

PARENT HANDBOOK

2025

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SCHOOL INFORMATION

Principal: Christine Pillot

Assistant Principal: Judith McDonald **Business Manager:** Val Maher

Office Administration: TBC and Sandra Dillema

SCHOOL TERMS 2025

	Start Date	Finish Date
Term 1	Students start Thursday 30 th January Friday 4 th April 2.00pm finish Foundation students start Friday 31 st January Early Education Program students start Monday 10 th February *Foundation students do not attend Wednesdays in January and February. From 3 rd March, Foundation students attend 5 days/week.	
Term 2	Tuesday 22 nd April	Friday 4 th July 2.00pm finish
Term 3	Monday 21 st July	Friday 19 th September 2.00pm finish
Term 4	Monday 6 th October	Friday 19 th December 1.30pm finish

CURRICULUM DAYS 2025

Tuesday 28th January

Wednesday 29th January

Wednesday 13th August

Monday 3rd November

SCHOOL ROUTINE - START AND END OF THE DAY

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL: 9.00am

START OF DAY – PLEASE ESCORT YOUR CHILD TO THE DESIGNATED MEETING AREA / ENTRY GATE

IF YOU ARE LATER THAN 9.10am PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO THE OFFICE WHO WILL CALL THE CLASSROOM

HOME TIME: 3.00pm

PICKING UP AT THE END OF THE DAY: 2.45 - 3.00pm

<u>PLEASE MEET STUDENTS AT THE DESIGNATED MEETING AREA / GATE.</u> Please be on time to pick up students at the end of the day. Students can become anxious if they are not picked up on time. Our staff are required to attend meetings and other duties at the end of the day, so we would appreciate students being picked up on time.

WELCOME

We welcome all students and families as part of our Croydon Special Developmental School Community.

This handbook provides an overview of our school for your information; our staff are happy to answer any questions you may have.

OUR SCHOOL PROFILE

At Croydon Special Developmental School, we have a team of highly skilled and dedicated teachers, education support and allied health staff who work in partnership with families to provide a quality education for students with a moderate-profound intellectual disability. Some students also have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and/or physical disabilities.

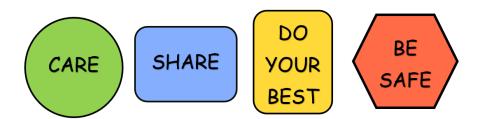
Our school curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum and offers flexibility for teachers to provide structured, individualised, engaging learning experiences for our students. Our Early Education Program is based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, (VEYLDF), with a focus on developing each child's fine and gross motor, communication and social and emotional skills through guided play and structured activities.

We promote positive student wellbeing and engagement through the implementation of Positive Education, explicitly teaching personal and social capabilities through the Respectful Relationships curriculum and School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework. Our school values are Care, Share, Do Your Best and Be Safe.

OUR SCHOOL VISION

AT CROYDON SDS WE ARE CREATING SUCCESS!

OUR SCHOOL VALUES



ABSENCES

If your child is going to be away please record this on **Compass** or notify the school office by **9.15am** on the day of absence.

If a student is away without explanation parents/carers will receive a text message on the day of absence notifying them of the absence and requesting that school is notified of the reason. We ask that you report a reason for absence as soon as possible on Compass or by phoning the school office, (a voice message can be left) ph: **9725 4933.**

CAR PARKING

During term 1, our building project will be completed. Once complete, there will be a designated driveway and car park, (top of Belmont Road East) for parents/carers and all visitors to the school at the front of the new administration building. This driveway is also to be used for student drop off and pick up.

Currently there is parking available along Belmont Road East, (in front of school) along Bacchus Drive, and at Belmont Park, (behind tennis court).

Please be aware of the parking restrictions on Belmont Road East.

Our first priority is the safety of our children, so all students and siblings must be carefully supervised in this area. **Drivers, please enter the school gates slowly, 5 km/hour.**

CLASS STRUCTURE

Croydon SDS is divided into four sub schools: Early Education, Primary, Secondary and Transition.

We run a Transition to School Program for the students starting school for the first time and details will be given to families during the enrolment process.

Student transition from Primary to Secondary School at Croydon SDS is dependent on a range of factors that are taken into consideration when determining the class that best meets student needs. Parents are advised at the end of the school year regarding placement for the following year.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Child Safe documents and information are available on the school website.

Croydon SDS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Croydon SDS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Croydon SDS is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

We value our partnership with families and encourage you to participate in many school activities. In 2025, there are two modes of teacher and parent/carer communication; parents/carers may choose between a hard copy communication book or email. You can email your child's teachers through Compass.

