Welcome to the Middle School.

We have a wonderful team of enthusiastic teachers who are committed to providing positive learning experiences. This year we have some great learning programs planned and our students will be encouraged to challenge themselves and become more independent learners as they grow in a happy and supportive environment.

We look forward to a positive year with your children. If you have any queries or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact your child’s teacher.

Sue Kitchingman
Middle School Team Leader

VELS – (Victorian Essential Learning Standards)

In the middle school Learners become more persistent and prolific in their learning and develop confidence through using specific skills, particularly literacy and numeracy. They are able to participate in discussion about ideas and beliefs and express informed opinions. All programs are based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). This document sets out the foundation knowledge, skills and behaviours that children develop in their schooling. 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

The teachers plan and discuss curriculum as a tightly knit team through term planning of integrated units and weekly team meetings where the week's work is planned to meet the learning needs of all children. Teaching approaches, strategies and assessments are also shared as a team to maximise student learning.

Literacy

Reading

Teaching readers in years 3 and 4 is a carefully balanced approach to develop, consolidate and extend the students’ reading knowledge, understanding and skills as they read more complex text. As students develop as readers, we support them to think more critically about texts. Students are encouraged to be independent readers and choose their own books. They are able to borrow suitable books from the school library for use at school and at home.

This year children have been introduced to ‘Café’ Reading which encourages a selection of ‘good fit books’ for each individual child.

Writing

In writing workshops, children plan, write drafts and edit their work to the highest possible standard. Through shared, interactive and guided writing, students write a variety of text types. They study good writing by published authors, as well as their peers, and learn to use varied sentence structures and interesting vocabulary such as adjectives, similes and metaphors. Students also study text structures and develop proofreading skills.

Word Study

Grammar and spelling are important. Students learn about parts of speech, punctuation, prefixes and suffixes, tense and plurals. They are taught to use a variety of strategies in their spelling, including visual (the way a word looks), sound/symbol (sound pattern) and morphemic strategies (meaning of words).
Mathematics

The Victorian Early Years Numeracy Program is used from Prep to Grade 4 and emphasises mathematical language, place value, the use of concrete materials, estimation and problem-solving skills. The program is based on the recognition that all children can succeed in Mathematics given sufficient time and support, and that by the end of this critical stage of schooling students will be competent and confident in their early mathematical learning. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, a focus on the learning needs of each student and a combination of whole class, small group and individual instructional strategies to provide explicit teaching in Mathematics.

Integrated Units of Work

Throughout the year students will be engaging in integrated units of work designed to include the domains of Civics and citizenship, Science, Technology and the Humanities.

Our topics this year are:
Term 1: Identity
Term 2: Sustainability
Term 3: Social Justice
Term 4: Creativity

ICT

Information and communication technology is an integral part of our program. Laptops and iPads are used by all students to support their learning. Relevant skills are taught and a responsible approach to Internet use is developed.

Take Home Books

Middle school students are encouraged to select appropriate material for reading during library sessions under teacher supervision.

Home reading is to be recorded in the diary and signed by the parent at the end of the week.

Homework

Homework is given weekly and consists of 4 parts.
Reading – Students keep a weekly log of home reading (at least 4 times a week).
Spelling – Words to build spelling knowledge and strategies.
Mathematics – a game, problem or activity to develop skills being taught in the classroom.

Integrated – an activity to develop and reinforce our unit work.

Students may be required to finish work not completed during class time. Students will also be encouraged to take part in the Victorian Premier’s Reading Challenge.

Specialists

The specialist programs in our area are Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, LOTE – Auslan.

NAPLAN (National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy)

Year 3 & 5 students will be involved in NAPLAN testing in mid May 2012.

Notices & Diaries

Communication between home and school is very important. Each child has a diary to record homework and special events. It can also be used for parents and teachers to communicate with each other. Your child’s diary will be checked regularly and is to be brought daily. Please sign any messages from us, so we know you have seen the diary.

Notices are sent home in a large zip case. 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 to the office or a note.

Camps and Excursions

In September the Year 4 children will go to CAMP GUNDIWINDI located in Wandin. This camp is an adventure camp where children will be involved in activities such as archery, rope course, orienteering, flying fox and night trails. The camp is a 3 day/ 2-night camp.

Camp Gundiwindi is an outstanding opportunity for your child to put into practice the skills of independence they have developed throughout their education. It is also an important aspect of their social and personal development.
Sport

Students take part in Middle School Sport each Thursday. Students are placed in groups and each week take part in a different sporting activity. It is important that students come properly attired for physical activity. If students are not able to participate due to illness or injury, they are required to provide notification from home.

Social Skills, PATHS

Building effective social relationships and relating well to others requires individuals to be empathetic, and to be able to deal effectively with their own emotions. It also requires them to be aware of the social conventions and responsibilities that underpin the formation of effective relationships. Our PATHS program helps students to develop the skills and strategies needed to form effective relationships and resolve problems in a sensible, fair and effective manner.

Class Reps

This year the role of the class rep will be to liaise between parents and the class teacher. We are looking for volunteers to help with fundraising activities and assist in Fete planning and organisation.

Parental Involvement

At various times throughout the year, the Year 3 & 4 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.