Prep Information

2013

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The following is additional to the information booklet which was given out at the end of 2012.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routines/Administration</td>
<td>Page 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absences</td>
<td>Page 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour Management</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Education</td>
<td>Page 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Page 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Page 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Page 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy for Children</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>Page 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>Page 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Routines/Administration

Term Dates:

**Term 1:** Tuesday 29th January (first two days are student free). Students from Years 1 to 6, begin on Thursday 31st January to Friday 28th March.

**Term 2:** Monday 15th April to Friday 28th June

**Term 3:** Monday 15th July to Friday 20th September

**Term 4:** Monday 7th October to Friday 20th December

School Hours

- 8:50 am - start
- 11.00am - 11.30am - recess
- 1.45pm - 2.25pm - lunch break (includes eating lunch between 1.30pm & 1.45pm)
- 3.15pm - dismissal

All Prep students are dismissed at 3.15pm. This will assist in easing traffic congestion at the end of the school day.

Communication

If you wish to contact us regarding your child you may email us (email addresses have been sent home).

Any notices will be sent home via the clear plastic folder that is in your child’s blue folder. The notice board outside the Prep room also has information on what we’re doing.

Absences

If your child is away from school, you need to provide a written or emailed note of their absence include dates and reasons. If you are going on an extended holiday, we need, in writing, the dates which you will be away. The absence notes proforma is on the Patch website.

If your child arrives late to school, or leaves early, you must sign them in/out at the office. We need the white slip from you for our records.
A culture of positive reinforcement and encouragement permeates all facets of our school and underpins all our interactions with children wherever possible.

Despite there being few issues with behaviour at The Patch, staff have decided that a whole school approach to behaviour management is needed – one that is consistent in all grades across the school. As a result, we are currently trialling a whole school approach to Behaviour Management called ‘Step Up For Success’.

STEP UP FOR SUCCESS is a 3 step approach that can be easily implemented at any level in the school. It is simple for students to understand and for teachers to implement. STEP UP FOR SUCCESS is an approach that focuses on positive outcomes, is clear visually for students and teachers to track and allows individual teachers ownership in terms of using their own preferred reward system. STEP UP FOR SUCCESS has another very important dimension in its application that many other approaches to behaviour management overlook. It can act as a catalyst for teachers to focus on those children who often just ‘fit in’ – but who can easily be overlooked due to others demanding or needing more attention. Because of the clear visual aspect of where children are placed on the Step Up For Success chart, teachers can be more pro-active with those who always do the right thing but sometimes go unnoticed.

HOW IT WORKS:

- Each classroom will use a chart divided into 7 sections titled ‘Step Up For Success’.
- Each student will begin the day with their name in the middle section of the chart, the aim being to move up 3 steps to the top of the chart by the end of the school day.
- Once a student reaches the top of the chart there will be a reward according to the system in place in each particular grade.
- If a student does something positive (eg working well, giving a good answer, listening well, helping someone etc) the teacher can tell them that they can ‘step up’ and their name is then moved up to the next step on the chart. Children can move their own names up or the teacher can do it for them.
- If a student does something inappropriate (eg arriving late for class, disrupting the class, being rude etc) the teacher can tell them that they have to ‘step down’ and their name is then moved down a step.
- The first step down is a warning to the child.
- At the second step down into the second last section of the chart, the child needs to be removed from his/her peers for 15 minutes as a more serious warning. This could be in the middle room, at the side of the classroom on a chair, in a corner of the room etc.
- If a student has ‘stepped down’ into the second last section after a second warning and is obviously nearing the bottom of the chart, the teacher can unobtrusively focus on helping this child move up again by ‘catching them doing something positive’ or speaking to them in such a way as to avoid any further incidences of inappropriateness hopefully.
- Clear guidelines and consequences need to be in place and communicated clearly at the very start of introducing this 3 step approach because everyone needs to be clear
about what the final consequence is if a student reaches the bottom of the chart – as well as the reward available to them if they ‘step up’ 3 steps to the top of the chart.

