



Welcome to the Daylesford Dharma School Community, thank you for choosing to send your child to our school. We aim to provide an education based on kindness and compassion, this handbook provides some important information on how we do things at the school and what our expectations are of staff, students and parents.

Our school is based on Buddhist philosophy and therefore underpins all that we do. Our overarching principle is one of non-harm. This relates to all our actions of body, speech and mind.

We invite our school community to support the principle of non-harm and the development of wisdom and compassion. These are the principles that unite us as a community in a common point of focus and are our point of reference in all of our discussions and actions. Our education community; staff, students, families and volunteers, are supported in the development of skills to facilitate peaceful communication, conflict resolution, reflective practices and emotional learning.

Our expectations of actions can be best summed up by our Five Precepts.

The Five Precepts are based on the Five Mindfulness Trainings which represent the Buddhist vision for a global spirituality and ethic. They are an expression of the Buddha's teachings and provide us with a guide on how to think, speak and act in a kind and compassionate manner towards ourselves and to those around us.



The Five Precepts are:

Generosity

I am committed to practicing generosity in my thinking, speaking, and acting. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others; and I will share my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. I will practice looking deeply to see that the happiness and suffering of others are not separate from my own happiness and suffering; that true happiness is not possible without understanding and compassion; and that running after wealth, fame, power and physical pleasures can bring much suffering and despair. I am aware that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough conditions to be happy. I am committed to practicing Right Livelihood so that I can help reduce the suffering of living beings on Earth and reverse the process of global warming.

Body Responsibility

I am committed to cultivating responsibility for my body and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of others. I am determined not to engage in physical violence and control my body. I am committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of my energy and cultivating loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness – which are the four basic elements of true love – for my greater happiness and the greater happiness of others. Practicing true love, we know that we will continue beautifully into the future.

Loving Speech and Deep Listening

I am committed to cultivating loving speech and compassionate listening in order to relieve suffering and to promote reconciliation and peace in myself and among other people, ethnic and religious groups, and nations. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to speaking truthfully using words that inspire confidence, joy, and hope. When anger is manifesting in me, I am determined not to speak. I will practice mindful breathing and walking in order to recognize and to look deeply into my anger. I know that the roots of anger can be found in my wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in myself and in the other person. I will speak and listen in a way that can help myself and the other person to transform suffering and see the way out of difficult situations. I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to utter words that can cause division or discord. I will practice Right Diligence to nourish my capacity for understanding, love, joy, and inclusiveness, and gradually transform anger, violence, and fear that lie deep in my consciousness.



Mindful Consumption

I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my friends by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will practice looking deeply into how I consume. I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear, or craving pull me out of the present moment. I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption. I will contemplate interdependence and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy, and well-being in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my community and the Earth.

Reverence For Life

I am committed to cultivating the insight of interdependence and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life. Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.

Embracing multi-faith

Students and families of any religious belief or secular background are welcome to join the Daylesford Dharma School community.

We hold the view that a multiplicity of spiritual traditions is necessary in the world, and that this plurality of religious and spiritual traditions provides for the wide variety of people's dispositions and aspirations.

In support of this, we cultivate understanding and mutual respect through the study of other cultures, religions and traditions.



Governance

The Board of Governance oversees the strategic direction and philosophy of the school according to Buddhist principles. The Board also employs the Principal and manages the risk to the operations and future of the school.

The Board meet once a month to discuss and make decisions in relation to the strategic direction of the school, the Principal also attends and reports to these meetings.

Positions on the Board are held by talented, passionate community members who strongly believe in the vision and values of the school. Board Directors contribute their time voluntarily.

Opportunities to meet and communicate with members of the Board occur throughout the school year.

Funding and Fees

As an independent school we are partially funded by the Federal and State Governments but we rely on tuition fees and donations in order to run the school.

The government funding essentially covers the teacher salaries, therefore school fees are very important as they cover the costs of resourcing and administering the school.

