Room 4 Parent/Caregiver Information
February 2013

Dear Parents/Caregivers,
Welcome to the Year 3/4 Classroom. I look forward to working closely with you and your children towards a successful and productive year. During the first weeks we will be spending time organising and developing classroom routines and establishing our program. Within the classroom the students will have opportunities to work in a collaborative environment, with all the children interacting together and learning about each other’s skills and abilities. At other times they will be working in single sex groups, ability and mixed ability groups. If you need to talk to me about your child’s particular needs please make an appointment to see me so we can have quality time for our discussion. I am generally available for this straight after school on Mondays. Alternatively you can email me at jan.deweerd547@schools.sa.edu.au.
Could you please bring this handout to the parent information evening next week when I am looking forward to catching up with all of you.

Kindest regards
Jan de Weerd,

Routines
❖ Staffing
I am working full time this year and Rosalie Kathigitis, Sue Pearce and Graeme Milne will be with our class to provide me with preparation time. Fiona Matthews and Margaret Bader will provide learning support for our students. Please consult the time table for more details.
❖ Stationery/Equipment-
There are caddies on each table containing pencils, scissors, rulers, erasers and sharpeners. There is an ample class supply of coloured pencils, crayons and textas. School equipment stays at school! Your child is welcome to bring a pencil case with his or her own labelled pens/ pencils.
❖ Take Home Books-
Information will be sent home via your child’s Take Home Book as the need arises. It will come home every night and needs to come back to school each day. Please sign off the reading every night and needs to come back to school each day. Please sign off the reading section when your child has read and also on completing the homework spelling look/say/cover/write/check. There is a section to sign off on your child’s home use of the Mathletics/ Spelldrome website. It is important to sign the notes received section as it is the only way for me to check that all newsletters and other printed material are received and read at home!
❖ Homework-
• Reading- 5 nights Monday-Friday- (At least 15 minutes)-For this age group it is still important to read aloud with expression for about 5 minutes and to read silently for the rest of the time.
• Spelling practice 4 nights Monday- Thursday. Your child needs to do a look/say/ cover/ write check in the space provided in the Take Book.(5 minutes)
• Catch-up work on language activities- occasionally- will be entered in the Take Home Book- mainly as a result of your child not completing the required work in class time.
• Research projects- occasionally will be entered in Take Home Book.

This is not an unreasonable homework schedule but if for some valid reason your child cannot complete the homework tasks please let me know via the Take Home Book!

❖ Student Participation
We will be involving students in a variety of activities such as decision-making and opportunities to contribute to classroom organization and activities. Regular class meetings will be held to facilitate this process.

❖ Parent Participation
We welcome parent participation in the classroom. The 3-way partnership of parents, students and teachers working together to ensure maximum learning opportunities is essential. Students, parents and teachers all have differing skills and abilities. We therefore welcome parent helpers in our class and see parents as an integral part of our students’ educational process. For example I would like some help with our reading groups and we can always use helpers for our kitchen/garden sessions. Please let me know via a note in your child’s Take Home Book if you can help us.

❖ Student Responsibilities
The children are working together to develop classroom responsibilities and rules to ensure that the room is a happy, safe and caring learning environment for all. They are based on the following values

Respect – Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and social equality.
Caring – Everyone has the right to express themselves, share ideas and learn from others.
Success – Teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn.
Responsibility – Everyone has the right to a fair go at school.
Safety – Everyone has the right to feel safe and work in a safe, supportive school.

Logical consequences will apply to inappropriate behaviour and the students will be awarded in a variety of ways for keeping to the rules and helping our class to be a pleasant, productive learning environment. There is a whole school Behaviour Management Policy in place, which clearly sets out the steps followed consistently throughout our whole school.

Each student has a Maccy Merit card which plays an important part in encouraging our students to make responsible choices as they work their way towards earning lucky dips.
CURRICULUM OUTLINE

- ENGLISH

-Reading and Viewing
We expect all students in the class to read at home regularly as well as at school. Children will continue to learn how to recognise words by sight and by using their knowledge of letter/sound relationship. This will teach children how to extend their reading vocabulary on a daily basis.

