Getting to know our Prep Teachers

**Prep Team Leader**

Glen Katherine was my first school and twenty four years later…. I’m still here. I began teaching Italian and then moved into a classroom. My own children attended GK and loved every minute of it. I am passionate about teaching and have taught many year levels. I have a creative flair which is demonstrated through my everyday teaching. I am a bubbly outgoing person who enjoys chatting and loves spending time with my family.

totino.angela.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Angela Totino**
Prep T

**Libby Downey**
Prep D

This is my third year teaching Prep at Glen Katherine Primary School. I loved my time at primary school so much that I decided to come back…. as a teacher! I’m a mum to two dogs and enjoy spending time with family and friends. I am a passionate Geelong supporter. I am a child at heart who still enjoys Disney movies and paraphernalia.

downey.elizabeth.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Jessica Szczepaniak**
Prep S

This is my third year at Glen Katherine Primary School. I love teaching Prep. I am originally from Queensland and enjoy spending my holidays there. I have travelled and taught abroad. I recently tied the knot. I enjoy keeping healthy and am a personal trainer. I also enjoy spending time with family and friends.

smith.jessica.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Specialist Teachers working with your child this year**

I have been a teacher at GK since 1995. I love all sports have a passion for teaching physical education and Sport to Primary aged students. It has been fantastic to follow the sporting pathways of students that I have taught over the years. I get a buzz out of seeing students strive towards achieving their goals and working towards “being the best they can be.” We have fantastic facilities here at GK and students are provided with excellent sporting opportunities.

blackburn.david.m@edumail.vic.gov.au

**David Blackburn**
Phys. Ed.

I have been teaching at GK since 1992, both as a class teacher and a specialist. I have loved both roles and really enjoy watching the students develop from Prep to Grade Six and beyond. My passion is in the visual arts and I hope that I have inspired many students in their artistic endeavours. NOTE: Nadia teaches grade 3-6 and is at school

cosma.nadia.n@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Nadia Cosma**
Art 3-6

I have been teaching at GK since 2000, first in grades and now in Science! I love being the science and sustainability coordinator because my passions are being outside and gardening. At home we have a big garden that my whole family enjoys working in. I think we are lucky to have a great

webb.annemarie.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

**MUSIC TEACHER**
to be confirmed
Welcome to Prep at Glen Katherine Primary School

We would like to welcome all our gorgeous children and families for 2015. We can’t wait to share all the new and wonderful things we will be doing this year. Parental involvement is highly valued and we look forward to sharing your child’s learning with you. We are looking forward to getting to know all our children and families.

SPECIALIST PROGRAM

During the year your child will participate in a Specialist Program where they will be taught by a teacher other than their classroom teacher. Physical Education, Science, Art and Music occur weekly within a 50 minute session. Our even and odd weeks align to the number of weeks students have been at school. Eg. Week 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 (Odd week timetable used)

Here is your child’s Specialist Timetable;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EVEN WEEK</th>
<th>ODD WEEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Sandra Portara</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYS ED.</td>
<td>David Blackburn</td>
<td>Tuesday (PT) Friday (PD &amp; PS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td>Thursday (PD) Friday PT &amp; PS</td>
<td>Thursday (PD) Friday (PT &amp; PS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIENCE</td>
<td>Wednesday PT &amp; PD</td>
<td>Tuesday PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What your child is required to bring to Specialist classes:

- Equipment for specialist classes:
  - We like all students to bring FILLED drink bottles to specialist classrooms.
  - Art: smocks for all art classes
  - PE: hats, appropriate clothing and footwear and notes if not able to participate in class.
  - Science: hats
  - Music: smiles

COMMUNICATION in Prep: OUR BLOG

If you are unfamiliar with blogs, they are like online journals. Blogs are websites where teachers and SPECIALIST teachers can add posts for people in our school community to view—students, parents and wider.

