Middle School Curriculum News

Term 1 - 2016

We are excited to begin this new year together maintaining old and establishing new friendships and meeting together. We have met together as a whole level and will continue to do so throughout the term. This gives us the opportunity to all be on the same page, working together and getting to know each other. It was also a lovely chance to welcome three new students to our level: Cian, Taj and Ardela.

HOMEWORK:
Reading is the main focus of homework for Term One with written homework to commence about Week Six. Children are expected to be reading 15-20 minutes each night - 5 minutes of that time MUST be OUT LOUD in order to work on their fluency and practice new vocabulary. The name of the book that was read needs to be recorded and signed by the parent and diaries will be checked weekly by the teachers.

RELIGION: This term we will be looking into the units of ‘Living the Law of Love’ and ‘Alleluia, He Is Risen’. Living the Law of Love explores the qualities and responsibilities of Friendship and reflects on the Sacrament of Penance and its connection to healing and reconciliation between people. Grade Threes should have received enrolment forms for First Reconciliation preparation. ‘Alleluia, He is Risen’ develops the understanding of the season of Lent and Easter, the stories, signs and symbols associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus. You are also most welcome to join us at any of our School Masses.

ENGLISH: Reading and Viewing
We are using the CAFE Framework in the Middle School during our literacy sessions. CAFE is an acronym for Comprehension (3 levels: Literal, Inferential and Evaluative), Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding vocabulary. It is a framework which explicitly teaches reading strategies and good reading behaviours. Goal setting is a major component of the CAFE program as is documenting learning and growth in reading.

We encourage our students to continue to choose Take home readers and Library books that are “Good Fit”. The students have been learning that to become a better reader they need to read Good Fit books and have been becoming familiar with choosing a book that is a Good Fit for them, using the acronym IPICK. Students use the IPICK method to assist them in the choosing Library books, take home readers and during class time (Read to Self/ Read to Someone) as part of the Daily Five Structure.

ENGLISH: Writing
Similarly to CAFE in reading, we are using a writing framework, V.O.I.C.E.S. This acronym, represents a set of writing traits that proficient writers use: Voice, Organisation, Ideas, Excellent word choice and Sentence fluency and we use this framework to support students on their journey to becoming successful writers. The framework is built up using the writing success criteria developed by teachers and students in meeting the Learning Intention of each writing task over the term. Developing spelling strategies and knowledge of basic grammar rules will be part of our writing program while students revise and proofread their work as part of the writing process.

MATHS: Over the course of the first term our main focus in mathematics is Number, we will be looking at counting, place value, addition, subtraction and multiplication strategies; including forwards and backwards counting to 1000 and beyond, bridging and partitioning numbers. We will be exploring mathematical vocabulary and students will be learning about the difference between digits and numbers and applying values using a place value chart.

Hints for home: take the opportunity to practise ‘real life’ maths at home eg: reading the time and timetables, measuring with metric units, counting money and calculating change, play card games to improve mental strategies, encourage your child to count and use numbers.
**INQUIRY:** This term we are inquiring into Civics and Citizenship, looking at rules and responsibilities that influence us. We will also be reflecting on our stewardship of the earth and our role in caring for our garden and the wider environment. How we act and the actions that we take are important and do impact on the environment. We can start with small contributions, such as maintaining a ‘rubbish-free’ lunch box!

**Specialist: ITALIAN**

Benvenuti (welcome) to an exciting year in Italian. During this term the grade three and four children will be learning a prayer, greetings, class rules, the alphabet, some basic questions and answers such as; My name is..., How are you? Etc... in Italian. The grade three and four children will be learning the days of the week, vocabulary and phrases related to the topic of Easter. I look forward to getting to know your children and helping them develop a passion for all things Italian! Grazie (Thank you), Signora Maria Morina.

**Specialist: PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Wow, this term starts with a bang! On Monday 8 February we have our Swimming Carnival at Mentone Grammar pool, Crn Lucerne Street and Como Pde West, Mentone. The children are very excited and keen to jump in the water and do their best for their team. We hope to see many of you on the day to watch your talented children!! The hectic pace continues as we also prepare for the Athletics Carnival to be held later in the term. The children will spend their PE lessons revising; running, throwing, jumping and novelty event.

To make life even more exciting, we are also including Gymnastics on the agenda. The children are always enthusiastic about this unit and they are really keen to experience the next level of cartwheel, beam and mini tramp work.

The focus is as always on having a go, doing your best and having fun whilst being a good sport. Children are reminded that they need to wear the correct sports uniform and suitable runners on PE and Gymnastics days. Marina Coletti

**Specialist: PERFORMING ARTS**

The children will explore Drama through the use of hand puppets. Each child will decorate a hand puppet into the character they would like to use and then they will use their character in different situations over the sessions. The children will role play, produce and perform short skits as well as create and/or solve situations. They will be expected to work cooperatively with others during activities and perform for their peers. Liz Bolch

Upcoming important dates:

- **Tues 9th Feb:** 3/4 Info Session ‘Growing into the Middle School’ @5:30pm,  **Wed 10th Feb:** Ash Wednesday Mass @9:15am,  **Thurs 11th Feb:** Reconciliation Night 1 @7pm (Grade 3 Parents) & weekend Mass 13th-14th Feb,  **Fri 12th Feb:** Welcome BBQ @5:30pm,  **Mon 22nd Feb:** School Photos,  **Tues 23rd & Wed 24th Feb:** Family Conferences,  **Thurs 25th Feb:** 3/4 Mass @9:15am & Reconciliation Night 2 @7pm & weekend Mass 27th-28th Feb,  **Fri 26th Feb:** 3/4s perform at assembly @2:30pm,  **Thurs 10th March:** Reconciliation Night 3 (with children) & weekend Mass 12th-13th March,  **Mon 14th March:** Labour Day,  **Thurs 17th March:** Athletics Carnival, Edithvale Athletics Track,  **Fri 18th March:** St Joseph’s Mass @9:15am,  **Wed 23rd March:** 3/4 Excursion to Botanical Gardens,  **Thurs 24th March:** Holy Thursday and 1pm finish (End of Term)

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*Sports uniform is required for both days (Phys Ed and Gymnastics)*

We look forward to a busy and exciting term! From the 3/4 Team