Since it's inception the school has endeavoured to make the tuition fees as affordable and accessible as possible.

Fees are invoiced four times a year in line with the school terms. Invoices are emailed indicating the payment terms and how to pay. We are able to accept cash, EFTPOS and credit card payments in the office or you can pay directly into the school's account.

If you are having trouble paying your fees and any stage please do not hesitate to contact the Principal to discuss alternative arrangements.



Tuition Fees 2018

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
Full Fee	\$768.75	\$768.75	\$768.75	\$768.75	\$3075
Concession Fee	\$525	\$525	\$525	\$525	\$2100
Material Levy **	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$200

** Materials levy covers some of the costs such as paper and consumables in the school/classroom throughout the term.

The booklist fee for 2018 will be a one-off fee at the beginning of the school year as follows:

Grade	Booklist Fee
Prep, 1, 2, 3, 4	\$110
Grade 5 & 6	\$165

The booklist fee covers all stationery, textbooks, workbooks for personal use in the classroom. These items become the student's property and therefore they become responsible for the care and replacement for these items. You may be charged for additional workbooks throughout the year as your child progresses to additional levels.

For 2018 we are going to invoice you a set amount per term to contribute towards Camps and Excursions rather than invoicing each excursion or camp separately.

Grade	Camp/Excursion Fee per Term	Camp/Excursion Fee Yearly Total
Prep, 1, 2	\$31.25	\$125
Grade 3, 4, 5, 6	\$50	\$200

In 2018 we are introducing a Building Levy to put towards the ongoing progress of our school we are asking for families to contribute \$20 per term which will go directly into the building fund towards future capital improvements.

Health Care Card Holders

Families holding a current Health Care Card are entitled to our concession fees and we require a copy of your current card to have on file.



Conveyance Allowance

The conveyance allowance is a form of financial assistance to help families in rural and regional Victoria with the cost of transporting their children to their nearest appropriate school/campus. The conveyance allowance is available to eligible students travelling by public transport, private car and private bus. The conveyance allowance is also available to eligible students whose nearest school is not serviced by a free school bus.

There is an extensive free school bus service that operates in and around Daylesford. This is coordinated by Daylesford Secondary College. If however you live over 4.8km from the free bus route you may be eligible for the conveyance allowance. There is a map in the office of the routes offered on the free bus service.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) commenced in 2015 for four years and will provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. \$125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students, with \$225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student.

Application forms can be obtained from the office.



Communication

In line with our precept of Mindful Consumption the school chooses to communicate electronically wherever possible. The weekly eNews is the best source of information in relation to what is happening in and around the school and information on upcoming events. The eNews comes out weekly on a Wednesday evening.

Other notices, reminders and communications are done through email and text messages where possible. If you do not have ability to receive emails or text messages please communicate this to the office so alternative arrangements can be made. Paper notices will be issued via students should permission or a signature be required such as in the case of an excursion.

Please endeavour to update your contact details with staff in the office to ensure we can communicate with you.

Compassionate Communication

The school has adopted a Compassionate Communication approach largely based on Non-Violent Communication (NVC) developed by Marshall Rosenberg. This is the process that children will encounter on a daily basis as they resolve their social challenges. Skill building is formally revisited each year during Term 2 when Social Harmony is the overarching theme that guides the learning. We also implement restorative justice processes as a supplementary approach from time to time.

The Dharma School views conflict resolution as an ongoing process and a necessary skill to acquire if we are to hold any hope of world peace.

The Peace Table process is how we deal with any conflict that arises in the school. It is not a place where you go if you have been naughty or bad but rather a place to work through conflict in a peaceful and meaningful way.

“World peace does not mean the absence of conflict. It is in the nature of this reality of living that conflict happens, and conflict must be expected. World peace is therefore not about the attainment of absence of conflict but is a state that arises from the manner in which we resolve our conflicts. It is through mutual respect, appreciation for differences and by compromise that we resolve our conflicts. “

Geshe Konchok, Daylesford Dharma School Founder.