In Grade Prep you will find a range of information, which could include;

- Suggestions on ways you can support your child’s learning at home
- Classroom routines and procedures
- Recent learning taking place
- Samples of students’ work, homework expectations and support for learning
- Photos of students learning and celebrating their achievements

You can access our classroom BLOGS and Specialist BLOGS via our school website/students/blogging at GK.

www.glenkps.vic.edu.au
LEARNING in Prep - what is important to us

Our Integrated Units this year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Family and Me</td>
<td>People who help us in our Community</td>
<td>On the farm</td>
<td>Move it, Move it!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIBRARY
The children in our class go to Library on Monday.

This is an opportunity for students to read and borrow books to have in class or to take home to read. The Library is also open at 8.20am to 8.35am before school and 3.00pm to 3.15pm after school for more borrowing or returning of books.

Please bring library bags on Monday.

Special Programs
ICT—The children in our class will use laptops within the classroom to enhance ICT skills.

PMP—The Perceptual Motor Program runs for a 30 min session each week in Terms 2 & 3.

Fine Motor—Children will develop their fine motor skills by participating in a range of activities weekly.

HOME READERS - our expectations and routines

Every night your child will bring home a book to share and read with you. To start off with books could be textless or have simple text. We do not expect children to be able to read the texts by themselves yet. Please set aside time to sit and read these books with your child. Ask them questions about the text and pictures.

Record the take home books read in the yellow ‘Home Reading Diary’. Do not use this book to record library books or other books read at home.

G.K Blue Reading Bags are to be used for their take home reader. Please bring the blue bag, with the reader and ‘Home Reading Diary’ each day to school.

Remember reading should be an enjoyable time with your child. Please ensure you find a quiet time and place to do this.

CLASSROOM ROUTINES and PROCEDURES which help us to learn

PUNCTUALITY (Beginning the Day)
Every day your child is away from school/late impacts on the level of success that will be achieved throughout their time in school. We understand that sickness or necessary/critical appointments are a part of everyday life and cannot be avoided. We also know that getting students to school every day and on time will enable us to get the best out of your child (academic, social and emotional growth) which is always our priority.

Routines and procedures are critically important in establishing a strong learning environment within each classroom. For this reason it is extremely important that students are at school, ready to begin their day prior to the bell going at 8.40am. It is expected that learning begins from the moment the bell rings. Students will be marked ‘late’ if they are not in their classroom when the bell rings.

Parents entering classrooms – Parents are welcome to speak to teachers before 8.30am or after school at 3.00pm. After 8.30am, all teachers will be preparing for the start of the school day so will be unavailable for discussion. If you should require a longer period of time to discuss anything concerning your child, our teachers are happy to negotiate another time that is suitable for all concerned.

To enable the school day to begin promptly for all students, we ask parents not to enter the classroom with their child when the bell rings. A priority in establishing a strong learning environment is encouraging independence with all our students (Prep to Six) and the start of the day routine begins at 8.40am for the entire class.

HEALTHY HABITS

Nude Food – We are a school working towards attaining our 5 Star Science and Sustainability Rating. A continual part of this is educating our community about sustainability practices and healthy habits. For this reason we encourage students to make a conscious effort to reduce their rubbish waste by using little or no wrappings in their lunch boxes. Airtight containers and lunch boxes with compartments provide the ability for food to be left ‘nude’ (unwrapped), which also reduces our rubbish around the yard and in bins. So try to get on board.

Brain Food /Water – Learning uses a lot of energy. Topping up our bodies with nutritious food and water is important to get the most out of our day. We encourage our students to bring ‘brain food’ to school for this reason. Brain food could consist of fresh fruit, dried fruit or chopped vegetables that students can nibble on during class time. In most classrooms we do not stop to eat this food. Instead, students graze at specific times directed by their teacher. For this reason we ask that fruit is chopped up into easy to eat portions (rather than whole pieces of fruit) and messy/ juicy fruit is avoided. E.g. watermelon, mango,
LINKLETTER
Our school linkletter is published weekly via our school website. Parents who ‘subscribe to newsletter’ on our school website will receive a weekly email alerting them to the arrival of our Linkletter. A hard copy can be found in the office area should you not be able to access this information electronically.