- The consequences of reaching the bottom of the chart after 3 steps down are to take work and go to a designated teacher for the rest of the day. Parents will be informed via a note home or a phone call if their child has had to be sent to another grade due to inappropriate behaviour causing them to be ‘step down’ 3 steps and off the chart.
- If a child has ‘stepped down’, been sent to a designated teacher for the rest of the day and then still misbehaves, he/she will be sent to the Assistant Principal or Principal for further action.
- If it is found that a child is being removed from his/her class too often, the teacher and Principal or Assistant Principal will meet to discuss what further intervention is needed to break this pattern and move forward more positively again. This would involve parents being informed and involved in the process.
- Specialist teachers will support the Step Up For Success approach by referring to it in their classes and verbalizing it with the children when they are working well - or not. Specialist teachers will not have the classroom chart brought to them but will, if appropriate, send a note back to class listing the names of any students who have shown positive behaviour/responses or otherwise.
- The rewards that children receive when moving off the top of the chart after the 3rd and final step are at the discretion of each classroom teacher.
- This approach focuses on positive outcomes, is easy for replacement teachers to follow and contains a visual representation of where each child is at throughout the day.
- Each day is a new day as children all begin again in the middle section of the chart.

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**Environmental Education**

Prep: during their first year of environmental education, students in prep are introduced to our nature-based education program through hands on activities which build on their curiosity and understanding of the world around them. Students explore our multi-award winning student designed and built gardens, interact with the animals of the Eco-Centre, discover the wonders of the school ground - including the wetlands, examine life cycles from eggs to chicks and seeds to vegetables and express themselves using natural materials and the great outdoors. They immerse themselves in nature, whether it is building miniature homes in our fairy garden, constructing child sized bush shelters in the wetlands, harvesting potatoes from our vegetable garden or making terrariums in old strawberry containers. Through these activities and more, students develop an understanding of the diversity and beauty of nature, learn to take responsibility for living things and encounter firsthand the life around us all.

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**ICT**

In Prep we have access to an interactive whiteboard which we use for literacy and numeracy activities. We also have access to laptops which we will introduce later on in the year.
Indigenous Education

Within the indigenous history curriculum students develop an understanding of the past and present experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their identity and the continuing value of their culture. The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions, critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively.

Foundation – Year 2: Curriculum focus: Awareness of family history and community heritage.
This history curriculum enables students in Foundation to Year 2 to learn about their own social context of family, friends and school, and the significance of the past. They engage with the remains of the past; develop a concept of time as present, past and future, and through role play use their imagination to speculate about the lives of others in the past. Through experimentation, practice and play, children in these years use their interest in people and how things work to make sense of their world.

Japanese

Japanese at The Patch Primary School

At The Patch Primary School, the Languages Program focuses on Japan and the Japanese language.

All students from Prep to Grade 2 have 30 minutes of Japanese per week, and Grades 3-6 learn the Japanese language and culture for one hour per week.

While it can take up to 2000 hours of language study to become fluent in the Japanese language, primary school students have the ability to learn and retain new language readily, particularly in regard to written Japanese characters. Recognition of hiragana characters, and the way they form words and sentences, will be introduced and reinforced through a variety of learning activities and games. Japanese vocabulary and grammar will be emphasized, as well as learning about Japanese culture and etiquette associated with speaking in Japanese. Students will also have the opportunity to get involved in activities related to Japanese festivals, as well as some historical aspects of Japan.

Numerous studies have indicated that learning a second language has many advantages other than being able to speak another language. Studying a second language in the earliest years of primary school is shown to advance the age of readiness in English. Language skills are transferable; what we learn in one language helps us with any other language. Learning Japanese helps the students to strengthen their English skills. Learning a second language enhances the student’s ability in writing and maths, as well as advancing cognitive development. Research has also shown that people who learn a second language at a young age are more likely to have more advanced grey matter in their brain.

The Japanese program at The Patch supports the school’s English literacy and numeracy programs. It is difficult to teach another language without re-enforcing English structures.
Numeracy is also supported, for example, numeracy activities such as telling the time, counting money and calculating change, etc., must be understood in English before being able to do in Japanese.

Each year, the school holds a cultural day, where students spend time participating in Japanese activities including sport, famous Japanese folktales, craft, music, etc. We are also applying for a Japanese sister school, so that students will be able to engage in meaningful language learning with students in Japan. Sometimes this is a lengthy process, but we will let you know as soon as we know!

We hope that students at The Patch will find learning Japanese a fun and rewarding experience, and that students will choose to continue Japanese at high school, where available. If you have any queries, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact our Japanese teacher, Jane Capon, who is here on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Library

Each Friday afternoon (after lunch) the Prep children go to the library all together. We ask that children have a library bag to put their borrowed book in. Library books need to come back on Friday so that children can borrow another book and we can return the last one in the system. If children forget or don’t have a library bag, they are unable to borrow that week. Children are able to borrow 1 book each week, so long as they have returned the previous week’s book. If you lose a book and cannot find it, please send along another book (this doesn’t have to be the same one) with a note to replace it.

