

KAROO ONLINE Q&A SESSIONS

Thank you to the parents who participated in our recent online question and answer sessions. Here are some questions raised during the course of the sessions. If you have any further questions, please contact Mrs Leanne Vines (Principal) on 9759 6222.

How do you integrate ICT within the curriculum?

We have class sets of iPads which are timetabled for classes to use throughout the week. There are programs which support curriculum areas such as Mathematics, Phonics, Spelling and Reading. Scratch Junior is used for coding, which helps with problem solving and location type activities. There are various other apps to support or extend our curriculum areas.

We complete tasks within the classroom during instructional teaching and small focus groups, strategies are reinforced by the use of the iPads. Later in the year the students become familiar with laptops, using the mouse pad and keyboard to develop word processing skills.

What are the school values?

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Excellence
- Honesty and Fairness
- Tolerance and Understanding

How do you deal with bullying?

We have zero tolerance to Bullying at Karoo. There are often one off incidents which need to be appropriately dealt with and we use a Restorative Approach. If it is a true case of Bullying it is when someone repeatedly uses their power to hurt or scare others. It can be done by an individual or by a group. It can be carried out physically, emotionally or verbally. This is not tolerated at Karoo.

We will have Restorative sessions with the people involved and the person named as the bully is made aware of how their behaviour impacts on others. We discuss strategies going forward and provide opportunities for the people involved to repair their relationship.

At all times, communication is the key with all the families involved and the focus is on a solution and changing of behaviour not as a punitive approach.

What do you do for students who may be feeling upset at recess and/ or lunchtime and don't have people to play with?

Lunch time clubs are organised by our Student Wellbeing Officer, known as Friendship Clubs. These are held in our school library every Friday and cater for all age groups. Student Leaders and a teacher assist the Wellbeing Officer.

We run 'Circle Time' in every classroom every day, which provides an opportunity for the students to share how they are feeling in relation to their learning and their social interactions. The frequency of these class discussions is determined by student requests, and most often this is prior to or after time outside. This allows the teacher the opportunity to assist the students at the point of need.

During Term 1 our Foundation teachers are rostered to yard duty in the designated Foundation playground, which provides a sense of familiarity for the students. The Principal and Assistant Principal also ensure they spend time with the Foundation students when they are in the yard too.

During Term 1 we allocate a Year 5 buddy to every Foundation student. We develop our Buddy Program by encouraging and providing support and strategies to both groups of students. The Year 5 students are taught skills of negotiation and ways to offer support without being too 'over powering'. The Foundation students learn strategies to take turns, to seek help when needed and safe play on the playground equipment. We also provide additional play equipment for the Foundation students to encourage social play.

Regular monitoring by staff is shared in meetings and allows us to change practices to meet the needs of our students.

How do you report back to parents apart from the formal reports twice a year?

Foundation Staff regularly provide feedback to parents/caregivers. Staff are available for scheduled appointments, phone calls and responding to emails. It is important to remember that the Foundation team are with the students when they are dismissed from their classroom every afternoon; this is a good time to have a chat or to make an appointment if you require more time with the teacher. Monday and Tuesday after school all staff attend meetings and Professional Learning so they are not available on these days. Compass is used for individual class communication, year level and whole school communication. You will be assisted to gain access to the Compass app. at the beginning of the school year. Parent information is shared on our website.

Following Department of Education guidelines every student is provided with a written report (accessed by Compass) at the end of Semester One and Semester Two. After the Semester One report has been shared with families we organise opportunities for parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss the student's report and future learning.

How do you implement the School Entry Assessment (SEA) testing at the beginning of the year? Do you do it on Wednesdays?

During our Transition Sessions there will be an opportunity to book your child's SEA testing session. These are held in the first week of the school year. The booking time is for one hour, 10 minutes is allocated for a 'Getting to Know You' with the student and parent, and then the remaining time is for the assessment with the student. The students complete English and Mathematics activities, an Entry Auditory Processing Assessment and letter and sound knowledge. Teachers use this time to develop a rapport with the students and relieve some nerves prior to beginning school. The English and Mathematics activities are interactive and hands-on, so in many cases the students feel like they are playing.

After these sessions are completed the Foundation team gather the data and use their observations to plan according to the student's needs. The students will then begin school full time, 5 days a week after the completion of all assessments. There is no definitive number of days allocated to this process, it is dependent upon the number of Foundation students enrolled. Parents will be informed of the students starting date at the final Transition session in December 2020.

Do you have a Before and After School Care Program?

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) is managed by Karoo School Council. A feature of Karoo's OSHC program is the appointment of supervising staff. As a Council we employ the staff and we pride ourselves on ensuring consistency with staffing.

The program operates during school terms, 5 days a week from 7.00 a.m. - 8.45 a.m. and then after school from 3.45 p.m. – 6.15 p.m.