Our school newsletter is published fortnightly through Compass.

For matters of a more urgent nature, we encourage parents/carers to speak to either the classroom teacher or Instructional Team Leader over the phone or in person. This can be arranged by making a meeting time via email or phoning the front office.

SCHOOL PHONE: 9725 4933

Contact with teachers needs to take place between 8.30 - 4:30pm. It is not expected that teachers will communicate with parents via phone or email outside of these hours or on weekends.

PLEASE FEEL WELCOME TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS. OUR STAFF ARE HERE TO HELP AND SUPPORT.

COMPASS

Compass is our primary learning management and communication parental portal.

You will be given your personal password to access the Croydon SDS Compass portal.

Non-attendance SMS texts will be sent from Compass.

Using Compass, you will be able to:

- View your child's school events, these are incursions and excursions,
- Email your child's teachers,
- View your child's attendance, and enter an explanation for absence or lateness,
- View student Individual Education Plans and reports,
- Consent and pay for camps and excursions, and
- Access school documentation (policies, resources etc.)

Getting Started

The Compass App can be downloaded to your phone from your App store by searching for 'Compass School Manager' and looking for the blue and white Compass icon.

Compass can also be accessed via your computer at https://croydonsds-vic.compass.education/

PLEASE NOTE: If you are having difficulty accessing Compass, the quickest fix is to use the "Can't Access Your Account?" (or Forgot My Password) link. This will provide you a temporary password to access your account, and you can update your password to suit your needs.

What if I already use Compass?

Compass is increasingly becoming the student management system of choice for many schools and some families may already be familiar with this system. Families may also have students still at schools where Compass is your primary communication tool.

It is possible to use the Compass app to switch between student profiles, even when students are attending different schools.

To set up your Croydon SDS student on your current Compass phone application use the 'Switch Accounts' link in the menu to add an additional student. You will be asked to login into the Croydon SDS portal on the first occasion.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office on 9725 4933.

The Compass application can be downloaded free from the Apple Store and Google Play.

DREAM BIG- Science / Technology

Dream Big is based on a STEM program, where learning occurs through integrating the subjects, science, technology, engineering and maths. Dream Big promotes curiosity, creativity and problem-solving skills through opportunities to explore both design and digital technologies to create innovative solutions that meet current and future needs. Students are encouraged to explore and make decisions about the development and use of technologies, considering the impacts of technological change and how technologies may contribute to a sustainable future.

Dream Big enables students to learn and experience the process of taking an idea with raw material and developing it into a functional item. Students are encouraged to analyse and refine processes throughout projects within the Dream Big program. Students participate in a range of hands-on learning experiences, such as, gardening, product design and making, and robotics.

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

We also offer an Early Education Program that caters for children aged 2.8 to 4.8 years, (as of January 1st of that year) with significant delays in two or more developmental areas or a diagnosed disability.

Our Early Education Program is based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, (VEYLDF), with a focus on developing each child's fine and gross motor, communication and social and emotional skills through guided play and structured activities.

Children may only be enrolled in 1 Early Education Program setting.

Session hours – 9.30am – 2.30pm

3-year-olds are offered 1 session a week, 4-year-olds are offered 2 sessions a week.

EXCURSIONS

Throughout the year students in upper Primary, Secondary and Transition may have the opportunity to attend excursions. Additional payment may be required for some excursions. If families are eligible, they can use their Camp Sports Excursion Fund (CSEF) for these excursions. Please contact the office for forms to apply for this funding. Excursions include extra - curricular activities such as art/theatre productions and community activities.

Parent consent forms and payment must be completed via Compass prior to the excursion. Parents unable to access Compass will be sent a hard copy of the excursion form which can be returned to school. Students MUST have a completed consent form to attend the excursion and will not be able to attend without consent.

FAMILY SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

The Family Support Coordinator, Linda Garland is available to inform parents and guardians of the services and supports in the community to assist them in caring for their child and family. Centrelink payments, Companion Cards, transitioning to school or to post school options, attending the SSG meetings, accessing community resources and allied health professionals. She can support parents and guardians to explore options to meet their needs and develop a fortnightly newsletter for the sharing of information and opportunities in the community. Families can book an appointment to meet Linda on her Croydon SDS workdays of Wednesdays and Fridays by contacting the office.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Our school nurse, Helen, is on duty from 9.00am-3.00pm and will coordinate first aid and medical issues. If your child requires first aid at school, a first aid report will be completed on the day of the incident by the treating staff member, following this a Compass notification will be sent to parents. Staff will notify parents, usually by phone, if there has been a head injury or any higher-level illness or injury. Please do not send students to school if they are unwell.