The children will be introduced to variety of writing styles through author studies. Our aim is to make reading an enjoyable and fun activity. Some children will still be reading from the Reading Level books and completing Running Record tests with Mrs. Ryan. Once students are reading and comprehending competently at Level 29 they will be tested on line to obtain a "lexile" level. This will enable them to choose reading material at their appropriate reading level. It is expected that they read at least one book a week from the extensive lexiled collection available in our library and to sit for an online comprehension test on the book after they have read it.

All students are required to participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge. We do not have a weekly library borrowing time but students are encouraged to change over their books as soon as they have finished them. Our library bags will help the students keep track of their library books. Students need to change their levelled readers in Mrs. Ryan’s room first thing in the morning.

In our guided reading groups the focus will be on reading a wide variety of texts for comprehension as well as having the opportunity to read aloud in a small group setting.

We will be using the excellent “Making Connections” Resource for the explicit teaching of comprehension skills. Viewing television and films is also an important part of our literacy programme as is learning to glean information from websites.

All students have been enrolled in the highly engaging ReadingEggpress website and are expected to complete at least two reading comprehension activities each week.

-Writing
Learning to read and write requires explicit modelling. Each week there is a graded set of Spelling activities based on phonetics, spelling rules or theme and interest words. I will continue with the Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar program that Mrs. Ryan implemented so successfully over the last two years.

Spelling activities are designed to help your child acquire the four essential spelling knowledges (Phonological, Visual, Morphemic and Etymological). Spelling lists will include words from these four areas with an emphasis on learning words needed for the current writing genre. Please take the time to look at your child’s Spelling book. The Spellodrome online spelling programme is a fun way for our students to improve their spelling accuracy as well as a valuable assessment tool for me to see how well the students can spell when they have to use words in context.

The students will be explicitly taught the language and conventions for the various writing genres such as recounts, narratives, procedures, scientific reports and formal and informal letters. In Term 1 we will focus on Persuasive texts as this is the genre the Year 3 children will need for the NAPLAN early in Term 2.
-Listening and Speaking
The children will have the opportunity to express their ideas and opinions in a range of informal, non-threatening situations. They will also get the opportunity to practise speaking in front of a variety of audiences ranging from the class to the whole school at assemblies. We will continue to practise good audience and listening skills.

-Handwriting
We will be introducing and revising linked script in formal handwriting lessons and encourage the children to start using linked script in some parts of their language work eg spelling activities. The year 3s will continue with the lovely script that is part of the Jolly Phonics program.

❖ HEALTH/PE
Our focus this term is on the social skills necessary to create an enjoyable, safe working environment for everyone. We have fitness sessions 4 times a week and Mrs. Kathigitis will take the children for more formal skills sessions. We encourage the consumption of fresh fruit, nuts or vegetables in our students' diet by allowing them to have an extra food break at around 10.10 just after fitness. The only food allowed at this time is fresh, unprocessed fruit, nuts or fresh vegetables. Please make this an “easy to eat” snack so the children can eat while they work. Muffins, cakes, fruit rolls, yoghurt, cheese, sandwiches and biscuits etc may be eaten at the 11.05 recess break. Our students need to drink as much water as possible to help the brain function more efficiently and to avoid dehydration during the hot weather. They are required to have a water bottle on their table so that having a quick drink does not become an interruption to their work routine. Cordial or frozen fruit juice boxes are not appropriate during lesson time as frequent sucking on a cordial bottle is detrimental to the teeth and the spillages can be messy. During the hot weather the children can store their lunchboxes in the classroom.

❖ SCIENCE
Our topic in Science this term is ‘The Rainbow Reef’ - looking at coral formation as well as the creatures that inhabit the reef environment. Mrs. Pearce will take the children for the Science lessons. Throughout the year the Room 4 children will also continue to have a huge involvement in Environmental Science activities such as Water Watch, Weed Warriors, Gardening and Bat Monitoring. Mr. Milne will be with the students for these sessions.

