



24 February 2009

Dear Parents/Carers

Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) Parent Information - Term 1 2009

Welcome to Kindergarten 2009. All Kindergarten children have settled into the first few weeks of 'big school'. It is wonderful to see within these first four weeks that students are becoming more independent. They are finding their own class lines, carrying their own bags and tying their own shoe laces. It is fantastic to see all the students participating in various activities and most importantly enjoying school so much. This is due to the fact that you can trust your children and you are allowing your children to take risks and to learn from their mistakes.

This year we have 7 Kindergarten classes. The teachers for Early Stage 1 are:

<i>KH</i>	Mrs Tulloch	<i>KD</i>	Miss Duncan
<i>KF</i>	Mrs Felton (Mon – Wed) and Mrs Tingle (Thurs - Fri)	<i>KM</i>	Mrs Myers
<i>KL</i>	Mrs Kitto (Mon – Wed) and Mrs Bellamy (Thurs - Fri)	<i>KP</i>	Mrs Philip
<i>ESL</i>	Miss Miller, Mrs Wojciechowski and Ms Simmonds	<i>KT</i>	Mr Ta
<i>RFF</i>	Mrs Bellamy, Mrs Rawle and Mr Hutchinson	<i>Librarian</i>	Mrs Kobeleff

Should you have any questions or concerns please make an appointment to see your child's teacher. During the first four weeks all students (K-6) have been taught lessons based on social skills (school and class rules and appropriate ways to mix with others). Students have also been learning about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. These few weeks have been vital in order to establish routines and help your child understand school.

The following provides a general outline of the teaching and learning program for the rest of the term. Similar content is taught across the stage and students are working towards achieving Early Stage 1 outcomes by the end of the year. Learning experiences may be presented differently. They are designed to cater for students' needs as a class group or individually.

ENGLISH

English is taught in three main areas:

- **Talking & Listening:** This is an important area for all students. They will learn to speak in a range of settings, eg presenting news to the class, working in groups or participating in class discussions and even when playing. A particular focus will be on the 5 L's of listening – *Legs* (crossed), *Look* (at the speaker), *Lap* (keep hands to themselves), *Lips* (closed when someone is talking) and *Listening*. Talking & listening skills can also be reinforced at home. It is important for students to be able to reflect on what they have been learning at school.
- **Reading:** Students develop reading skills, strategies and comprehension through modelled, guided and independent reading. In modelled reading teachers demonstrate "What good readers do". In guided reading students (individual or small groups) are taught a range of strategies to read texts at their level. Parents often tend to relate reading to words only, however good reading skills can also be developed through the use of pictures especially in younger readers. Pictures not only help to tell the story but also clarify meaning and develop comprehension skills. Pictures form a talking point in reluctant and early readers. It is important for children to read and be read to in various settings, hence reading to an adult or being read to each night is an important part of the reading process.
- **Writing:** Students will develop handwriting, spelling, grammar and writing skills through daily lessons. Early Stage 1 teachers will have a strong focus on correct pencil grip, posture and letter formation in handwriting. Students will be taught when capital and lower case letters should be used in their writing. When teaching writing, teachers draw on the student's experiences and general knowledge to form ideas for their writing. We encourage them to have a go at putting their thoughts into words. At the beginning of the learning process, we often find symbols and letters jumbled up and all over the page. This is how writing begins. It is important for students to write the sounds in the words they are saying, or even make symbolic representation. Teachers will then use these letters to praise and teach 'good writing strategies'.

MATHEMATICS

The strands of Mathematics are number, space and geometry, measurement, patterns and algebra and data. Working mathematically is embedded into all the stands of Mathematics. Students are taught concepts through hands-on practical activities such as 'Count Me In Too' games using dice, counters, blocks and other objects. Language plays a very important role in Mathematics education. Students must be able to explain what they are doing using everyday language. For this reason, it is again important for you to talk to your child about everyday maths situations (e.g. when shopping using money, counting out plates, knives etc. when setting up the table). Learning experiences will be as a whole class, group or individual activities.

Connected Outcomes Groups (COGS) & HSIE Unit

The units we are focussing on will change each term. COGS helps to integrate Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE), Science and Technology, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Cognitive Groups:

Groupwork helps to build social skills and greater self esteem. Children learn best when they interact with each other. They feel more comfortable when taking risks and making decisions. This learning session also helps to develop language, fine and gross motor skills. Activities cover a range of areas such as reading, construction, drama, writing, Mathematics, home corner, painting, play dough, craft, computers, science and so on. These sessions are always stimulating for the students and the best part is that they think they are only playing but there is lots of learning involved.

Social Skills:

A large part of your child's first year at school will involve learning appropriate social skills. Listening to others, taking turn, sharing materials, helping others, speaking nicely, manners and rules, will be reinforced daily to ensure all children are happy, safe and learning to their full potential. We ask that you help us in encouraging your child become more independent. Students should by now be able to:

- carry their own bags.
- deliver any notes to their teacher by themselves.
- tie their own shoe laces

- play without your supervision before school (from 8.30am – please drop & go). I understand how great it is to see our own children playing in a social setting. But by continuing to have your presence in the playground and watching their every move does not help them to develop independence. **We strongly urge parents to walk their children to the school gates and go. Thank you to those parents who are supporting us in this matter.**

Additional Information:

- **Homework:** Homework will start in Term 2.
- **Remember:** Play, exercise and rest are also vital for 4 and 5 year olds.
- **Assembly is on Friday:** your child will tell you when his/her class is running assembly. We encourage all parents to come and watch their children receive awards.
- **Parent Helpers:** teachers are always happy to receive some parent help in the classroom. If you are available for any amount of time please speak to the classroom teacher and they'll be more than happy to receive your help (a parent helper information session will also be conducted in the next week or so).

USEFUL WEBSITES

You may find the following websites of interest:

Count Me in Too – www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/countmein/index.htm

Board of Studies – www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/#parentsguide

Yours sincerely

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Principal

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