ABSENCE NOTES/LATE TO SCHOOL
If your child is absent from school it is an Education Department requirement that you provide a note to your child’s teacher indicating the reason for absence. We ask that this arrives with your child on return or soon after.
If your child is late to school, they do not need to go to the office to inform them of their arrival. Late students should move directly to their classroom to start their day. Our school website has Student Absence Notification forms that can be printed or you can fill in an online absence form directly through the Notices link.
Glen Katherine Primary School Website: www.glenkps.vic.edu.au

UNIFORM
Wearing school uniform is compulsory for all students. Some particular components to be aware of;

**Hats** – Our school hat needs to be worn during Term 1 and Term 4. If a student does not have a hat at school they will need to stay under a shade area for the duration of lunch and recess. Hats during Phys Ed are also compulsory.

**Hair** – Hair should be neat and well groomed, with longer hair (shoulder length or longer) tied back in line with our Head Lice Management Policy. Extreme hair colours and styles are not acceptable. All hair accessories should conform to the GK colour scheme. (nay blue, royal blue, pale blue, white)

**Shoes** – Shoes should be predominantly black, blue, white or grey with laces in the same colour scheme. Sandals must have covered toes. Footwear should offer appropriate foot support when doing physical activity. Lightweight, slip-on style canvas footwear is not considered appropriate.

LABELLING ITEMS
Could you please ensure that all personal items belonging to your child are clearly labelled with their name. Items include clothing, hats, lunch boxes, water bottles, bags and stationery. It is inevitable that students misplace their items from time to time, but names on items assist in the return to students. It also provides an easier sorting process in our lost property area at the office.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING A PARENT HELPER THIS YEAR?
WE LOVE OUR PARENT HELPERS!
If you have time to help out in classrooms or around the school in any way this year we would love to have you. The partnership between school and home can never be undervalued and we encourage parents and grandparents to become active members of our GK community in any way they can.
We do have guidelines and expectations developed for Parent Helpers which are important to be aware of. Later in the booklet a copy of the Parent Assistance Policy has been included for your reference. A few things in particular to highlight would be;

- When working in the classroom it is important to know you would be assisting the whole class and not just the needs of your child
- Adults assisting or working within the school may sometimes gain access to confidential information such as disclosures by children or other personal information. In all cases confidentiality must be respected.
- In Term 2 and 3 the preps will be participating in our Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) and we will require parent helpers. More detailed information will come home closer to the date.

If you are interested in assisting, let the Grade Communicators know when they request contact details. Alternatively, chatting directly with your child’s classroom teacher could occur.

GRADE COMMUNICATORS
The Grade Communicator Policy has also been attached later in the booklet. It explains what a Grade Communicator is and how you can expect to see them function within our school.
OUR SCHOOL VALUES

Resilience
Excellence
Safety
Persistence
Encouragement
Creativity
Tolerance

Steps To Learning developed together, walked together...

Creating positive learner-centred classrooms is a priority for us at Glen Katherine PS. We know that when we focus on each individual student’s academic, social and emotional needs we will have the most effect as teachers. What our classrooms look like, feel like and sound like impacts on every students’ learning. Every relationship (both student and teacher) in our classroom will impact on every student’s learning potential. We are committed to providing every child with the same learning opportunities by providing consistent learning processes across all classrooms.

Some key beliefs we have and work to further develop at Glen Katherine PS include;

**Rights & Responsibilities** - With all rights, come responsibilities.
Students and teachers have the right to learn, and the responsibility to allow others to learn.
Students and teachers have the right to feel comfortable and safe in the classroom and the responsibility to allow this to happen.

Relationships – learning is a social event, and studies have proven that both teachers and students will benefit from caring and supportive relationships with each other. To improve students’ chances for academic success, teachers must strive to form meaningful, personal relationships with students and build a respectful learning community.

**Clear expectations and boundaries** - Students need clear boundaries and structures in place to support classroom learning. A consistent whole school approach to managing student behaviour allows students to develop an understanding that school rules are there to protect our rights and there are consequences for the choices we make. Consistency means that the process is fair for all. Everyone will be congratulated for good learning behaviours and accept responsibility for their poor behaviour.