Health Support Needs Plans

Students with Complex Medical Needs will have a Health Support Needs plan completed at a meeting with parents/carers and the team working with the student including: school nurse, teacher and therapists. These will be reviewed annually, or as required by our nurse.

Head Lice

Head lice are transmitted by having head-to-head contact with someone who has head lice. Parents are responsible for the detection and treatment of head lice. Please inform the school if your child has head lice and a letter will be sent home to all students in that class providing information for treatment and control. Children are excluded from school until the lice has been treated.

Medical Conditions

Parents are requested to complete the Medical Form prior to your child commencing school. This form is required to be updated annually or if there are any changes the school should be aware of. STUDENTS MUST HAVE UPDATED FORMS TO CONTINUE ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Asthma

An asthma management plan is required to be completed annually and **SIGNED BY DOCTOR**. Asthma medication is to be kept with the student and staff will supervise and record administration.

Epilepsy

An epilepsy management plan is required to be completed annually and **SIGNED BY DOCTOR.**A Swimming medical clearance form signed by a doctor is also required for students with epilepsy.

Allergies

The school must be informed of all allergies as soon as any condition is known. Parents will be asked to fill out an appropriate allergy form so that we can monitor all allergies. Allergy forms are available from the office.

Anaphylaxis

An anaphylaxis management plan is required to be completed annually and **SIGNED BY DOCTOR**. Epipen will be kept in the student's classroom.

Sun Smart

Hats: Each student is required to provide a sun hat which must be worn in terms one and four when they are outside. Please name hats. We are aware that some students refuse to wear a hat but we will encourage them to do so.

Sunscreen: Students are encouraged to wear a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (SPF30+). Sunscreen will be applied by teachers for students needing assistance. Students must bring their own, named sunblock to ensure it is suitable for their skin. School will have sunscreen in each classroom and permission forms are required to be completed if you would like staff to apply the school's sunscreen or if your child will be applying school sunblock.

INCURSIONS

An exciting range of incursions are held at Croydon SDS suited to the age group and learning needs of students. Incursions, such as lunch time clubs and performances are held at the school throughout the year and include activities such as sport and fitness sessions, animal visits, cultural activities, community service visitors and a range of arts performances. If families are eligible, they can use their Camp Sports Excursion Fund (CSEF) or School Saving Bonus (up until June 2025) to cover the costs to pay for these incursions.

LATE ARRIVAL/ EARLY PICK UP

Please report to the main office to sign your child in and/or out via the Compass Kiosk at the main desk at reception. We do ask that you are on time to pick up your child as staff are required to attend meetings and other duties after school. Please telephone reception and advise if you are running late to collect your child.

LEARNING PROGRAM

Each student at Croydon SDS has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Classroom teachers, therapists work collaboratively with families to identify the learning goals for each student. IEPs are monitored regularly by the classroom teacher and goals are reviewed each semester. Parents will receive a copy of their child's IEP and a mid and end of year progress report, via Compass or hard copy on request.

You will be invited to attend a Student Support Group Meeting (SSG) in week five of each term. Your child's teacher will meet with you to discuss your child's needs, goals and progress. Face to face meetings are preferred and we encourage students to attend these meeting where possible to share their thoughts and achievements.

Individual Education Plans

Individual Education Plans are written to cover curriculum areas taught in all Victorian schools and adapted to meet the diverse needs of our student population. Each student will have goals in:

- English: Reading and Viewing/Speaking and Listening/Writing
- Maths: Number and Algebra and Measurement and Geometry
- Personal and Social Capabilities
- Movement and Physical Activity: Physical Education
- Dream Big: Design Technologies
- Humanities
- The Arts
- Science

LOST PROPERTY

Please let your child's classroom teacher know if your child has lost an item at school.

Parents are reminded to clearly label all clothing and personal belongings.

LUNCH

Students are required to bring their own drink, snacks and lunch to school. Soft drinks are not permitted and healthy food choices are encouraged.

MEDICATION

If your child requires any medication at school, it must be supplied in original packaging with a signed authority and instructions.

<u>Medication forms are available from the office.</u> There is a **Medication Authority form** for regular daily medications administered at school and a **Short-Term Medication Authority** for medications which are for a short period of time e.g. antibiotics. Medications must come to school via parents/carers or bus supervisor, **not carried by students.** Medication is kept in a locked cabinet in the Health Centre and administered by the school nurse.

