




**ELC**

# **PROSPECTUS**



**FIRBANK  
GRAMMAR**

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024



# ONE CONQUERS WHO CONQUERS ONESELF

**Our vision** is for Firbank students to embody our motto, conquering themselves, their challenges and embracing possibilities.

**Our purpose** is for Firbank to provide more than exceptional education.

We care about our students and offer a breadth of experiences, knowledge and skills that equip them to be continuous 'conquerors of learning' and ready for life.

# 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 that all children have potential. 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

### PLAYGROUP - STAY AND PLAY

We provide a weekly '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 areas of the Early Years curriculum.

### KINDERGARTEN - STANDARD AND LONG DAY PROGRAMS

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 four or five-day program options for 4-year-olds. We appreciate the demands of modern life, and, since 2019, have supported our families by providing a convenient Long Day Education model commencing at 7.00am. and finishing at 6.00pm

Our Long Day Education model allows for smooth transitioning of children between it and the ELC standard program which runs between 9.00am and 3.00pm

This model supports a seamless transition between the programs.

## 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 knowledge, gifts and talents. We see the role of Firbank Grammar Early Learning Centres as providing a rich environment for students to embrace their interests, discover their strengths and passions. It is also a place where children explore fostering their curiosity and to enhance their knowledge and skills in a safe nurturing environment 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

## LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) 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 learning program places a significant emphasis on play-based inquiry learning with a balance between child-centred and intentional teaching. Our program recognises the importance of developing the whole child in the developmental areas of: communication, social and emotional, cognition and physical.

The VEYLDF is an outcomes based framework that we are required to follow and guides our practice with the children. This framework defines five outcomes for the children.

Firbank's four strategic pillars forms the basis for our educational philosophy.:

These are as follows:

- achievement
- wellbeing
- strong community
- sustainable organization

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

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

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

# 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 marveling, 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 spaces in the Firbank Early Learning Centres are designed to be 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 that 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 early 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.



# FUTURE FOCUSED

## SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) PRIORITY

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 engage in practical and relevant STEM experiences embedded throughout their the program.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, an increase 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. 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 an opportunity for wonder, curiosity and creativity.

## OUTDOOR LEARNING

- BUSH KINDER AND GARDEN TO KITCHEN PROGRAMS

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 the world around them 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 gives the children the opportunity to explore their natural environment and connect to country. They are given time to explore and investigate and harness their natural curiosity in diverse ways.

## MANDARIN (BRIGHTON CAMPUS)

Once a week, the Chinese teacher works with the children to build familiarity with the largest growing global language. An early start to this tonal language has proved to be beneficial as research shows that learning another language helps stimulate cognitive growth in young children. Mandarin is taught through engaging and interactive experiences, such as songs, stories and games. The children are also introduced to some Chinese characters.

## PE PMP

The PMP Program runs for the duration of the year and aims to develop a child's perceptions and understandings of themselves and their world through movement and motor experiences.

Multi-sensory activities promoted through the program are designed to develop each child's gross motor skills, fine motor skills, short term memory, eye tracking and language skills in a fun way.

It gives the child experiences in seeing, hearing, touching, processing, making perceptual judgements and reacting.

This is achieved using a variety of equipment during carefully sequenced activities which include running, hopping, skipping, jumping, balancing, crawling, climbing, throwing, catching, bowling, sliding, etc.

## LIBRARY

Children are engaged in a love of literature through exposure to a variety of texts and opportunities to look at and borrow books which aid brain development. Stories provide particular opportunities to develop language comprehension and the foundations of literacy. The children can choose books on topics that interest them and book recommendations are also made that lead to broadening of tastes and vocabulary. There are opportunities for the children to research their own questions or question related to their class inquiry.

## MUSIC

The Music teacher incorporates song, movement to music, voice and opportunities to play musical instruments. The children are introduced to the musical elements of sound, melody, rhythm, pitch and tempo through enjoyable music and movement experiences tailored to engage young children.

## EARLY LITERACY AND NUMERACY

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. The children use play to make meaning and understanding of the world, and to develop oral language and symbolic competence. They share personal experiences and understanding through talk, play, shared stories and collaborative exploration. When early learners assume the roles of characters and play elements of a story, comprehension increases, as do understandings of print media. Songs and rhymes accompanied by actions that support the development of concepts, sentence structure and vocabulary along with phonemic and graphemic awareness and memory. Young students relish playing with sounds and grammatical constructions, such as repeating patterns, substituting words, asking questions, repeating lists of words, numbers and letters.

## ZONES OF REGULATION SOCIAL THINKING AND WELLBEING APPROACH

Regulation is something everyone continually works on whether we are aware of it or not. The Zones of Regulation is a communication and wellbeing approach, focused on self-regulation and emotional control where children learn to recognize in themselves. There is a provision for mindfulness and thoughtfulness. It gives children an appropriate language for expressing their emotions. There is common language that is used across all the ELC and Prep.

# BRIGHTON CAMPUS



# SANDRINGHAM CAMPUS



# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We take pride in our diverse community, with several of our staff and families joining us from local and 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 girls from 3 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 3 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, collaborating to support their child's learning and development. Both formal and informal opportunities enable the building of a relationship intended to ensure the Early Years Program meets your child's individual talents, interests and 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 through music, story time and play.

## 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 fund-raising and fundraising.





# PATHWAYS FOR LEARNING- OUR ADVANTAGE

Children's early experiences have an impact on their later educational journey. We aim to extend this through the child's school life with our focus on the 'pathways for learning' model. Students commencing their learning journey in our Early Learning Centres have a unique opportunity to reap the benefits of continuing an educational experience 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.

### HOW WE SUPPORT TRANSITIONS AT FIRBANK ELC

WHAT WE DO	WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE
CONNECTING WITH CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buddy Program</li> <li>Children engaging with peers</li> <li>Introducing children and families to educators before commencement</li> <li>Getting to personally know each child</li> </ul>
CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcoming families</li> <li>Meeting with the Head of Campus to discuss the program and answer questions</li> <li>Sharing information</li> <li>Recognition of the significance of starting school for parents</li> </ul>
CONNECTING WITH PROFESSIONALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration between educators</li> <li>Communicating with previous teachers</li> <li>Working collaboratively across services, where necessary</li> <li>Strong leadership to support transition</li> </ul>
FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduled Transition sessions in the Prep room prior to commencement</li> <li>Promoting continuity for children</li> <li>Accessing appropriate support for children and families</li> <li>Identifying strategies to support new students</li> </ul>
RECOGNISING STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrating children's growth</li> <li>Recognising family knowledge and achievements about their children</li> <li>Respecting issues that matter to young children</li> <li>Challenging stereotypes</li> <li>Holding challenging, but realistic expectations for children</li> </ul>
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings between families and educators</li> <li>Monitoring the transition over time</li> <li>Acknowledging child and family reflections</li> </ul>



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51 Outer Crescent, Brighton Vic 3186 ELC - Year 12 Girls Campus  
45 Royal Avenue, Sandringham Vic 3191 ELC - Year 6 Co-educational Campus  
[firbank.vic.edu.au](http://firbank.vic.edu.au)