**SCHOOL BEHAVIOURS WE HAVE DISCUSSED IN PREP**

We have been discussing kindness and how to be kind to others. We have look at sharing, taking turns, speaking nicely to each other, helping each other and using our manners. Children have drawn pictures about how they can be kind to others.

We have also started to look at the school values, talking about being persistent, respectful, resilient and safe. We are implementing this through the You Can Do It program which is social and emotional skills program aimed at the early years. We will continue to discuss and build these values over the school year.

If you need to have a chat about anything this year...

Your child’s teacher can be contacted on the school number: 9431 1599
(If the teacher is teaching, a message will be left with them to make contact with you if necessary)

You are welcome to approach teachers before school between 8.20am and 8.30am. After this time, teachers are expected to be preparing for the start of the day. After school at 3.00pm may also be an appropriate time if your child’s teacher is available.

It is always preferable to organise a mutually convenient time to discuss problems or concerns. Before school and after school teaching commitments will impact on our ability to discuss matters to the level they deserve. A strong home school partnership is critical in assisting your child throughout this year and we would like to ensure we invest an appropriate amount of time in addressing your questions and concerns.
Glen Katherine PS Policy Statement – PARENT ASSISTANCE

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS
Parents provide our school with significant resources, insights and expertise. We seek to greatly enhance the opportunities that we can offer our students by encouraging the numerous benefits available from parent involvement in our school.

GUIDELINES
The wide-ranging participation of parents in school programs, classrooms and operations, Parents and Friends Association, School Council and its subcommittees, fundraising, camps and excursions, uniform shop and canteen should be actively encouraged at all times.

The school will recognise the contributions of parents as they occur throughout the year in general school communications and formally recognise contributions by means of an annual thank you morning tea in late term 4.

For Parent Helpers in Classroom, Support Programs, Excursions and/or Camps
• Parents as classroom helpers must comply with the school's expectations and practices.
• Classroom helpers and volunteers for excursions, incursions and camps must have a 'Working with Children Check' to work in our school in child related programs to meet the expectations of the 'Working with Children Act' 2005.
• Invitations for parents to assist in the school's programs will be made via the school's linkletter, grade blogs, website or through personal contact at the individual teacher's discretion.
• Parent helpers will be briefed as to their roles and responsibilities prior to commencement and where required will undertake appropriate training or orientation. To ensure clarity of expectations, parent helpers will be given written guidelines, which they will be required to sign indicating willingness to comply.
• Where a child has special medical needs, there will need to be individual consultation and agreement regarding parent participation in out of school activities.
• When adults are working with or supervising students a teacher must be within the vicinity at all times as the teacher has the primary duty of care responsibilities.
• All decisions relating to adult involvement or otherwise will rest with the teacher in charge of the activity.
• Adult helpers must not be accompanied by preschool age or other children for duty of care reasons.
• All parent helpers are required to supervise students in their care adequately. This duty of care requires not only the protection of students from known hazards but also protection from those that could arise.
• Helpers assisting with school or classroom programs must only discuss or convey relevant curriculum or program details with students as authorised by the teacher in charge. No other matters are to be discussed with students.
• Adults assisting or working within the school may sometimes gain access to confidential information such as disclosures by children or other personal information. In all cases confidentiality must be respected.
• Helpers are not responsible for disciplining students. They must refer them to the teacher in charge.
• Helpers within the school must not use the staffroom unless invited to do so by a staff member. This is to respect the privacy and professional needs of teachers.
• Concerns relating to parent helpers should be addressed to the Principal or Assistant Principals.
• Failure to observe any of the above guidelines will result in that helper no longer participating in school programs.

Date Reviewed: July 2012
School Council: August 20012
Responsibility: Leadership Team
GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/ADULTS VOLUNTEERING TO HELP OUT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Parents are able to provide our students, staff and school with valuable support, time and assistance and for this, we are very grateful. Our school and programs are certainly enhanced by the many contributions that parents make from one year to another. One way parents are able to support their child/ren and teachers is by assisting and helping out in some way during the school day, where and when this is possible of course. Parent helpers assisting in class programs take on a ‘duty of care’ role as they are partly involved in the shared supervision of students. All parents assisting and helping out at school during the day are required to have a ‘Working with Children’s Check’. This is a departmental requirement.