We encourage parents and family members to participate in our skills development programmes that are regularly extended to our school community. We value your connection to our school community as you follow your child’s learning journey. We also have a number of resources available for borrowing, please see the Principal if you are interested in utilising these resources.

The Peace Table

The “Peace Table” is a focus meeting. It is a conceptual framework and process for establishing harmony in our school.

It is set in a quiet place in the classroom or in the office, it is a place for deep listening and communication – not just for dealing with behaviour.

All incidents that are brought to the peace table are resolved in a fair and consistent way. This consistency of process and language is what supports the school culture of peace that is perceivable when walking in the classroom.

All members of the school community are expected and encouraged to use the peace table as a place where issues can be discussed, ideas canvassed and problems explored and resolved.

Sharing Circles

Sharing circles are a strategy used at our school to create a sense of belonging and trust within the classroom and the school. Students are given the opportunity to feel worthwhile and their presence within the group is valued and seen as purposeful.

Sharing circles are not just a tool for when things are not going right. They provide a forum to share joyous moments and the things that are working well.

Concerns and Feedback

The Daylesford Dharma School strongly encourages parents to express any concerns that they may have for their child’s learning or wellbeing with the class teacher. It is best to make an appointment with the teacher so that they can give full attention to your concern.



We also believe it is important to not let small concerns slide but to address them early on so that they do not go on to become problems. We value your input and interest in your child's progress and are always happy to make time to discuss issues and collaborate on solutions.

Similarly we encourage you to communicate any changes to home or family life with your child's teacher. This is an important part of our holistic approach to student wellbeing and assists us in supporting developmental and life transitions.

Similarly, any concerns regarding the school leadership, communications or administration are encouraged to be communicated with the appropriate staff member.

The School Day

The school day begins at 9am and concludes at 3:20pm Monday to Friday during school terms.

Attendance

Attendance at school is very important to the learning journey of each child. We encourage parents to ensure that their child/ren attend as regularly as is possible. As part of our funding agreements with the federal and state governments we are required to record absences and report on these twice a year.

If your child is unable to attend for any reason please inform the school as early as possible by phoning the main telephone number 5348 3112. It is fine to leave a message stating your name and the name of the child that will not be attending. For planned or prolonged absences we ask that you inform the Principal in writing at least 4 weeks prior.

Late Arrivals

We understand that it is not always possible to arrive on time in the mornings however we ask that you be mindful of the learning that maybe already underway in your child's classroom if you are late.

Please accompany your child directly to their classroom to hand over to their teacher if you arrive after 9am.



Early Finishers

If for any reason you need to pick up your child prior to 3:20pm please inform the school of your intention by communicating with the office. You will also need to sign your child out using the diary in the Office stating the time you picked them up.

Free School Bus

Our students are able to access the Free School Bus service that operates in and around Daylesford and surrounding areas. There is an extensive service operated by local bus companies. The Daylesford Secondary College is the bus coordinating school, if you wish to utilise or enquire about the Free School Bus please contact the Bus Coordinator on 5348 2367.

After School Care

Daylesford Child Care Centre operates the Daylesford Outside School Hours Care program offering care for children in the Daylesford area after normal school hours. For more information on the services they offer and how to access them please contact 5348 3702.

What to Bring

Food

We support children to be mindful when consuming food. To eat without awareness of the resources, energy and kindness of others that is embodied in the food is seen in mindfulness cultivation as an act of violence. When we eat with mindfulness and connect into our food, we are cultivating our knowledge of interdependence – the first stepping stone to world peace.

We encourage the inclusion of whole foods as a general approach to the school lunch box. We encourage home-cooked snacks as lunch box inclusions.

The Dharma School discourages the inclusion of sugar based and low-nutrition snack foods as a regular part of food consumption.

