and to develop a rich sensory understanding of their surroundings. In turn, this teaches students to respect, treasure and value the world's resources. We aim to help our ELC students to understand that there is an interdependence between living things and that they are part of this.

The ELC staff facilitate an outdoor learning program to deeply connect children with nature and sustainable practices. Examples of this in the ELC include: sorting and recycling rubbish, tending the orchard and veggie garden and using natural materials in all aspects of the curriculum. The cooking program actively engages students to use ingredients that they have helped to grow in the garden as they experience and explore the connection between what they plant and what they eat. Bush Kinder enables children to explore environments beyond the ELC including our Sandringham Junior School and the Royal Avenue Reserve.



BRIGHTON CAMPUS

 Junior School
↑ All visitors please report to Reception

Sport
Music
Art
Administration
Resources



SANDRINGHAM CAMPUS



Firbank Grammar School
Early Learning Centre



Firbank Grammar School



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Our School Community

We take pride in our diverse community, with several of our staff and families joining us from international locations. We capitalise on the collective strengths of a range of cultures, beliefs and experiences, supporting the International Baccalaureate World mission of developing global citizens.

Facilities

Turner House: Positioned across the road from the Senior school, students in Turner House regularly engage with a variety of teachers with a myriad of expertise, and students from toddlers to 18 years of age, and benefit from Firbank's state-of-the-art resources and facilities.

Sandringham Campus: Positioned on the site of Sandringham House, the students regularly engage with a variety of teachers with a myriad of expertise, and students from toddlers to 12 years of age, and take advantage of the school's resources and facilities.

Events

The Early Learning Centre is embedded in the Firbank Grammar community and the children actively participate in all the events celebrated at the school with the intention of building connections beyond the ELC and developing a strong sense of belonging and community.

Parents as Partners

Educators and parents work in partnership to support their child's learning and development. Both formal and informal opportunities enable this collaboration and the building of a relationship intended to ensure the Early Years Program meets your child's individual talents, embraces their interests, and supports their needs.

'Stay & Play' Playgroup

The playgroup class, held in our Early Learning Centres, offers young learners abundant opportunities to explore and investigate, within a purposefully planned and stimulating environment. Firbank 'Stay and Play' is a place for both adults and children and focuses on developing relationships and building connections as they play together.

Connection with Brighton Grammar School - School Visits

The strong historical connections between Firbank Grammar and Brighton Grammar continue through reciprocal visits between Brighton Grammar Junior School and Firbank Turner House from ELC to Year 6. This provides an opportunity for students from each of the schools to collaborate on a variety of projects and it also exposes them to a greater range of perspectives.

Parents Associations of Firbank

Both Sandringham House Parent Association (SHPA) and Parent Association of Turner House (PATH) hold a range of events throughout the year including morning teas, welcome events, Mothers and Fathers Days activities and much more. All parents are welcome to attend meetings and to assist with the events which have been very successful in both friend-raising and fundraising.



PATHWAYS FOR LEARNING - OUR ADVANTAGE

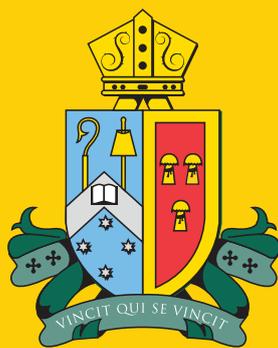
Realising the impact of children's early experience on their later development and wishing to extend this through the child's school life drives our focus on the 'pathways for learning' model. Students commencing their learning journey in our Early Learning Centre have a unique opportunity to reap the benefits of continuing an educational journey in the one school. Research supports the view that fewer changes in schooling environments has a positive influence on achievement and social and emotional wellbeing (Mehana & Reynolds, 2004). These pathways are promoted by a systematic approach to transitions at various points throughout the child's Firbank journey.

Transitions and Continuity of Learning

For families with young children, transitions occur on a daily basis. As children become older, they experience more formal transitions - from one year level to the next, from the Early Learning environment to Prep, and from Junior school to Senior school. At Firbank, we look at each child's transition experience as unique.

The importance of a positive transition to school has been emphasised in research around the world. It has been clearly established that a successful start to formal schooling is linked to later positive educational and social outcomes. We plan, develop and implement considered and deliberate structures for children to feel comfortable and ready to approach school transitions.

What we do	What this looks like
Connecting with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddy Program • Children engaging with peers • Introducing children and families to educators before commencement • Getting to personally know each child
Connecting with families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming families • Meeting with the Head of Campus to discuss the program and answer questions • Sharing information • Recognition of the significance of starting school for parents
Connecting with professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between educators • Communicating with previous teachers • Working collaboratively across services, where necessary • Strong leadership to support transition
Flexible and responsive transition programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled Transition sessions in the Prep room prior to commencement • Promoting continuity for children • Accessing appropriate support for children and families • Identifying strategies to support new students
Recognising strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating children's growth • Recognising family knowledge and achievements about their children • Respecting issues that matter to young children • Challenging stereotypes • Holding challenging, but realistic expectations for children
Reflective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings between families and educators • Monitoring the transition over time • Acknowledging child and family reflections



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**JUNIOR SCHOOL
BRIGHTON**

Middle Crescent Brighton
Victoria 3186 Australia
Phone 03 9591 5141
Fax 03 9553 8164

**JUNIOR SCHOOL
SANDRINGHAM**

45 Royal Avenue Sandringham
Victoria 3191 Australia
Phone 03 9533 5711
Fax 03 9521 0365

ABN 69 007 000 419
CRICOS Provider No 00140K
enquiries@firbank.vic.edu.au
www.firbank.vic.edu.au