To assist parents and to help in understanding the expectations that are in place for helpers, the following guidelines are intended to give helpers/prospective helpers a clear understanding of what is expected when you commit to lending a hand:

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Classroom helpers must comply with the school’s expectations and practices. All supervising adults have a legal duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students in their near vicinity from risks of injury that are reasonably foreseeable.
2. Helpers will be briefed as to their roles and responsibilities prior to commencement and where required, will undertake appropriate training or orientation. The teacher/staff member inviting parent assistance is responsible for briefing the helper/s.
3. Due to duty of care requirements, parent helpers are unable to bring other children with them (e.g. toddler, pre-schooler, baby). If for some reason a parent helper is unable to participate in a planned school activity e.g. illness, they need to notify the class teacher at their earliest convenience.
4. When adults are working with or supervising students, a teacher must be within the vicinity at all times.
5. Helpers must respond to any emergency management procedures as requested by a member of staff.
6. Helpers must undertake the activities and supervision requirements fully during the entire duration of the activity/event as expected and be aware of any risk assessment material if required in the activity, eg gymnastics, PMP, Sport.
7. Helpers must be prepared to work with an individual/small group that may not necessarily include their own child/children.
8. Helpers assisting with school or classroom programs must only discuss relevant curriculum or activity details with students as authorised by the teacher in charge. No other matters are to be discussed with students.
9. Helpers are not responsible for disciplining students. Any student behaviour issues must be referred to the teacher in charge.
10. Helpers assisting or working within the school may sometimes gain access to confidential information such as disclosures by children or other personal information. In all cases confidentiality and privacy must be respected.
11. Helpers must ensure mobile phones are on silent during activity sessions and only check for messages when not directly supervising children. It is not appropriate to allow any student to use any mobile phone/electronic devices at school or from their bag.
12. Taking photos will be the responsibility of GK staff (for privacy reasons) so helpers are not to take photos on their own personal digital devices.
13. It is not the responsibility of helpers to contact or pass information onto any other parents regarding student welfare, behaviour, injury, learning issues etc. The teacher is responsible for this if/when required and privacy regulations would be breached if for some reason a helper divulged inappropriate information to other parents.
14. Helpers are to direct any concerns regarding students and/or the facilities promptly to a GK staff member and/or the teacher in charge.
15. As a number of children have allergies and/or special dietary needs, helpers are not permitted to provide any food to any child.
16. Helpers are expected to comply with the government legislation that sees all schools as ‘smoke-free’ zones.
17. Helpers should only use the staffroom when invited to do so by the staff member they are assisting. The staffroom is the only whole staff communal space and we all need to respect the privacy and professional needs of teachers and non-teaching staff during their working day.
18. Any concerns about helpers will be referred directly to the Principal or Assistant Principal. Non-compliance with any of the guidelines is likely to result in a helper no longer participating in school programs.

We do value the wonderful support we receive from our helpers and hope that the above guidelines are viewed positively and with an understanding that clarity of expectations is essential in order to ensure that everyone gets maximum benefit from our school helper’s program.
Are you interested in taking on a Grade or sharing a Grade Level Communicator Role?
Like to learn more about the role of a grade communicator? Then please read on …

THE GRADE COMMUNICATOR POLICY

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

The Grade Communicator Program supports effective parent/teacher, parent/school and parent/parent communication to enhance links across our school community and support the use of parental involvement within the grade, area or specialist program.

The Grade Communicator Program also supports parents’ understanding of school wide programs and operations.

The program also aims to support opportunities for parents and families to extend their social connections within grades and areas of the school and to offer welcoming contacts to new families enrolling at the school.

GUIDELINES:

1. A representative from our school Parents and Friends Association (PFA) will be elected to the role of School Grade Communicator Convenor (SGCC) each year.

