Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Hi everyone, my name is Melinda Umback and I am pleased to have the opportunity to teach your child this year. I have been teaching for seventeen years and I have taught children across all grades from R-7 but specialize in Junior Primary teaching. This is my tenth year at Maccy.

We have nine children in the class this term, with two children starting school for the first time. Sometimes getting beginning children into a routine can be a slow and steady process but believe me, with persistence it will happen! Needless to say staying positive and happy is a must! The school has some copies of a book published by Early Childhood Australia called “Your Child’s First Year at School.” Please let me know if your family would like to borrow a copy to read.

Beginning of the day

Please ensure children are lined up at 8:45 am when the start of the day bell goes, this will help with establishing routines and limit the disruption to our learning time, which happens when we have to wait for late comers. We line up at the bottom of the steps to ensure safe supervision by the Yard Duty teacher before the bell goes. Routines and independence are quickly
established if children get used to saying goodbye at bell time, carrying and hanging up their own bag and coming in and sitting down quietly on the floor by themselves right from the beginning of the year. **If children arrive late to school they need to be signed in at the Front Office please. Children also need to be signed out at the Front Office if you need to pick them up early at any stage.**

**Our Learning**

As we work thematically, many subject areas are incorporated across the curriculum throughout the day - so the timetable attached here is a guide only. You will notice that the children have some lessons with other teachers - Rosalie Kathigitis for Health and PE on Thursdays and Art on Wednesdays, and Sue Pearce for Science on Tuesdays. As detailed on the timetable we have music/dance on Mondays and Yoga on Fridays in the Activity Room. On these days especially it is helpful if children wear shoes that they can take off and put on themselves.

The whole school theme for this term is **"Into Indonesia."** We will be working thematically across many curriculum areas with this topic. The Curriculum Overview will be sent out shortly. This year we are continuing our involvement with the **“Better Buddies”** program with the year 7 students, Mrs Roberts and Kerry (our Christian Pastoral Care Worker). This program was developed by the **“Alannah and Madeline Foundation”** and I have included additional information here for you about the foundation. The program requires the year 7’s to undergo some training before the anticipated activities and events with our class begin.
A lot of our learning will be based around the “Jolly Phonics” program. As you will see from the Jolly Phonics Overview attached here it is a very intensive phonics program covering one sound each day for nine weeks. Children will be bringing home (tomorrow night) a Jolly Phonics “Sounds” book to read through each night. It is very important that this is done every night - your child should also be able to show you the action that helps them to remember each sound as well. Letter cards and later on “Tricky words” will also be coming home. Parents can support Jolly Phonics learning by working with their children on games such as letter snap, making/sounding/ writing words with the letters that come home or talking about things that have the ‘sound of the day.’ See the info sheet in the front of the Sounds Book tomorrow night. I have also included here the Jolly Phonics Information Brochure for you to have a look at. The actions for each sound are on the last page. You will also see that the children have with them tonight a Homework Writing book to practise writing Tricky Words and letters that come home each week. As you will see from the Jolly Phonics Overview the Tricky Words for the first few weeks are the child’s first and last name. After each section of letters I will send home a photocopied reader and lists of words. The children love these because they only contain the sounds that have been covered, meaning the children can sound out the words and read them independently and very successfully – which may not be happening with the other readers at this early stage just yet.
Healthy Fruit Time

We have a quick, healthy fruit time at about 10am each morning. Please ensure that your child has a small and easy to eat piece of fruit or veg (cutting/ dicing sometimes helps). Only fresh fruit/ veg are eaten during this time and we try to limit rubbish. The class has a scrap bucket so that we can compost scraps for the garden. Children are also able to keep a water bottle on their desk during the day. Pop top bottles are preferred so that spillages are limited.

Take Home Reading Folders

As well as Jolly Phonics materials the Take Home Reading Folders contain a Reader, Home Reading Diary (Yellow Diary) and a Communication book. Any Newsletters or notes will also come home in these folders (School Newsletters in odd weeks). It is important that these folders (and their contents!) come to school every day. Please note that your child will also require a Library Bag to borrow books from the Library each Thursday - Take home folders can be used in an emergency if Library bags are forgotten but the easy fiction books are often quite large. Library books need to returned to class by the following Wednesday. Reading is a strong focus of our learning program and it is essential that children are reading at home, please record the reading done in the diary each night. These Home Reading Diaries also contain great tips for parents and Certificates. The children love to go and show Mr Milne their ‘Yellow Diary’ when they achieve a certificate. The Communication book is for you and I to use for messages between home and school and vice versa. It is important that any time your child is absent from school that you write a short explanation note (eg: illness, family reasons) as reasons for
absence are recorded as a part of Departmental process. Don’t forget to remind your child that they have a note to show as well or I might not see it. Please sign any notes that come home in this book so that I know they have been seen by you. Any student books that come home every night can be covered to stop them getting too tatty. We like to make our own covers for the work books we use in the classroom every day.

**Maccy Merits**

We have a Maccy Merit system to reward positive and helpful behaviour. When children have completed their charts they get to go and show Mr Milne and choose from the Lucky dip box. We also have a “Star of the Day” each day who is the leader/helper for the day - they also get to sit on the beanbag. Just for your information, so that everyone gets a turn we go alphabetically with this highly coveted role!

**Bushfire Policy**

If your child is new to school this year you will need to bring in an old towel (with your child’s name on it) to the front office so that safety procedures in accordance with our Bushfire Policy can be adhered to.

**Reading Roster**

Please return the form below if you are interested in being on the Reading Roster for this term. This involves spending time (about half an hour) with individual students and listening to them read their readers at the start of the day. Children read the reader they had the previous night. Please note that we have a Student Assembly first thing on Monday Mornings which
makes reading on Mondays difficult. Mr Milne is holding a “Volunteers Information” morning tea on Thursday January 31\textsuperscript{st} at 10:30am. \textbf{All parents wishing to help out at school need to attend this information session.}

I appreciate there is a huge amount of information to take on board here. It is difficult to strike a balance between too much information and not enough. If there is anything I can make clearer for you, please let me know. Please also keep checking in with the school website as I will endeavour to post class items regularly. We have a \textit{“Meet and Greet” night happening at school on Wednesday of week 3 (13/2/13),} coinciding with the School Council AGM so please put this date in your diary. I am looking forward to catching up with everyone soon.

Regards,

Melinda

________________________________________________________________________

Please return by \textbf{Monday 4th February.}

My name is_____________________________________

I would like to be on the Reception Reading Roster.

Please rank the days you are available from 8:45 – 9:30am.

1\textsuperscript{st}_____________

2\textsuperscript{nd} ____________

3\textsuperscript{rd} ____________ Signed____________________

*Please note all volunteers need to attend the Information Session on Thursday January 31\textsuperscript{st} @ 10:30am.