❖ HISTORY
Our focus this year will be on Australian history. Please consult the term overview for the particular topics to be taught each term. We are starting the year with “The First Fleet” and are visiting the Maritime Museum on Tuesday April 9th as an important part of our learning about this topic. The whole day excursion, including a trip on a boat to see the Port River Dolphins will cost a very reasonable $20. You will receive more information in due course.
**MATHS**

Our Maths programme follows the Natural Maths strategies. All teachers were trained in this exciting methodology last year. At times Maths will be learnt in class groups, smaller mixed ability or ability groups to maximise student-learning opportunities. Our program uses many hand-on activities combined with teaching specific skills and problem solving activities where children will be recording information correctly. Students can access the Mathletics and IXL programs at school and from home to consolidate a broad range of Maths skills in a fun way.

Topics to be covered in the first two terms include

1) Understanding Number
2) Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division up to numbers in the thousands with an emphasis on becoming proficient in all tables and also having automatic recall of the basic addition and subtraction number facts.
3) Factors
4) Fractions and Decimals
5) Angles
6) Location (Maps and coordinates)
7) Time and Temperature
8) Measuring lengths and distances using metres and centimetres, estimating and ordering things by length, mass and capacity and the sequences of clocks and calendars.
9) The use of appropriate Maths terminology such as difference, place value etc.
10) Problem solving activities.
11) At home families can help by discussing real life maths problems. For example buying something at the shop and the expected amount of change, telling the time, dates and days of the week, marking birthdays on the calendar and practising times tables.

Your family will host the Maths Monster at least twice a term for a fun family Maths event.

**THE ARTS**

1. Mrs. Kathigitis provides our children with a comprehensive Visual Arts programme.
2. Music and singing will be catered for by Mrs McVicar in our Junior Choir sessions.
3. Special performances by outside groups are organised by Mrs. Kathigitis for the whole school each term and are an important part of educating our students to enjoy the Performing Arts.
4. Keyboard and guitar lessons are provided by visiting teachers.
5. Our class will participate in a whole school musical at the end of the year.

**STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN/GARDEN PROGRAMME**

This wonderful programme which teaches our children where our food comes from and how to prepare it into nutritious, delicious meals is capably coordinated by Robyn Jones who also runs the kitchen sessions. Sandi Swinburne supervises and inspires our students in the garden. Both these ladies can always use parent/grandparent volunteers.
Our students are divided into groups and each group has a 45 minute gardening session and 90 minutes in the kitchen. Please make sure your child is appropriately dressed for gardening on Mondays. The school provides gardening gloves but we would like each student to bring gum boots or an old pair of shoes to change into for the garden session.

***** INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
This will be integrated with the other curriculum areas. We have 7 computers in our classroom, an Interactive Whiteboard and we have regular sessions in the RBLC (Resource Based Learning Centre). For example we will be using the Internet to access information and we will be using desktop publishing to publish some of our writing. There will be a big focus on improving keyboard skills.

We will continue to work on our own class blog this year which will provide us with an opportunity to share our work and experiences with students all over the world. The site will contain a photo gallery as a visual record of the important events in Room 4 in 2013. We will also contribute to the school website. I will always check the internet agreements which you signed before uploading any photos. We will be using our email to write to classes in Australia and overseas. If you are new parents to Room 4 you may want to check out last year’s blog. [http://fraudew.edublogs.org/](http://fraudew.edublogs.org/)

We will start adding to it soon.

***** INDONESIAN STUDIES
We will be continuing our Indonesian language and culture studies with the help of the Languages Online website and podcasts, as well as through songs, games and play scripts.

In the Kitchen this term Robyn has planned to prepare a wonderful range of Indonesian foods with the children.

***** OUTDOOR EDUCATION
I am investigating several possibilities for a class camp in term 4. If you have any suggestions let me know. Narnu seems a great place and was a popular destination with my own children but there are lot of other great spots.

***** COMMUNICATION
The take home book will remain the main form of communication but sometimes I find it just as handy to write a quick email or send a text message to not only share concerns but also successes. It is also a great way to let you know that we have updated our class blog. If you are happy for me to contact you this way could you please fill in the section below with your up to date email and mobile phone address.

Please write clearly and in a large format.

Name of Child--------------------------------------------------
Parents/ Caregivers names-------------------------------------
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Preferred Email address----------------------------------------
----------------------------------------------------------------
Mobile phone number------------------------------------------