2. On an annual basis, the School Grade Communicator Convenor will liaise with the school Leadership Team to review the Grade communicator program and determine the needs of the school in the year ahead.

3. The SGCC will coordinate the distribution of information to parents along with the selection process of a number of grade or grade level communicators each year. Expressions of Interests from interested parents will be called for and Grade level teachers will be consulted prior to Grade Communicators being confirmed.

4. A list of all school Grade Communicators will be developed and available to the school staff and all grade representatives.

5. The Grade Communicators will be encouraged to make an effort to attend PFA meetings at least once a year and assist the PFA for special functions and morning teas if required.

6. Agreed meeting procedures will be developed. An agenda will be distributed prior to each meeting enabling parent representatives the opportunity to add items of special interest to the agenda. This will allow all parties adequate preparation time and provide opportunities for specific staff to be available for input. Minutes will be distributed to all representatives.

7. Grade Communicators will be advised of their role at the initial Coordinators’ Meeting each year. Guidelines for communication including the use of proformas, privacy requirements, timing and use of administration facilities will be advised.

8. A section of the Parent Section of the school website will highlight the role and activities of the Grade Communicators. The school Linkletter and/or grade level Blogs and emails will be used to provide information to parents.

9. A register of newly enrolled families will be maintained at the office and available via the Welcome Committee Convenor to pass on to the appropriate grade/level communicator to enhance the transition of new families to our school community.

10. Grade Communicators will be available to guide parents within their grade/grade level to appropriate school contacts as required, with the classroom teacher being the first contact point. Representatives will be familiar with our Communication with Parents, Parent Participation, Parent Helper and Parents and Friends Policy guidelines.
WAYS IN WHICH GRADE or GRADE LEVEL COMMUNICATORS CAN HELP

In 2015, following feedback in 2014 from both parents & staff along with the declining availability of volunteers, we are reducing the number of Grade Communicators. We hope to provide Grade Communicators (GC) as follows:-

- Preps: 3 (1 GC per class)
- Grade 1: 3 (1 GC per class)
- Grade 2: 2 per grade level
- Grade 3: 1 or 2
- Grade 4: 1 or 2
- Grade 5: 1 or 2
- Grade 6: 1 or 2

Some examples of the types of communication and assistance that could be facilitated by a Grade or Grade Level Communicator include:-

**Parent/teacher**

- Finding classroom helpers for specific activities or events e.g. Working bees, literacy groups, hands on Maths, helping with computer activities, art related activities
- Finding helpers for simple administrative tasks (e.g. sharpening pencils, laminating, gathering materials, covering books)
- Finding help for incursions e.g. BBQ assistance, gardening etc.

**Parent/parent**

- Development of a family phone (mobile only) & email communication list for each grade at a grade level (voluntary inclusion, parents will need to provide their permission to be listed on the communication list) using the Parent Communication proforma provided by the School Grade Communicator Convenor.
- Emergency assistance for parents in need e.g. Helping to bring child to school when parent is ill or finding someone close who can through the school newsletter or phone tree.
- Through the Welcome Committee making sure a new family in the school is settling in OK. (A register of newly enrolled families will be maintained at the office and available via the Welcome Committee Convenor to pass on to the appropriate grade or level communicator.)
- If there is enough interest, organize an occasional social get-together – e.g. a coffee morning or a parent night out for your grade/grade level or get together with other Grade Communicators and do a joint activity. (The activity can be promoted in the Linkletter, on grade level Blogs, via email to parents who have registered their email or on the website.)

**Parent/school involvement**

- Being able to support other parents in their understanding of school wide matters by:
- Referring them to school information booklets, policies, and website links and
- Encouraging them to contact appropriate school personnel, with the classroom teacher being the first contact point
- Assisting them to be aware of our Communication with Parents, Parent Participation and Parents and Friends Policy guidelines.

The Grade Communicator confers directly with the class teacher or a designated GC Liaison teacher regarding the provision of and nature of assistance required.

If you are interested in nominating for a Grade or Grade Level Communicator role, then please complete & return the enclosed Grade Communicator Expression of Interest proforma.