<u>Parents / carers must notify the school nurse as well as class teacher immediately of any changes</u> to medication.

NDIS NAVIGATOR

The NDIS Navigator, Libby Anderson is available to help parents and carers navigate and understand the NDIS. Libby can support families to apply for and access NDIS funded supports for their child, prepare for plan reviews and find out how to raise issues about their child's plan with a provider. Libby works at Croydon SDS on Thursdays and Fridays from 8.30am to 4.30pm. You can speak with your child's teacher or contact the school office to make a time to speak with Libby. If needed, an interpreter can be booked in person or over the phone.

A Release of Information form needs to be completed by parents/ carers to indicate which external services and providers are able to have contact and share information with the school.

NEWSLETTER

A fortnightly newsletter is published online and the link is given to families via Compass. A hard copy can be sent home for any families on request. Please let the office know if you would like a hard copy of the newsletter sent home each fortnight.

PARENT PAYMENTS

Schools provide students with free instruction to fulfil the standard Victorian curriculum and we want to assure you that all contributions are voluntary. Nevertheless, the ongoing support of our families ensures that our school can offer the best possible education and support for our students. We want to thank you for all you support, whether that's through fundraising or volunteering your time. This makes a huge difference to our school and the programs we can offer. Information about voluntary parent payments is provided to all families through Compass and on or website.

Department of Education Payment Policy and annual school payment plans, including amounts are published on our website.

PARENT PERMISSION FORMS

At the beginning of each year, parents are required to complete a parent permission via Compass for:

Photographs, Swimming, Trampoline, Sunscreen, Movies/ DVD's, Head Lice and Personal Care.

A Release of Information form needs to be completed by parents/ carers to indicate which external services and providers are able to have contact and share information with the school.

PERSONAL HYGIENE LEARNING AND SUPPORT PLAN

In 2025, we have a new Personal Hygiene Learning and Support Plan to identify individual student personal hygiene care needs and supports. This plan is to be developed on enrolment during the first SSG meeting with the teacher and parent/carer. The plan will be reviewed in the student's first year in secondary, or earlier if required.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P.E.) – Movement and Physical Activity

Physical Education at Croydon SDS includes a range of programs, including Swimming, Bike Education, Perceptual Motor Program, (PMP), Interschool Sport, and fitness. These programs provide students with the opportunity to develop gross motor skills as they develop proficiency in movement skills, physical activities and movement concepts. Students' participation in various physical activities, sports, and methods of fitness provides enjoyment and increases their health and wellbeing. Sessions follow a familiar routine which can incorporate action songs and gross motor circuits, with a focus on core strength, balance, body awareness, agility, hand-eye coordination and turn taking. Students develop problem solving and teamwork skills thorough playing games, observing rules and social norms.

PLAYGROUNDS

Croydon SDS have two main playgrounds, one for primary and another for secondary/transition students. The playgrounds are designed for children of all abilities and offer a host of movement and play options, including inground trampolines, bicycle paths, a basketball court and a range of games painted on the asphalt.

PRIMARY SECTION

Our primary section consists of two sub-areas, Primary 1 caters for students from Foundation to Year 2. Primary 2 caters for students in years 3-6.

Focus: Our classrooms provide safe, supportive and stimulating learning environments with educational programs which cater for individual skills, strengths, needs and interests.

In the primary section we strive to:

- Build independence and confidence for each student in daily routines.
- Promote a strong sense of self for each child.
- Develop student communication skills to interact effectively with peers and staff.
- Develop play skills.
- Develop fine and gross motor skills to support learning.
- Support self-regulation to be ready to learn.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council comprises representatives of parents and teaching staff. Parent representatives are elected for a two-year term. At the start of the school year, nomination forms are provided to parents to nominate themselves to be elected to the Council. The role of the School Council is to help set the long-term future for the school and maintain oversight (not management) of the school's operation.

SCHOOL INFORMATION / WEBSITE

Current school documents can be found on Compass, (under school documentation) and on our school website. These documents include Croydon SDS policies, School Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan, Annual Report, and Consent Form Information.

The school website: http://www.croydonsds.vic.edu.au/

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

School photographs take place each year. In 2025, official school photos will be taken in early term 3. The school has an external company come and take student photographs. Information about the date, photo pack options and prices will be published in the school newsletter.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The Croydon SDS school uniform is not compulsory to wear, however it is highly encouraged; many parents find that school uniform is a practical option and supports students with their school routine.

