

Buddies in big school

Vox pop

What do you like most about summer?



Tarrawanna Public School

Established: 1952.
Address: Kendall St, Tarrawanna.
Phone: 4284 4399, 4284 4662.
Fax: 4285 1389.
Email: tarrawanna-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au.
Principal: Norma Blinkhorn.
Assistant principal: Shirley Ellis.
Number of students: 156.
Number of teachers: 10.
Number of front office staff: Two.
Motto: Strive to achieve.



Transition to School's Billy Backpack with Tarrawanna Public's Tahlia Mackay, Marcus Bogovac, Tiana Mackay, Emily Creagan, Laura Green, Phoebe Green, Taylor Mackay, Penny Small and Georgia Le Pla. Picture: KIRK GILMOUR

The first day of kindergarten doesn't have to be a terrifying event. At Tarrawanna Public School, new school year tantrums and tears are practically non-existent thanks to the Transition to School program. A NSW Government initiative, the program is designed to foster partnerships between families, pre-schools and primary schools.

Co-ordinated by Illawarra Children's Services, it eases both parents and children into the school community by providing opportunities to meet and speak with teachers and other parents before the year begins.

Offering a gentler way to introduce children into the world of school, kindergarten teacher Sharon Hoban said network members regularly met to ensure their innovative methods remained effective.

"Myself and the assistant principal go to monthly meetings with the Transition to School network where we actually make links with pre-schools," she said.

"Pre-school teachers and kindergarten teachers come together and discuss issues involving transition and how we can best make the transition a positive experience for all children."

In addition to parent information

expos and a school starter picnic, parents and children are also encouraged to meet at the school over three mornings during the final term of the year.

At these meetings, future students are teamed up with a buddy, an older child who will guide the new kindy kid through their first year of school.

"Their buddies will send the child a Christmas card so that they'll get another little letter before the end of the year wishing them a Merry Christmas and telling them they are looking forward to them coming next year," Mrs Hoban said.

"When the new kindies arrive next year the buddies take them down to the playground and sit with them during eating time.

"They have the comfort of knowing that they have this one person who is looking after them and making sure they know where to go and get a drink from and where to go to the toilet.

"The buddies stay with the student throughout the whole year of kindergarten and they come up to class and work with their sight words and their spelling."

Year 4 student Katherine Peetz will be a buddy for two new kindergarten students next year and said she was looking forward to helping her new

friends.

"It gives them a good idea about the school," she said.

"It's lots of fun because once you've got a buddy they usually become a good friend of yours."

But it isn't just the new students who need support throughout the transition into big school - the whole family is involved.

A major factor in the program's success has been the high involvement of parents and the introduction of a parent mentor.

As the parent mentor for the 2009 kindergarten class, Raeligh Kerr said her task was to help ease parents' worries and concerns.

A mother of two young girls, Mrs Kerr said meeting other parents before the school year provided opportunities for friendships to be made before that nerve-racking first step onto the playground.

"While the kids are in transition all the parents will get together and swap phone numbers and we actually organise meetings so the parents can try to stay together," Mrs Kerr said.

"There's such a long time between transition and school starting so parents can organise some play dates or have a picnic together just so they can get together over the holidays."

MICHELLE WEBSTER



Jason Davis
Year 5

Playing sport, my favourite sport is rugby.



Jack Dorahy
Year 4

When I go to swimming training the water is warm.



Aimee Potter
Kindergarten

I get to wear lots of dresses.



Chelsea Tobia
Year 5

When it's hot you get to go to the pool.



Mahmoud Abdul Ghani
Kindergarten

You get to play outside all the time.



Cassandra Kerr
Kindergarten

You can go swimming in the pool.



Ashleigh Morrison
Kindergarten

Playing tennis and there are lots of other games I like to play too.

Did you know?

Shaun Boyle, Wollongong Winter Olympian in skeleton, attended the school from 1976-82. Local journalist Nicole Charlton (nee Boyle) also attended Tarrawanna Public School as did MP David Campbell's two sons. Bev Lawson, Wollongong Police area commander, was the first school captain in 1952.

Principal's view



Norma Blinkhorn
Tarrawanna Public School

Tarrawanna Public is a fantastic little school set in lovely spacious park-like grounds.

We have recently had lots of great new playground equipment and an undercover playmate area installed, plus lots of educational games brightly painted on our playground surface areas.

We have many great resources in our school including computers in every classroom and a computer lab for all our children to use.

Our school provides lots of opportunities for all children to grow, develop their

abilities and to strive to achieve in all areas of their school life. We have lots of friendly, well behaved, great students at our school.

Recent achievements by our students include Ainsley Kerr winning first place in the Wollongong Council poetry writing competition, and a number of children gaining entry into selective schools, and OC classes.

Parents and carers are always welcome to visit our school, and we encourage strong parent teacher partnerships.

Our school staff like to look after our children and foster high expectations, to prepare them for positive participation in later life.

One of our new school initiatives is the Positive Behaviour for Success program, which involves all our staff and students.

We have great sports programs, including gym sports and coaching clinics in many different sports, and a swimming program in addition to the normal cross country, athletics and PSSA sports.

The creative and performing arts are well catered for with music, visual arts, and dance, drama, and public speaking programs.

Of special school pride to us are our two fantastic junior and senior choirs, which give frequent public performances with all our students participating.

Additional special programs for our students include Reading Recovery, plus other programs to assist student learning.

Aboriginal education and the Dare to Lead program are priorities in our school.

We have a fantastic kindergarten orientation procedure and an excellent kindergarten program.

There are also great kindergarten rooms and wonderful teachers, and we are part of the new initiative BEST START for our children.

Enrolment enquires are welcome and we are currently enrolling for 2009. Come and meet us and have a look around, we love to show off our great little school.



Principals: this is a free service. To feature your school on this page, contact:

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PHOTO: GILMOUR