We encourage our whole school community to approach healthy eating as the norm and snack foods and sweets as being for occasional use.

We embrace the principles of the ‘slow food’ movement and the rich local food heritage of our community as a reflection of our commitment to teaching interdependence.



We support our school community by committing to a kitchen garden program that teaches children food propagation, harvesting and cooking of local organic produce. This encourages the celebration of cooking and eating together in community.

Our educational philosophy recognises the interdependent nature of all life. This inspires the principle of non-harm that joins us with a common bond in community. We strive to see all other beings as being worthy of our compassion and equanimity. It is this view that guides our school to adopt the approach of eating a vegetarian diet while at school. However, children (and their parents) are in no way required to commit to a vegetarian lifestyle at home.

By supporting the practice of non-harm in food choices at school, we encourage discussion and reflection and the opportunity to consider cultivating compassion at a more expansive level. The Dharma School extends this policy to its fundraising and kitchen garden programs.

We also ask that all communal food at school have no animal products (Vegan). This provides another level of respect for animals and allows greater inclusion for our school community.

It is an ongoing process to assist the children to understand what rubbish is and what is to be recycled and above all to work towards reducing their consumption. We have a “nude food” policy that assists reduce rubbish at school.

It would greatly support the school if sound recycling and reduction habits are also reflected in practice at home and taught to children.

Clothing

Please ensure you provide adequate clothing for your child depending on the season. During Term 1 and Term 4 as part of our SunSmart policy students are required to wear a sunhat during play times and during outside activities. Acceptable hats are either broad rim or legionaries styles that are free from excessive branding and logos. (Baseball caps are not acceptable). We actively discourage sharing of hats between students for hygiene reasons. We suggest having a hat designated for school that is kept in your child’s schoolbag so it is not forgotten. During our SunSmart terms students will be restricted to shady areas such as the verandah if they do not have an appropriate hat.



During the winter months Daylesford can be quite cold and wet so it is advisable to provide gumboots, jackets and beanies to maintain the comfort of your child during playtimes and protect them from the elements. We suggest having a spare pair of clothes, particularly socks, in your child's schoolbag for those times when kids find themselves wet and cold after play.

As we have a practice of not wearing shoes in the classroom we suggest that children wear shoes that they are able to put on and take off without assistance. Velcro is a great choice while your child is still learning to tie shoelaces.

We do not have a school uniform and allow students to dress freely as an expression of their personality. We do have T-Shirts with the school logo that are available for purchase from the Office. We encourage students to wear the school t-shirt while on excursions as it makes visibility easier while in a group in a different environment.

Curriculum

Our whole school approach to curriculum is supported by our Awareness Program. This program provides the background against which all learning takes place.

The integrated framework of our Awareness Program promotes self-awareness learning that is linked to social responsibility, respect for cultural diversity and human rights, sustainability, and upholding peace as an attainable goal. It is this program that informs the curriculum and supports our unique school culture.

The Awareness Program utilises meditation, logic and debate, the creative arts and ethics in an integrated inquiry based approach to self-learning.

The Awareness Program introduces four informing principles that constitute the background against which our integrated curriculum is studied and interpreted.

These principles that derive from Buddhist philosophical thought are:

- Interdependence: that all phenomena originate in dependence on causes and conditions.
- Impermanence: that all phenomena and circumstances are subject to constant change and transformation.



- Actions and their consequences: all actions of body, speech and mind, both individual and collective, are consequential and influence future circumstances.
- The nature of the mind: all experience and knowledge is dependent on the subjectivity of our mind perceptions and projections.
- These informing principles share a strong alliance with contemporary scientific research and modern psychology

Every week on Wednesday morning we hold a Whole-School awareness between 9 and 9:30am in the Grade 1/2 classrooms. Parents are most welcome to join us for this session.