The school uniform creates a sense of pride in our school as well as giving our students a sense of belonging. The school uniform colours are red and navy. The Croydon SDS uniform consists of a range of practical clothing options to cater for all weather and school activities.

Uniforms with school logo can be ordered and purchased from State Schools' Relief our uniform supply company.

Uniforms can only be ordered online using the Shopify App. If you need assistance, please speak with office staff.

A price list, how to order guide and sizing chart are available from the school office. Sample sizes are also available at the office. All uniforms will be delivered to the school. During school holidays, uniforms will be delivered to your home address. Some items in school colours can also be bought from Kmart, Target, Big W etc.

SECURITY

It is essential to keep Gates 1,2 and 3 school entry gates closed, especially at drop off and pick up times. This is to ensure the safety of all children. Please meet a staff member at the gate for your child to transition into the school grounds. During school hours the gates are locked, and access is via the office. If the front door is locked, please phone the school on 9725 4933.

SECONDARY

The secondary section is for students in Years 6 to 9/10.

Focus: Providing engaging learning environments where students are encouraged and supported to explore, achieve and succeed, whilst developing independence and social engagement.

In Secondary we work with students to:

- Promote and build student independence and confidence through all school activities.
- Assist students to develop a strong sense of self and show an awareness of the feelings and needs of others.
- Extend communication skills to interact effectively with a range of people in different contexts, including the community.
- Build on learning and life skills.
- Promote positive interactions and social experiences with others.
- Support self-regulation to manage everyday situations and experiences.

Career Action Plans

In Secondary, students begin to their develop career action plans to inform educational programs that work towards post school options for all students.

TRANSITION

Our transition section caters for students in Years 10/11 and 12.

Focus: To build students' individual capacity, advocacy and develop maximum independence to enable a seamless transition from school to post school placements.

All transition students are enrolled in the Victorian Pathways Certificate, (VPC). Students will work towards unit one in Literacy, Numeracy, Personal Social Capabilities, and Work Related Skills over their three years in Transition.

Students are supported to develop their own Career Action Plan (CAP) with therapist input where relevant, with a focus on planning for the future. A career action plan is a dynamic planning document owned and managed by young people, to reflect their increased career development learning. CAPS are shared and discussed with parents during SSG meetings.

The CAP helps young people:

- set their goals,
- clarify the actions needed to achieve these goals, and
- commit to participating in the planned activities.

In transition we strive to:

- Build independence and encourage ownership of learning for each student in school, work and life,
- Promote a strong sense of self and build a respect for the feelings and needs of others,
- Extend communication skills to interact effectively with a range of people in different settings including out in the community and in work situations,
- Extend work and life skills to build independence,
- Build persistence to work on and complete tasks,

- Develop independence and confidence when out in the community,
- Develop self-management skills to enable effective problem resolution and the ability to work as part of a team, and
- Ensure the student is actively involved in the planning process.

Curriculum:

The CAP is used in conjunction with the student's Individual Education Plan which reflects VPC to build academic, life and work skills capacity to enable students to transition seamlessly from school to post school pathways.

STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

We recognise that birthdays are important in the lives of our students. Staff are not able to accept invitations to attend student birthdays outside of school. Parents are able to send in things for a small class-based celebration. Please speak with your child's classroom teacher if you would like to make arrangements.

THE ARTS

The Arts provides students with the opportunity explore and develop their creative and expressive capacities by learning about the different practices, and traditions that have shaped the expression of culture locally, nationally and globally. Students are both the artist and audience in the Arts. During The Arts program, students explore a range of artistic forms, including visual art, dance and music. Students are encouraged to be creative and express ideas and feelings as the develop their fine and gross motor skills in both development and production of art works.

TRANSPORT

We have a designated transport zone which outlines the bus service area, for students to access the CROWN bus service to and from school. Details on the bus zone, route and times will be provided to parents prior to the start of a new school year. The school office staff will notify parents of these details. Parents/carers must inform the school via the school office if there are any changes to bus pick up arrangements such as a different person collecting the student from the bus.

Crown bus staff are not trained to manage specific medical conditions and will call 000 if medical support is needed. Please speak with the school about specific needs and whether bus transport is appropriate.

A Release of Information form for Crown Coaches needs to be completed at the start of each year.

Please note: On declared CODE RED days, no Crown bus runs will operate.

School Owned Buses

The school also owns a 12-seater bus and a wheelchair accessible 16-seater bus which are used to support class and section excursions and a variety of school programs.