Literacy

Our Early Years Literacy Programme includes exploration and explicit teaching of reading, writing, spelling, handwriting skills and speaking and listening.

Reading and Writing

The ability to read and write with understanding is a core element of our literacy program. As a team we all have a love of reading and remember being drawn to books and spending countless hours ‘getting lost ’ in them. It is this love of reading we want to develop in the young children we work with each day. We are aiming to build a community of strategic readers and writers. To do this we will be explicitly teaching the reading and writing strategies they need to be successful readers and writers.

Reading Eggs

ABC Reading Eggs is a program developed by the Blake Education literacy team, the publishers of Storylands, Go Facts, Sparklers, Gigglers etc. The program allows students to experience a unique online world, supporting individual learning by offering one-on-one lessons where children progress at their own rate. With interactive animations, fun games and memorable songs, Reading Eggs is great fun. The program also allows teachers to keep track of individual student’s progress and move children on so that each child is working at their own level.

All Prep children will receive a password for use at home and school.
**M100W**

To help your child develop their sight vocabulary, we will be sending home sets of words starting with the 12 Golden words. This is to help in the reading process, to develop automatic retrieval of words. Children develop at their own rate. As they learn these words we will test them and give them the next level. The magic 100 words make up, on average, one half of the words used in reading.

**Take home books**

Each day, we will change your child’s reader. As their sight vocabulary increases, they will be tested by the teachers and placed on the appropriate level. The take home book is below the level that they may test on because this needs to be an easier book in order to develop their fluency and expression. If by chance, the book is too hard, just read it to your child. After testing, if necessary, we will change your child to the next level.

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**Numeracy**

Our study of number is related to understanding basic number concepts and developing the appropriate mathematical language from a wide range of experiences.

During this year your child will be presented with the opportunity to:

- Learn to count in sequence and develop an understanding of pattern and order in number (emphasis will be on the numbers 1 - 20).
- Gain an understanding of the concept of grouping.
- Gain an understanding of equality, addition and “take away”.
- Understand the meanings of such terms as between, before, after, under, over, first, last.
- Recognise what is consistent or inconsistent and correct any inconsistencies (eg in a pattern).
- Choose an appropriate way to respond to a mathematical situation (eg. use materials to solve a problem).
- Make and draw reasonable representations of simple shapes and patterns.

This year we are counting each day we are at school. When we get to 100 days at school we will have a celebration. Lots of our numeracy activities are based around our 100 days at school.

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**Philosophy for Children**

**DEFINITION:**

Philosophy is an exciting subject that encourages students to articulate questions, comprehend carefully, evaluate reasons, uncover assumptions, clarify ideas and concepts, make judgements and draw inferences.
Philosophical inquiry is primarily concerned with the search for meaning through activities which enable us to develop a framework in which fundamental questions of how we think and know are raised and considered alongside equally fundamental questions of how we ought to treat one another and the world itself.

The practice of philosophy in schools is implemented through the community of inquiry where both abstract (conceptual) and concrete thinking are explored.

Although it is ideal to form communities of inquiry across all disciplines and subject areas when it comes to teaching children to be inquirers the discipline of philosophy has a special role to play.

Philosophy commits us to persistent and disciplined thinking with social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components.

Philosophy is not so much concerned with final answers as it is with coming up with and exploring better questions and tentative answers.

**Physical Education**

Each Monday, Deb Herrmann takes the Prep children for P.E. Physical Education is the process through which sport and sport education, outdoor adventure activities, dance, gymnastics, aquatic, ball handling and athletics are used to help students learn motor skills and to learn about and achieve physical fitness. Physical Education activities also assist in the development of personal and social skills in students.

Students in their formative years P-3 develop basic education skills. These include the development of the essential fundamental motor skills - the catch, kick run, vertical jump, overhand throw, ball bounce, leap a, dodge, punt, forehand strike and two handed side arm strike. Students must be given the opportunity to learn essential motor skills upon which later learning is dependant. Mastery of these skills by students is necessary if optimum development of higher level skills is to occur.

In term 3, there will be a dance based program called ‘Stomp the Beat’. In term 4, we will have an eight day swimming program at the Monbulk pool, starting after Cup Day.

**Excursions**

Term 2: Excursion to Monbulk and sausage sizzle at Baynes Park. We will visit some shops in Monbulk and discuss what happens in our community.
Term 4: Prep/Buddy excursion, early December.