



**A guide to
choosing
the right
school for
your child**

One of the most important decisions you will make is the choice of a primary school for your child.

Altona Green PS hopes that this booklet might:

1. give you some questions that you should be asking about all the schools you are considering
2. give you brief answers for these questions in relation to Altona Green PS

No doubts you will have some questions that you want further information about and some questions that we haven't even thought about!

Please call the school on 93600777 or contact us via e-mail: altona.green.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Does the school have a vision - a statement of what it plans to achieve in the future?

Our school's vision that underpins all that we do here at Altona Green PS is:

***Altona Green Primary School
.....building a positive future by developing
life long learners who value themselves and
others.***

Our school has a population of just under 400 students, large enough to offer a comprehensive educational program through the provision of well-maintained facilities, the on-going professional development of our staff and a range of specialist programs whilst being small enough to make each student, parent and staff member feel valued as an individual within our school community.

Is there much communication between school and home?

A weekly newsletter is sent home with students every Thursday which provides a regular opportunity for staff to communicate with the parent community. Year levels contribute to this on a regular basis through our 'classroom clippings' section to update parents on happenings in the rooms. Assemblies, information nights, School Council meetings, parent/teacher interviews and many informal telephone calls and meetings are all ways in which information about our school can be relayed to parents.

How do parents feel about the school and its educational environment?

A random selection of parents is surveyed on an annual basis. As part of these surveys, parents are asked to respond on topics such as:

- teaching quality
- assessment and reporting
- educational leadership

The results of the surveys continue to show very high levels of parental satisfaction, something that we are most proud of!

How does the school develop confidence and self-esteem?

The wellbeing of our students in the school is paramount in everything we do.

We believe that a group of students whose self-esteem is regularly encouraged will seek to further improve their skills and knowledge through more active participation in all aspects of the educational program.

How important is achievement and how is achievement promoted?

Achievement for all children is central in everything we do at Altona Green PS. Achievement can happen in a variety of areas:

- academic achievement and artistic achievement
- sporting achievement and behavioural achievement

We celebrate achievement in a number of ways through awards at assembly, through children showing or demonstrating their personal best at school or in the local community

How well are "the basics" (e.g. Writing, Reading, Maths) taught at the school?

Our teachers plan their literacy and numeracy teaching as part of a level team

- Altona Green PS staff assess students against the Victorian Essential Learnings growthpoints that are currently being released as part of the new curriculum reforms in Victorian education.
- All grade 3 and 5 students undertake the state-wide AIM tests each year. In both instances, the results show very high levels of achievement - above the benchmarks for primary schools.

What is the average class size across this school?

Altona Green PS aims to keep all our classes smaller, with particular emphasis in the Prep-2 classes. This year our prep classes have an average of 17 students. At other year levels, the class size varies according to number of students at that year level but averages out at about 23 students per grade. No class is currently higher than 25.

Is there a "Reading Recovery" program available?

Altona Green PS recognises that each child's learning patterns are different and, accordingly, a high level of focus has been placed on helping students to develop their reading skills.

Kris Schenk runs our Reading Intervention program which specifically picks up those children who are deemed at risk in Year 1.

How are students with special needs catered for? Are children who are gifted identified and provided for?

As indicated earlier, the size of Altona Green PS is ideally suited for such students. The school is large enough to have sufficient resources for all students to be catered for, irrespective of their learning needs. Importantly, however, we pride ourselves on also being small enough to ensure the well-being of each and every individual student can be addressed.

As well, we have access to a variety of resources within the Department of Education such as psychologists, speech therapists, etc should a particular student have a need for such assistance.

Each of our learning programs have been developed to enable students to be able to achieve at their own level but in a way that also challenges them to push beyond that level and to "take risks" in their learning experiences.

Our all staff have received professional development in developing students thinking skills and in implementing challenging and motivating experiences through the recognition of the "Multiple Intelligences" which identifies individual strengths and individuals' learning styles.

What other specialist programs are offered?

Our specialist programs that are currently offered are:

- Health and Physical Education
- Music
- Visual Arts for all students.

An annual two-week intensive swimming program is offered to all students each year. This program is conducted at Altona Swim and Fitness centre by using their qualified instructors.

A variety of lunchtime activities are offered over the course of the year and these come from both the expertise of the staff of the interests of the children.

Eg. Chess Club, Greenies Group, Rock band.

Is Religious Education offered?

At the moment, no as the community has not indicated sufficient need in this area. School Council is open to monitor this should the needs change.

What computer facilities does the school have? How are they used in the learning program?

The school has a fully networked computer laboratory that enables "whole class" computer activities to occur. There are also a number of computers in each classroom linked back to the laboratory. This enables "small-group" activities in the classroom as part of the day-to-day learning program at each grade level.

Access to the Internet is provided through the Department of Education. This provides the students with the opportunity to operate within a "protected" area - taking advantage of the exciting world of the Internet while minimising the risks of exposure to inappropriate sites and information. Policies are in place that oversee our Internet usage and agreements are

Is Life Education offered?

Yes. Life Education is a health education program that is offered to all students every 2nd year.

Follow-up activities are integrated into the classroom program to reinforce the knowledge presented in the initial program.

What special activities are offered to cater for the special needs of Prep students?

Altona Green PS recognises how very important and exciting the first year of school is for all students (and parents, too!)

Each week during term 4, special activities are run at the school involving the teachers who the students will work with in prep.

In the first few days of the prep year, all preps are paired up with a buddy. This gives them a special friend to look out for them in the school ground, and someone to work with in various combined activities during grade prep.

One of the really pleasing features of Altona Green PS is the way the "big kids" look out for and help the preps, particularly near the start of the year when life is a bit overwhelming at times.

Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) is another feature of our prep program in Terms 3 and 4. This weekly activity gives the preps an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that aid mental and physical development.

