Grade 1/2 Newsletter
Term 1-4 overview

Dear parents/caregivers,

Welcome to 2015 school year and we are delighted to have the opportunity to work with you and your children. We are excited to learn more about all of our students and their interests, abilities and great achievements. This newsletter will highlight an overview of each learning area, such as Numeracy, Literacy (Reading and Writing), Integrated Curriculum, and Specialist subjects. This newsletter will also outline key events that will be taking place this year.
Literacy

Each week, students will participate in literacy sessions for two hours per day. The program is based on *Fountas and Pinnell*, which is a structured and sequential program that develops fundamental phonics blending and decoding skills used in both Reading and Writing. The Curriculum Component incorporates: Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion, Shared and Performance Reading, Writing about Reading, Writing, Oral, Visual and Technological Communication, Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study and Guided Reading.

**Reading**

**Lesson structure**
The reading sessions involve the exploration of concepts and ideas in texts, through sharing stories at the beginning of each lesson. Each student continues the lesson by exploring the selected concept independently or in small groups, using their just right reading books. The teacher will work with one of the small groups in a Guided Reading session. Each group will have the opportunity to participate in a Guided Reading session once a week.

**Home Reader**
A home reader will come home from school each afternoon. Please take the time to enjoy reading with your child each day. The purpose of the take home readers is for children to practice fluency and phrasing in their reading. Your child may read through this book quite quickly and it may appear that they are finding the words ‘easy’. These books are not designed to be a difficult task for your child. It is very beneficial to sit and look at the book together and share a conversation about what is happening in the book, how the characters may be feeling, and relating the ideas in the book to familiar experiences. We ask you to fill in the reading diaries every night after reading a book.

**Library books**
Library Books are borrowed weekly (as long as the previous book has been returned) during library sessions. These books are not always equal to your child’s ability. They are free to select any book, which may interest them.

**Writing**

**Lesson structure**
The writing sessions focus on developing various writing skills, where all children participate in shared learning experiences that focus on a specific genre. The children will then work on activities that will support them in understanding the learning outcome. Handwriting and spelling is highly reinforced during this time.

**Writer’s Workshop**
The Writer’s Workshop is a program that encourages students to write about their own passions and interests. With students choosing their own topics, they become experts in the field as their writing has meaning and purpose to them. This will then naturally support the learning of the English mechanics and the writing process becomes authentic.

**Spelling**
Students will continue to learn the High-Frequency Words progressing from Recognition to Spelling. Learning to recognize a word is a necessary initial step towards being able to retrieve a word from long-term memory for use when writing. Just as learning to recognize words enables your child to read more fluently, learning to spell the most commonly used words enables them to spend more thought on the creative process of communicating their ideas through writing. The process of learning words being introduced to your child is the ‘Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check’ method. This method incorporates the most fundamental learning processes; visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
Numeracy

Each week, students will participate in five, one-hour sessions of numeracy. Throughout these sessions, students will explore numeracy learning through a range of experiences, including the use of ICT, Mathletics and hands-on materials, where they will explore core mathematical concepts, such as:

**Number and Algebra**
Place value of numbers up to 1000, Skip counting by 2s, 4s and 5s, Odd and even numbers, Dollars and cents, Simple fractions, Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division

**Measurement and Geometry**
Measuring length, area, volume, mass and time
Informal and formal measurement, Sequencing time such as months of the year.
Lines, surfaces, planes, corners and boundaries, two and three dimensional shapes and objects, symmetry and asymmetry, location and maps

**Statistics and Probability**
Chance – ‘likely’ or ‘unlikely’, create displays of data using lists, tables and picture graphs and interpret them.

Numeracy sessions will be differentiated and an individualized program of activities designed to address students’ specific needs will be provided.

Inquiry

Each week, students will participate in four, one hour sessions of Inquiry. This term refers to most other areas of study, incorporating:
- Civics and Citizenship;
- Health and Physical Education;
- The Humanities (Geography and History)
- Science
- Interpersonal Development.
Children will work around a variety of thematic units during the year.
These include:

- Term 1: Social Harmony, Values and Responsibilities;
- Term 2: Food, Plant and Life Cycles
- Term 3: Space and Planet Earth
- Term 4: Mini Beasts and Dinosaurs

Learning will focus on:
- Fostering and developing students’ curiosity about their immediate world
- Encouragement of asking questions and testing ideas
- Exploratory, purposeful play that is central to students’ investigations
- Use of senses to observe and gather information
- Describe, making comparisons, sort and classify to create order that is meaningful
- Observing and exploring changes that vary in rate and magnitude
- Students beginning to describe relationships in the world around them
- Encouraging students to develop explanatory ideas and test them through further exploration.

Specialist Subjects

Throughout the week, students attend a wide range of specialist classes. These include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performing Arts and Art</td>
<td>Lisa O’Dowd</td>
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<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Greek: Tina Kyriazopoulos</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mandarin: Bo Wen (Ivy)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Macedonian: Miryana Ristovski and Julia Makacoska</td>
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<td>PE:</td>
<td>Mr. McIver</td>
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Please refer to the attached timetable for appropriate session times.
# Socialization

As part of our learning, we strongly support good opportunities for socialization at school. Students will progressively develop independent and interpersonal skills, understanding their rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Looking at and understanding terms such as cooperation, respect, acceptance, responsibility, fairness and caring, allows students to enjoy a happy lifestyle both at school and at home. These are some of the values we highly support at the school. There is a copy of our school expectations matrix attached, REACH, so please have this visible at home for students to connect these values between home and school. All of our school and classroom expectations are in place to assist in the socialization, health & welfare and developing independence of your child.

