

# About Our School

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## School context

Napoleons Primary School is situated south of Ballarat in the Golden Plains Shire. We value our 153 year history of providing ongoing education in Napoleons and seek to provide students with opportunities for learning and personal development in ways that will support them into their future. In 2023 we had an enrolment of 77 students and these were supported by four full-time staff, five part-time staff and five part-time Education Support staff. School facilities consist of two buildings - a main building with four classrooms, an Art room and a teaching resource room together with an administration area. The newer end of the school hosts two classrooms, a library and an open learning area/Assembly space. The school is adjacent to a community hall and tennis and cricket facilities. The school includes an oval and playground space that support a range of multi purpose, outdoor activities. In 2023 we applied successfully for a Schools Upgrade Fund (\$25K) and used this to upgrade our toilets and improve our sandpit. We also purchased 14 new computers for our students. Napoleons Primary maintained training of all teaching staff and the implementation of the Sounds Write program across the school. We saw many students progress with their learning, particularly in Reading and Maths and we appreciate the role that the Tutor Learning Initiative played as part of this progress. It is pleasing to see this will continue into 2024. We held our second *Writers' Festival* and celebrated our theme of Indigenous Australia with a community day that was well attended by our school community and showed a diversity of high quality work across the curriculum, and especially in writing. At Napoleons Primary School we strive to improve the learning outcomes of every student. We value creativity and initiative and encourage positive effort and a pursuit of excellence. 2023 was the last year of our Strategic Plan and we look forward to a year of Review in 2024 (Term 3). Our values - Respect, Creativity, Perseverance and Belonging - are recognised through classwork, throughout the school and as part of our School Wide Positive Behaviours expectations. Students demonstrating these values are recognised through our weekly assemblies. Our renewed focus on learning will be to continue our work on Writing in 2024. In 2024 we will undertake further Mental Health and Wellbeing work through the implementation of the Visible Wellbeing Program and the Respectful Relationships program.

We strive for improvement in all areas and will implement DIBELS reading assessments in 2024, a continuation of open-ended and multiple entry maths tasks after 2023's workshops with Jo Boaler and a renewed Student Agency focus throughout the school.

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## Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

### Learning

The school has a focus on the priorities of excellence in teaching, with an emphasis on building practice excellence and creating a positive climate for learning. There is a continued focus on setting high expectations and promoting inclusion. The school has been committed to improving the learning growth of every student in literacy and numeracy with strategic decisions for the allocation of equity funding. This ensured professional development and resourcing of intervention programs. In 2023, we maintained training in Sounds Write for new staff and consolidated our inquiry cycles within our staff Professional Learning Community (PLC) with the support of an Inclusion Coach. This allowed us to ensure our students were 'ready to learn' based on the Zones of Regulation. These were implemented into each class and enabled staff to check in with students prior to commencing learning. We are committed to continuing this work through 2024.

Our achievement data reflects maintenance of Reading and Maths skills and abilities however we have continued to notice lower achievement scores in Writing and so we will have renewed efforts in Writing in 2024.

The teachers at Napoleons Primary School are committed to ensuring our students maximize every possible learning opportunity as they develop, grow, collaborate, share and support each other towards success. We continue to take regular opportunities to engage in professional learning and this was reflected in professional learning walks to explore how DIBELS works to support students' progress in reading, and exploration of the *Seven Steps of Writing* to support students' focus on improving their writing. Our achievement goal each year is to improve the learning growth of every student in literacy and numeracy by a minimum of 12 months.

Our PLC Inquiry cycles continue to focus on students' achievement data in order to determine the most effective intervention. Last year was the first of the new NAPLAN assessments, occurring in Term 1. Our results demonstrate we are at or just behind similar schools with Year 3 although this difference is more significant with the Year 5 data as follows:

Students performing at *Strong or Exceeding* in Year 3 Reading (55%), Writing (64%) and Numeracy (64%)  
Similar Schools at *Strong or Exceeding* in Year 3 Reading (59%), Writing (71%) and Numeracy (65%)  
Students performing at *Strong or Exceeding* in Year 5 Reading (64%), Writing (50%) and Numeracy (64%)  
Similar Schools at *Strong or Exceeding* in year 5 Reading (73%), Writing (67%) and Numeracy (59%)  
Our NAPLAN comparison to Teacher Judgement results indicate consistency with only minor differences in these two measures. Our data identifies that teachers mark with high expectations across all areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics. It is clear that our chosen focus on Writing is appropriate as, especially at Year 5, our results drop significantly. We have undertaken a number of strategies to improve this data, including our Tutoring (TLI) and our professional learning in 6+1 Traits of Writing and DIBELS (Reading). We are maintaining the learning we have done in Mathematics to include rich, open-ended, multi-level entry learning tasks. We will also continue to use the resources provided through the DET Tutor Learning Initiative, together with our PLC focus each term, to ensure students have the best opportunity to build on their learning and demonstrate a minimum of expected growth in their learning in 2024.

## Wellbeing

In 2023 we continued to focus on our School Wide Positive Behaviours and Respectful Relationships. We had valuable support from the Area office (Ballarat) in both of these areas and, allocated our Mental Health funding to release an experienced teacher to lead the work in this area. Additional funding at the end of 2023 enabled us to undertake learning with the Visible Wellbeing Program. This program provides opportunities to consider and look after the wellbeing of students and staff. This is an 18 month program which we will begin in 2024.