To assist our preps in their oral language development we have established a "Developmental Play" program where children are encouraged to develop oral language skills through a structured play approach. An outside area has been established which is used exclusively for this program.

Does the school set homework regularly?

Yes. As mentioned earlier, the link between home and school is a critical factor in a child's education. The homework (which takes account of the child's year level) allows the students to develop organisational skills and good individual work habits, as well as allowing parents to participate in some of the child's learning experiences.

Are excursions and camps offered as part of the learning program?

Yes, students are able to take advantage of excursions in each year level. These include visiting a few places in our local areas as well as other full day excursions away from the local district. There is also a camping component as part of each of class program from Prep-6. (eg. Preps-breakfast at school which progressively builds to a 5 day camp for Yrs 5/6)

What types of sports are offered?

Grade five and six students take part in interschool sport in range of sports such as Netball, basketball, Football, etc against other local schools. The Interschool Athletics, Cross Country Running and Swimming Sports involve students at grade four, five and six.

Grade three and four students play sport on a weekly basis in a similar range of sports.

As mentioned elsewhere, there is an annual swimming education program offered to all students.

This year we will again be running our successful Prep/Junior Athletics carnival in Term 4.

How will I be informed of my child's progress during the year?

The major component of the reporting process is the twice-yearly written report presented to parents at the end of terms two and four.

These reports deal with each of the major aspects of your child's development (both academic and personal development) in a detailed written assessment document.

Formal parent-teacher interviews are offered twice a year. These interviews enable parents and teachers to discuss the student's achievement and areas where further assistance may be appropriate.

Teachers are also happy to make appointments with parents at other times to discuss the well-being and progress of their child. Where appropriate, Individual Learning Plans are developed, involving both the parents and teacher.

Do teachers continue their professional development and training?

School Council recognises the need for staff to continue their own professional development. To this end, School Council provides a budget for staff to attend a variety of programs throughout the year.

To ensure the very best coverage of topics, programs are generally attended by one or two members of staff, who are then required to train other staff during staff meetings, curriculum days and other opportunities.

Does the school have a uniform? Is it compulsory for students to wear the uniform?

Yes, the school has a uniform that is predominantly blue in colour. It is expected that students will wear the uniform to school every day, with the exception of special activity days.

Grade six students have a special windcheater for their final year at the school.

School uniforms are available through the office most days. The school also provides a chance for the sale and purchase of second hand school uniforms, as they become available.

Price lists for uniforms are available from the school office.

Does the school have "straight" year level grades or composite classes?

At the moment, Altona Green PS has adopted a policy of having 2 year levels level together, except for preps. ie; Preps, Yr1/2, Yr3/4 and Yr 5/6.

This may change in future years if issues cause this policy to be reviewed.

What input do I have to the policies of the school?

Policies are the responsibility of our School Council, an elected body of parents, teachers and other community members. Draft policies are presented in newsletters or in other forums where feedback is sought from all parents before ratification.

What facilities does the school have available to students and are they well cared for?

The school has a combination of portable and permanent classrooms, all of which are accessible undercover areas. All classrooms are air-conditioned and heated and all buildings are fully carpeted.

There are a number of specialist rooms within the main building, including:

- library
- art/craft room
- computer laboratory
- gymnasium
- school canteen
- student sick bay

Additional specialist areas include:

- the developmental play area
- cottage for our Leading Teachers
- Out of School Hours Care room

The school's external facilities are also significant:

- a large oval and adjacent tennis courts
- large asphalt area (including basketball/netball markings)
- 3 adventure playground areas
- sand pit and wetlands area
- shade areas
- the development of the facilities to implement our Kitchen-Garden program

The school has been in existence for just on 15 years and has received government and local funding to improve the facilities. The school community has contributed significant amounts of money to continue to develop the facilities at our school, particularly in the playground.

*Does the school encourage parental involvement?
In what ways?*

Absolutely!!

If you have the time to spare or special skills to assist we are grateful for any assistance in all sorts of ways.

What is the role of parents at the school?

The link between home and school is crucial for positive learning to occur. At Altona Green PS we welcome families into our school from their first point of contact with us.

To ensure this link is maximised, every
Many opportunities are provided for parents to meet with teachers and/or become involved in their child's learning

There are a variety of ways you can be involved at Altona Green PS. They include:

- classroom assistance
- School Council & its sub-committees
- The Parents Group
- social activities

Does my involvement in classroom activities require me to be specially trained or qualified?

No (except that you want to be involved in your child's education!).

What opportunity exists for the students to contribute to the school's decision-making process?

Students in grade three to six can be elected to the Junior School Council for the year. These students are elected by their classmates to represent their interests at the fortnightly meetings.

Several suggestions to do with playground activities and equipment, special theme days and fundraising ideas have been received by the School Council, Parents Group and staff, showing that the students from our school have a great feeling of ownership in the school.

Does the school offer before- and after-school care?

Yes! We offer Before School Care from 7:00am (breakfast is served for those who arrive before 8:15am) and an After School Care program from 3.30 till 6pm

Our program is registered with the Federal Government and operates accordingly.

How does the canteen operate?

The school canteen operates every day for lunch orders and snacks. The school is outsourced and run by an outside operator and the terms and conditions are overseen by School Council.

Wherever possible the food offered for sale has been chosen to reflect and reinforce healthy eating habits.

*I've got to this point of the document and want to find out
some more information about Altona Green PS.
What should I do?*

As indicated earlier, the members of Altona Green PS 's leadership team are always happy to make appointments to talk to prospective members of our school community.

Please make contact via the school office:

Phone: 9360 0777

In preparation for your visit or phone call, take the time to write your questions down so nothing will be overlooked.

We look forward to meeting you soon!