Integrated Approach to Learning

Our programmes support the pursuit of excellence in literacy, numeracy, social studies, science and technology and conform to the Australian Curriculum.

We strive to create a nurturing and inspiring learning environment where critical thinking, meditation and creativity are integrated throughout the whole curriculum. Our curriculum provides for a high quality, relevant and flexible continuum of learning.

In practice, our curriculum embraces the 8 key learning areas which are interpreted by learning themes that guide the focus for the learning of each term. These learning themes are:

- Term 1: Wellbeing,
- Term 2: Social harmony,
- Term 3: Cultural diversity
- Term 4: Environmental balance

This thematic structure allows detailed examination of the social, conceptual, creative and physical aspects of the world and intrinsically provides opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning and linking of the 8 key learning areas.

Specific lessons are timetabled to build numeracy, literacy and creative arts skills that support the foundation of the curriculum. These foundation lessons are informed by the learning theme that provides the focus for learning of that term and connects the 8 key learning areas into an integrated and whole school approach to curriculum framework.



This integrated curriculum approach allows flexibility to introduce current contemporary issues into the learning themes. It provides opportunities for reflection, creativity and the support of multiple intelligences. It promotes an inquiry approach to learning that fosters problem solving skills and academic stimulation of the whole child. It embraces human rights, sustainability, social responsibility and peace making in both general and specific ways.

Growth Mindset

The school has adopted a “Growth Mindset” approach. This involves continuing to practice and learn and embracing challenge and celebrating failure/mistakes as demonstrations of courage and learning.

For more information about Growth Mindset:

TED Talk by Carol Dweck titled “The Power of Knowing you can improve”

Assessment & Reporting

Assessment forms a large part of the learning journey. We assess students regularly through formal and informal means and this assists in informing us of not only the learning that has been occurring but identifies areas that we may need to focus on.

The school issues reports to parents twice a year, at the end of Term 2 and the end of Term 4. These reports provide information on the progress of your child’s learning throughout the year. You are welcome to make an appointment to discuss your child’s progress with the classroom teacher at any time throughout the year.

The school is required to offer the NAPLAN assessments each year for grade 3 and 5 students. We see these standardised assessments as a useful opportunity to experience test conditions that are likely to be experienced later in life. We provide an opportunity to practice mindfulness and meditation prior to conducting these tests in order to assist children cope with any anxiety or concern they may have. We see NAPLAN as an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of what they know and have learnt.

At the Daylesford Dharma School we do not hold formal Parent-Teacher interviews however at the end of Term 2 and Term 4 we hold Student Led Conferences. Student Led Conferences are where parents are invited into the classroom and the students present their learning to them.



This is a very rich experience for students and parents as it gives the student a real opportunity to demonstrate and explain what they have been learning in class. It also provides them with the opportunity to experience and develop confidence in presenting.

At the end of Term 3 we hold our Learning Celebration where the students get an opportunity to share and demonstrate the learning they have been doing particularly in specialist programs. It is also a great opportunity for our school community to get together as a whole.

Community

We invite parents to get involved in our school community and there are numerous ways in which you can do this.

We regularly hold fundraising and community events to not only raise money for our school but also to help build awareness of our school. Keep an eye on the eNews to see what events are coming up and how you can get involved.

We welcome parents in the classroom to assist with the learning also. Each class has a parent representative called a Class Carer who is the main point of contact for parents wanting to be involved in the classroom. The Class Carer liaises with the teaching staff to determine what the needs might be and how parents may be able to assist. They also are able to provide feedback to the teaching staff on any thoughts or ideas that parents have that may contribute to the learning. So if you have any special skills or talents that you may be able to share or whether you are able to assist in reading with students or making resources for the classroom please speak to your Class Carer and get involved.

We hold excursions regularly throughout the year and welcome parents assistance on these. Please speak to the Class Carer if you are interested in helping out on any upcoming excursions.

