

Stage 2 Newsletter

29th April, 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school for second term. We hope that everyone had an enjoyable holiday.

This newsletter will outline the program for Term Two and provide dates and other information relevant to Stage Two.

Teaching and Learning Program

This term our major unit is 'Places, Then, Now and Tomorrow' which provides students with the opportunity to explore the history, issues, values and attitudes associated with the changes in places. The unit focuses on how Avoca Beach has changed since settlement. This is an integrated unit, which means it incorporates H.S.I.E, Art and English.

An excursion to Cockatoo Island on 19th May is included as a component to this topic as the island's purpose has changed several times to meet the needs of the users. **Further details and a permission note for this excursion is included with this newsletter.**

In Science, Mrs Fennell will complete the work about sound and then begin a new unit about recycling and reusing.

In Health, Ms Stevens will address bullying which links with the theme when students visit The Life Education Van in May.

Reading groups will continue to occur in each class and, at times, across classes.

Text types (writing tasks) to be covered this term are to complete Explanations started in first term, revise Narratives, Descriptions and Responses.

Maths groups will continue this term

Gymnastics for sport will begin on Thursday. This is an eight week program. Students need to wear the school sports uniform of shorts or black tracksuit pants.

Homework

The 'Homework Grid' will be used again this term. The type of tasks will differ and focus largely on English and research skills.

An assessment task related to the H.S.I.E unit will be set. More details regarding this will be available shortly.

Helping With Homework/Assessment Tasks

Stage Two children often require guidance with their homework. This guidance differs with every child. All parents are keen to help and children do benefit.

For many, the assessment task related to our unit will be the first task of this type attempted. One of the criteria for assessment by teachers will be “The information is written in the child’s own words.” This is a difficult skill for children to learn and can require years of practice. It is recommended that children read the information till they are very familiar with the content writing down key words. Using just the key words, children then write the information in their own words. Some children will need assistance in verbalising their thoughts. With continued practice, children will gradually require less assistance. Year Three children will naturally find this more difficult than those in Year Four.

An important question to ask is, “Does the information they have written answer the question and fit with the criteria of the assessment task?”

Part of the assessment task will be presenting their information to the class. The criteria for the written and spoken tasks will be given to students so they fully understand the expectations. Children will benefit by rehearsing their talk at home, either to an audience and/or recording themselves and playing it back so they can hear and make any adjustments.

Writing assignments in one’s own words is a skill that is required throughout school and tertiary education. Our students are at the very beginning of acquiring this skill, and will continue to improve.

The finished product your child brings to school may not appear to be to adult standard, but the learning and life-long skills acquired by our students during the process is beneficial.

Part of students’ homework is always reading, and we are pleased to observe that the amount of home reading is increasing. In class we will continue to emphasise comprehension **and we ask that parents also focus on this** by discussing the characters, themes, etc related to the book.

Classroom Requirements

Stage Two teachers would like to emphasise the importance of being prepared for class work with stationery needs. Please take the time in the first week of term to ensure your child has the following:

- 2 lead pencils
- red pen
- blue pen for when a ‘pen licence’ is awarded
- a pair of scissors
- a gluestick
- an eraser
- a ruler
- a pencil sharpener
- coloured pencils or crayolas
- felt pens (Textas).

These items are best labelled and contained in two pencil cases.

Communication

Teachers at this school are aware of the importance of maintaining effective and productive communication between home and school.

If issues arise that you wish to discuss with your child's teacher, please arrange a mutually convenient time by letter or telephone.

At the conclusion of second semester a written report accompanied by a work folder displaying each child's assessment tasks will be sent home.

Parent Helpers

Stage Two teachers appreciate the continued support by a large group of parents who assist regularly with reading groups and other activities. **Reading groups will begin in week two this term.**

Term 2 Dates To Remember

30th April: Band demonstration

6th May: MS Readathon Speaker

8th May: Mother's Day Stall

9th May: Cross Country at Heazlett Oval

9th May: Life Education Van arrives

13th, 14th & 15th May: National Testing for Year 3

19th May: Excursion to Cockatoo Island

27th May: Bush Regeneration for 3/4W

29^h May: University of NSW Science Competition. (Miss Walkerden's room)

29th May: District Cross Country

1st June: School Fair

2nd June: School photos

12th June: University of NSW Spelling & Writing Competition (Mrs Miles' room for spelling and Mr Whelan supervising writing. Room for writing to be announced later)

26th June: Bush Regeneration 3/4D

30th June: Visiting performer, Murrie Kulcha

Sue Walkerden

Louise Duck

Jane Miles

Wilma Vallis