Junior – Yrs 1&2

Staff
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Welcome
A warm welcome to all children and parents for 2013. What an exciting year we have ahead of us.

This year at Eastwood we have a great team of enthusiastic teachers ready to take on all aspects of the curriculum. The children have settled in beautifully and it is wonderful to see our children’s positive faces ready and eager to learn at the start of each day.

We look forward to a happy and productive year working with your children. If you have any queries or concerns, please don’t hesitate to see your child’s class teacher.

Kind Regards

Franca Elliott
Junior Yrs 1/2 Team Leader

VELS (Victorian Essential Learning Standards)
All programs are based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). This document sets out the foundation knowledge, skills and behaviours that children must develop in their schooling. The VELS domains are English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, The Arts, Interpersonal Development, Personal Learning, Civics and Citizenship, The Humanities, Languages Other Than English (LOTE), Science, Communication, Design and Creativity and Technology, Information and Communications Technology and Thinking Processes. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards is based on four levels. Regardless of grade level, children work in the VELS level which matches their point of need.

Learning Programs

Literacy
The Early Years Literacy Program operates for two hours daily in Prep - Year 4 classrooms. Skills and strategies, together with an enjoyment of reading and writing are developed through a variety of activities. This year sees the introduction of the ‘Daily 5’ and CAFÉ Reading which teaches children to work independently on their individually targeted reading and writing, enabling teachers to work with individuals and small groups.

On most days the Literacy Block begins at 9am, so it is most important that your child arrives at school on time to enable full participation in this program. Latecomers can cause disruption to the program; it is not necessary for a parent to come into the classroom, just bring your child to the Office for a Late Pass.

Writing
Children are involved in a variety of shared, guided and independent writing activities for specific purposes using different text types, including:

- Journals
- Report writing
- Story writing
- Procedural writing e.g. recipes
- Poetry
- Transactional writing e.g. invitations, letters
- Descriptive writing
- Persuasive writing
- Five minute free writing
We are also developing handwriting skills and the ability to hear and record sounds in words through short dictated sentences.

Spelling
When writing, children are encouraged to spell words by:

- Listening to the sounds in words
- Learning to spell the 100 most used words
- Looking at charts around the room
- Listening to the syllables in words
- Using dictionaries
- Using the LEM mnemonic as a memory cue.
- Finding similar words which they can already spell

Mathematics
Our program is based on the Prep – Grade 4 Early Years Numeracy Program and emphasises mathematical language, place value, the use of concrete materials, estimation and problem-solving skills. The Numeracy block takes place on a daily basis.

You can help your child to develop mathematical understandings by:

- Playing card games
- Measuring ingredients for recipes
- Calculating the cost and counting out money for lunch orders
- Showing how mathematics is used in real life, eg measuring the floor for new carpet.

Computers
Computers are a part of everyday life and are used as tools to enhance children’s learning in the areas of Maths, English and Integrated Studies. Each class is scheduled to use the Computer Lab for one hour per week. The school Netbook computers are also used in the classroom program. The area also has 10 iPads which are used as part of the program.

Specialists
The specialist program in our area is Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Environment and Languages - Auslan.

Integrated Units of Work
Integrated Units allow the integration of the strands, domains and dimensions of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Included are the elements needed for students to meet their learning needs during the early years of schooling. Units assist with the development of skills and knowledge in a meaningful context. Our topics are:

Term 1: Identity
Term 2: Sustainability
Term 3: Social Justice
Term 4: Creativity

Take Home Books
Reading is about gaining meaning from text. No matter how fluently and expressively a child may read, it does not necessarily demonstrate how much they understand. Children need to be able to talk about what happens in the story, interpreting information, summarising events and drawing conclusions. Spend some time chatting with your child about each story to develop and enhance these skills.

To enhance the development of reading strategies at times students will bring home two easy books to re-read over three days. Re-reading books helps to build familiarity which supports the development of reading skills.

Children will have the opportunity to change their ‘take home’ books twice a week.

The take home book reading is a small component of the classroom reading program and the books will always be an easier text than the children read for instructional text in class.

Encourage your child to read the books for themselves several times. Support them by reading a sentence or two together, demonstrating how reading should sound.

Although children won’t be changing their books daily, it is important that they bring their black Home Folder to school every day.
**Additional Assistance**

Literacy Intervention is an integral part of our Early Years Literacy Program. Extensive testing has been undertaken this month to identify students who would most benefit from this program. Some students will participate in a one-to-one program while other students will work together in small groups to receive additional assistance in Literacy.

**Homework**

Reading is the main focus of homework – maximum 10 minutes.

Other homework may possibly include:

1. Follow up from a classroom activity or finishing a task not completed in class in the expected time.
2. Bringing something to school for a particular activity.
3. A small research task.
4. Occasional maths or integrated study work.
5. Literacy and maths games (board and cards games) could also be played.
6. Writing a letter to someone in the class.

**Notices**

Notices are sent home in a large black Velcro closing Eastwood bag. Please return these each day. Epsilon is sent home each Thursday with the youngest child in the family and bank books are collected each Tuesday. If your child has been away, please inform the class teacher by phone call or note.

**Excursions**

Excursions and visits from outside agencies will be organised to support integrated studies. Notices will be sent home providing all details and costs. Permission forms with money need to be returned to school in a named envelope as soon as possible.

**Social Skills, PATHS**

As part of the Social Competencies program, all classes will continue to implement PATHS social skills lessons, with weekly sessions focusing on values, attitudes and social skills. This program looks at positive ways to teach children self-control, emotional understanding, and problem solving to help create a better learning environment and enhance developmental growth. Please see the Epsilon for more detailed information on the PATHS program.

**Buddies**

At this stage the buddy system has not been finalised. However, once organised the students will be partnered older students. This program is designed to extend students’ social competencies and work together on activities to compliment the integrated studies program.

**Transition**

New students entering the school and students moving from one grade to another are supported in transition through circle time meetings to ask questions about expectations of the next level and by meeting future peers. New students are also given opportunity to meet their future class mates before arriving and are given an information pack to help them settle into their new school.

**Parental Involvement**

At various times throughout the year, the Year 1 & 2 teachers will require the assistance of parents for both classroom activities and/or excursions. Some parents have already indicated a desire to help. These offers are greatly appreciated. A notice with a reply slip will be sent home towards the end of Term 1.

**Class Reps**

Each class will have 2 parent representatives who liaise with the class teacher. The role includes setting up a contact list for parents, organising get-togethers and attending class rep meetings. Please see your child’s teacher if you are interested in volunteering for this job.