In Semester 2 in 2023 we were fortunate to be eligible for Disability Inclusion Coaching. We were allocated a coach for two terms and our area of focus was emotional regulation. Through this support, we implemented the Zones of Regulation in each class and with staff. As part of a PLC focus, we collected data and implemented activities to move students from areas of high emotion (not ready to learn) to the Green zone (ready to learn). This had a great impact and enabled teachers to develop a shared language with students, so we were all better able to meet students' needs inside and outside the classroom.

Our focus on School Wide Positive Behaviours, Respectful Relationships, Visible Wellbeing and Zones of Regulation supports our efforts to balance our Wellbeing and Learning areas in accordance with FISO 2.0

In 2023 we focussed on priority goals with the intention of realising School Strategic Plan identified targets in all aligning areas. Staff report an increase in endorsement level (91%) that is above the State average (78%) for primary schools. Our Attitudes to School Survey did drop from our 2022 levels by 1% and remains below the State average for 2023 (84%). This was intriguing to us as the climate and culture at the school is positive in general. We re-ran a local survey and discussed each area of concern and the local results presented the same or similar responses. 2024 will have an increased focus on student agency to address this data and hopefully improve students' attitudes to their schooling at Napoleons Primary School. This work will include revamping our School Wide Positive Behaviour Matrix in 2024.

## Engagement

Our attendance rates improved in 2023, in comparison to 2022. We had less students (12%) away for more than 30 days and 20 - 29 days(7%), respectively, compared with the previous year. 23% of our students were absent for less than 10 days for the year and 35% of students were absent for between 10 and 19.5 days for the year. We understand that attendance has a direct correlation with academic achievement and consistency for wellbeing. We made a concerted effort to follow up on unapproved absences supported by our attendance software (Grade Expert). An analysis of our data by year level shows that no year level was away for less than 84% throughout the year. This is an improvement on last year's attendance (80%). We will continue to improve our engagement efforts for improving student attendance. We have moved to Compass in 2024.

We continue to experience families taking holidays during school time and illness, particularly during Winter months remains a factor. We find most students enjoy coming to school and mostly present as being happy while at school.

We have always been fortunate to have active parents in our school community. We have a very active PFA and 2023 was no exception. Our parent positive endorsement (83%) is just behind the State average (86%) in the Parent Opinion Survey on our Panorama reports, although on the Performance Summary the endorsement is (71%) and the State average is (83%). High parent positive endorsement is something we have always worked hard and achieved high responses. We do continue to struggle with

getting more participation in the Parent Opinion Survey. Each year survey invitations are sent to all families rather than a random sample. In 2024 we will renew our efforts at re-engaging our parent community, in order to get more representative data. We have seen an increase in parents helping in the classroom and have a very active PFA who support us to increase and improve the support for our students. We do notice a great level of engagement when we have open events at the school, including our end of year concert, our Writers' Festival open afternoon and our Mothers' and Fathers' Day breakfasts. We will keep these events and identify more opportunities for parent involvement throughout 2024.

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## Other highlights from the school year

In 2023 we continued to see success with our LOTE Chinese program with support from a local volunteer (who also supports the program at Mount

Clear College) and his connection with Qintao University in China. We now have an established curriculum that stands, with a few 'tweaks' to support students in the years ahead. We look forward to this success continuing in 2024.

Our Camps and Excursions events continued to be very successful in 2023. Years 4/5/6 went to Anglesea for a beach experience. Years 2/3 went to Camp Sunnystones near Bacchus Marsh and Foundation/1 students had their annual sleepover at school.

Year 5/6 students also camped out on our school oval to explore the skies, stars, moon and constellations as a STEAM-based, extra-curricular program. This was our third year of this experience.

In Term 2 we undertook our second Writers' Festival. This was themed around Indigenous Australia and involved an excursion to the tower at Mount Buninyong and to Sovereign Hill. We were able to showcase student writing, Art and STEAM projects and this gave students an authentic purpose to write. Parents,

and local community members attended our Open Day and activities. This was very successful and we look forward to continuing with Writers' Festivals annually and seeing our students show improvement in their writing skills.

2023 also was the year our school was to have a new Kindergarten built on our site. Students were very excited to see the buildings arrive and are very keen to visit the kindergarten children in 2024. We are looking forward to supporting the Kindergarten staff as collegiate educators, as it will be operated by a third party.

Our end of school concert was a great celebration of our students and their expertise. We said farewell to families who had been with us many years and with many children, as their last child completed Year 6. We recognised great achievement and demonstration of all our school values. We saw great creativeness in the performances on the night and resilience as we had to move indoors due to rain, half way through the evening. We are looking forward to improving all we do in 2024.

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## Financial performance

All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school. This is consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised. We are fortunate to have a healthy reserve for a small school. Our Financial performance for 2023 shows that we ended the year with a surplus of \$128,846. The larger than usual end of year amount reflects reconciliation from the previous year's leave reimbursement. Inspection of our 2023 budget/SRP

shows that we certainly expended that year's funding on that year's cohort of students. We show financial responsibility in all our operations and allocate our resources to meet our identified school priorities and annual targets.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at**  
<https://www.napoleonsps.vic.edu.au>