In Term 1 the OSHC team will take the Foundation students from OSHC to their classrooms in the morning and collect them in the afternoon. This assists with their transition and ensures they are supported by an adult. The program is highly regarded by our school community; it is vital that bookings are made. Please contact the Karoo office for more information.

As a lot of Kinder will have been missed this year, how will you cater for developing their fine and gross motor skills?

Although the 2021 students will not have had a full year at Kinder, the students' needs will still be met. During a 'normal' year in Foundation gross and fine motor growth is a strong focus, especially in the first semester of school. This is implemented through play based activities, craft, Physical Education, Fundamental Motor Skills Program and Perceptual Motor Program, and also through the Visual and Performing Arts Programs.

Will lockdown impact enrolment for next year? How does it look for Karoo if Kinders are shut down for the rest of the year?

Growth development gained at Kinder is important; we are confident the 2021 preschool children will present as robust and confident kids. We are currently discussing how we can modify our programs to meet the needs of the students. We have established a close relationship with kinders/ pre-schools and childcare centres, and will continue to work with them to ensure a smooth transition for all students. Social and emotional needs will be our focus as we prepare and plan for the Foundation students when commencing school.

We are currently sharing ideas about what the start of the year may look like – there may be more play based learning initially, work on reconnecting, developing social and emotional skills that may be missed with less kinder, and

adjusting to being with others again. We will monitor student engagement and connectedness. There will also be close monitoring of the student's fine and gross motor skills, and plan appropriate activities for their needs.

Our Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) may be conducted earlier in the year than we would normally do, as we are aware that with parks/ playgrounds being closed and a shortened kinder year, less of these skills may be developing.

Is Prep working remotely at the moment?

All students from Foundation – Year 6 in Victorian Government schools are learning remotely through a range of platforms. At Karoo we are using Google Classrooms.

How it looks for Foundation: we initially launched a website and uploaded all learning tasks. After surveying parents and students and conducting more Professional Learning for our staff, we are now engaging the Foundation students in daily Meets and small focused teaching groups. The students are also now uploading completed learning online too. The students are learning new skills i.e. logging in, muting/unmuting, waiting turns, asking questions, not speaking over top of others - importantly we have noticed an improvement in their speaking and listening skills. Whilst the delivery of the curriculum looks different there are many similarities, we are covering the same curriculum including Specialist areas of Physical Education, Visual and Performing Arts.

Foundation staff are doing regular instructional videos, which have a specific teaching focus.

Google Meets enable teachers to see what students are doing, and students can connect with each other = social connections are extremely important during these times. At the end of every day (approximately 12.30 p.m.) the teacher holds another Google Meet called a 'debrief' which provides an opportunity for parents to keep connected to the teacher too. Both parents and students have the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and importantly celebrate their work and achievements.

Although the students have only been physically at school for about 10 weeks, we are celebrating their '100 days of school' very soon. The students are being mailed a celebratory pack of resources and activities to do at home on the day. We will be encouraging students to dress up for the celebration too.

2020 Transition Program – what will it look like?

We have a strong relationship with the Rowville cluster of schools – there is Network meeting next week to confirm Transition arrangements to ensure consistency across the schools. We are hoping we will develop together some plans and agreed practices of what Transition will look like. Our current intentions are to have the students participate in a range of classroom and Specialist area activities. There are currently 4 planned dates for Transition.

Options we are considering:

- Social stories – in photo form
- videos, teachers talking
- use of online forums similar to this session

Key focus to address is to form our Foundation Team (teaching staff) for 2021 first so we are able to introduce them to students and parents as soon as possible - this will support them to form relationships.

If we are in lockdown at the start of the year, what would that look like for Karoo?

Under all circumstances we will follow directives of the Victorian Government, DHHS and Department of Education.

We are fortunate to have sourced additional laptops from the Department and will make these available to families who require them for students to use them at home.

In the event of lockdown next year we will continue with the platforms we are currently using, including: (taking into consideration the attention span and engagement of the students)

- story time
- providing small group learning with a teaching focus
- Google Meets
- learning through songs, rhymes, counting, videos.

All curriculum areas for all students being covered, with students and families being supported to upload and submit learning tasks.

We have recently prepared a pack of resources for Foundation students that was sent home; this included a small whiteboard and marker, counters and some take home books. Our Visual Arts teacher also prepared a pack of resources to assist students to complete art activities at home.

School tours – not happening at all!

At this stage we are not permitted to have school tours, we are minimising adults on site. All staff are currently working remotely to reduce students and staff on site as per DET regulations.

More details will be shared when we are informed by the authorities.

Enrolments

Office hours currently reduced – open 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Enrolments can be brought into the office or emailed to karoo.ps@education.vic.gov.au

A welcome pack, including a letter of confirmation will be sent to you shortly after we received the enrolment form.