Working Bees, odd jobs, cleaning, organising and fundraising are just a few other areas that you can get involved. We rely on our community to support us so that we can provide the best possible learning opportunity for your child. If you have any ideas or suggestions please let us know.

We require all parents who are interacting with children to have a Working With Children (WWC) check completed. This includes assisting in classroom activities, reading, library support and excursions. If you do not have a current you can apply for one as a volunteer and it is no cost. The application can be found online at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/> once you have completed the form print out and go to an



Australia Post outlet to lodge. You will need to provide a copy of your successful WWC to the Office in order to undertake voluntary duties with the students. If you require any assistance with completing an application please see the Office staff for assistance.

All parent and carers are invited to participate in the parent/carer meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to share experiences and ideas and to link with the teachers, administration and board. Meeting dates & times are notified in the eNews.

All parents and carers are invited to join the closed Daylesford Dharma School Families Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/472381739540749/> which provides support and communication to parents and carers of the school.

Who's Who

It can be difficult to know who's who so here's a list of some of the contacts you may need to know.

Your child's classroom teacher is your first port of call should you have any concerns regarding your child's learning or wellbeing at school. We view and value our relationships as a three-way partnership between student, parent and teacher. We also view parents as the experts when it comes to your children so anything that you can share with us that will help us support your child please do not hesitate to let your teacher know.

2018 Class Carers

Preps/Grade 1: Miri

Grade 2/3/4: Lola

Grade 5/6: Mika

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2018 Teaching Staff

Preps/Grade 1:	Ann Fitzgerald (Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu,Fri)	ann.fitzgerald@dharmaschool.com.au
Grade 2/3/4:	Nicole Simirenko (Mon,Tue,Wed) / Tina Halvy (Thu,Fri)	nicole@dharmaschool.com.au
Grade 5/6:	Emily Wilden (Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu,Fri)	emily.wilden@dharmaschool.com.au

2018 Specialist Teaching Staff

Chinese:	Annshar Wolfs (Fri)	annshar.wolfs@dharmaschool.com.au
Performing Arts:	Juilet Johnstone (Tue)	juliet.johnstone@dharmaschool.com.au
Visual Arts:	Juilet Johnstone (Wed)	juliet.johnstone@dharmaschool.com.au

2018 Learning Support

Learning Support:	Jobbo (Mon,Tue,Fri)	jobbo@dharmaschool.com.au
Learning Support:	Selena McVeigh (Mon,Tue,Wed)	selena.mcveigh@dharmaschool.com.au

2018 Administration

Office:	Rosie Berenyi-Mansell (Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu,Fri)	rosie@dharmaschool.com.au
Finance:	Sandra Laudan (Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu)	sandra.laudan@dharmaschool.com.au
Volunteer Coordinator:	Miri Taube (Mon,Tue,)	volunteering@dharmaschool.com.au

2018 Wellbeing Team

Chaplain:	Jaala Freeman (Tue,Wed,Thu)	jaala.freeman@dharmaschool.com.au
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2018 Leadership

Principal:	Jen Willis (Mon,Tue,Wed,Thu)	jennifer.willis@dharmaschool.com.au
Learning Manager:	Tanya Wiggins (Wed,Fri)	tanya.wiggins@dharmaschool.com.au

Daylesford Dharma School:

Address: 11 Perrins Street, Daylesford VIC 3460 **Phone:** 03 5348 3112

Website: www.dharmaschool.com.au



Final Note

Thank you again for being part of our community, we really value your support and involvement in this unique school. The future is a little brighter with the knowledge that mindful leaders are being developed through an education based on kindness and compassion. By choosing to send your child to our school you are contributing to a brighter future and a more peaceful world.

"The emphasis of this school is to teach the noble qualities of loving kindness and universal responsibility. We are not trying to change these children, but to awaken and nurture their own deepest qualities – their innate sense of loving kindness and compassion and their own natural tendency towards positive behaviour."

Geshe Konchok Tsering School Founder