## Important Dates

### Term 1

- 6<sup>th</sup> March- St. John First Aid Incursion P-6
- 11<sup>th</sup> March- LOTE commences and Family Fun Night
- 18<sup>th</sup> March-Breakfast?
- 20<sup>th</sup> March- Grade 5/6 C Cake stall
- 24<sup>th</sup> March-School Photo’s
- 27<sup>th</sup> March- Term 1 concludes and Easter Raffle

### Term 2

- 13<sup>th</sup> April- Term 2 commences
- 1<sup>st</sup> May- Grade 5/6L Cake stall
- 22<sup>nd</sup> May- Art Centre excursion and 1/2D Cake stall
- 27<sup>th</sup> May- Pasta day
- 5<sup>th</sup> June- Curriculum day (pupil free day)
- 8<sup>th</sup> June- Queen’s birthday (pupil free day)
- 12<sup>th</sup> June- Movie night
- 26<sup>th</sup> June- Term 2 concludes
- The Travelling Kitchen- Date TBA

### Term 3

- 13<sup>th</sup> July- Term 3 commences
- 24<sup>th</sup> July- Grade 1/2MP Cake stall
- 19<sup>th</sup> August- Curriculum Day (pupil free day)
- 26<sup>th</sup> August- Hotdogs day
- 4<sup>th</sup> September- 3/4S Cake stall
- 7<sup>th</sup> September- Herb day
- 18<sup>th</sup> September- Term 3 concludes

### Term 4

- 5<sup>th</sup> October- Term 4 commences
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October- Prep R Cake stall
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November- Melbourne cup (pupil free day)
- 9<sup>th</sup> November-Curriculum day (pupil free day)
- 27<sup>th</sup> November- Prep K Cake stall
- 5<sup>th</sup> December- Fete and Car boot sale
- 14<sup>th</sup> December- Concert and Student Art gallery
- 16<sup>th</sup> December- Year 6 Graduation
- 18<sup>th</sup> December- Term 4 concludes
- Grade 2/3 Sleepover – Date TBA
Homework

Homework is a vital component in the support teachers and families provide for the students. We will be giving a homework sheet on Monday afternoon that outlines the tasks for the week. Please spend a small amount of time each night with your child to ensure they excel in their engagement with learning.

How can I help at home?

Here are some points on how you can help your child excel in their learning by helping them at home. This will connect their learning between the school and home contexts.

Literacy:
Readin

-Listen to your child read the Take Home Reader.

-Check the school bag for new readers and the return of ones read.

-Encourage borrowing of library books. Encourage correct care and responsibility for the safe return of the books.

-Encourage reading of any description. Read road signs, play car-reading games. Read WITH and TO your child as often as possible, but make it “fun”.

-Encourage writing of any description. Shopping lists, letters to friends and relatives, a diary, imaginative sentences / stories, wish lists, transcription from brochures....

-Numeracy:

-Numeracy:

-Play counting and tables games with your child.

-Reinforce teaching of Measurement, e.g., as “what is the time?” Cooking in the kitchen. Encourage the wearing of a watch. Give your child money to handle when shopping. Discuss distances when traveling, time and distance to cover a journey etc.

-Jigsaw puzzles provide early experience for visual planning skills to develop. Games where dice are used give opportunities for number use and understanding. Logic and strategy games sharpen young minds for thinking and planning ahead.

Inquiry:

-To support students in further exploring and understanding the chosen topic at the given time. This can be achieved through conversations, questioning, use of ICT and books.

Specialist Subjects

-Ask your child what they are learning about and what they have discovered.

-Socialization

-Progressively give your child more responsibility, placing increasing expectations on tasks. E.g., encourage them to tidy their room; your input into the tidying should become less as they become more independent and able.

-Encourage responsibility for school notices, books, homework.

-Teach your child how to tie shoelaces.

-Encourage manners. “please”, “thank you”, and waiting their turn.

-Encourage sharing with friends.
MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH

- Please assist us at school by ensuring we have up to date details regarding address and phone numbers in case we need to contact you. This is particularly important if your child becomes ill and needs to go home or see a doctor. Please remember to provide your child with a healthy lunch. (Fruit for recess.)

- Please provide a note if your child has been absent. We often need to be informed of the nature of any illness.

- Where possible, try to keep to a regular bedtime for your child. “Early to Bed” on school nights is encouraged.

- We are a Sun Smart school and insist on children wearing a hat when outside during Terms 1 and 4. Please provide your child with a hat. Some parents are choosing to leave a hat at school in the classroom and supplying another for their child to wear between home and school.

- In the classroom we try to enforce an expectation of good eating habits, i.e., no walking around eating, sit quietly and eat, clean up dropped food, crumbs and wrappings. Reinforcement at home is appreciated.

- From time to time Head Lice can be a problem. Please check regularly your child’s hair for head lice (live louse) and nits (the eggs). No matter how long or short the hair, please check (especially behind ears, sides and back). Long hair should be tied and hats should not be shared. If you discover a problem, please let your child’s teacher know.

We look forward to working with you in the education of your child. If you have any concerns or problems at any time, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see us.

Warm Regards,

Year 1/2 Teachers.

David Dean
Julia Makacoska
Niki Photopoulos