

18 February 2016



MERCEDES COLLEGE

Dear Parent/Caregivers,

We would like to start by welcoming you and your child to Year 4 and we hope that this year is both productive and enjoyable. We believe that by forming a strong partnership with you we are able to support your child in their learning and maximise their learning potential. We have had a wonderful start to the year and know that we have a very exciting year ahead. The Year 4 teaching team consists of Mrs Janine Crookes, Mrs Melissa Buske and Mrs Franca Iskra.

We welcome the following new students and their families to our Year 4 classrooms: Alex Varley, Alexandra Goldsworthy, Violet Salvemini, Sam Ronan and Jemima Trott.

The following information is an outline of the classroom programme for Term One:

Units of Inquiry

Our first unit of inquiry topic this term covers the Transdisciplinary theme of **Who We Are** and we will be inquiring into *Global citizens have responsibilities to themselves, each other and to the Earth itself.*

The second unit of inquiry topic covers the Transdisciplinary theme of **How The World Works** and the main focus of this unit is on *earth's surface changes over time as a result of natural processes and human activity.*

Religious Education

Units to be investigated this term:

We are Stewards of God's Creation

- Students will gain a deeper of the responsibility God bestowed upon them to care for and conserve all aspects of nature and develop an attitude of stewardship towards the environment.

Lent Reaching Out

- Students will explore Scripture stories in order to understand Jesus' inclusive ministry and discuss ways to be more inclusive in the classroom and schoolyard.

Students will also be exploring parts of the Being Human & Being Connected Strands in Made in the Image of God programme. We will be completing activities to help build an awareness of the importance of reflecting on life's challenges as part of building resilience.

Numeracy

In Mathematics we aim to build on skills students already have and encourage them to take risks. We will provide students with varied activities that encourage them to explore concepts in different ways. We encourage students to challenge themselves and participate without fear of failure or making mistakes. Students are encouraged to articulate and share their mathematical thinking, the processes used and to verify their findings in a range of different formats.

Topics we aim to explore in Term One are:

- Place Value
- Basic Number Facts
- Addition
- Mental computation – build up a repertoire of strategies
- Multiplication Facts – revision of 2x, 5x, 10x
- Problem Solving across the Content Strands (Number & Algebra, Measurement & Geometry, Statistics & Probability)
- Data representation and interpretation

Students will be involved in a variety of activities to help develop their speed and accuracy of basic number facts. One of these is Numerical Acumen, which helps students to develop the mechanical basics of a numerical mind. Further details can be found at www.numericalacumen.com. Students will receive details of their logins later in the term. Mathletics is also used as a homework and teaching tool to help students develop their understanding of concepts and their fluency through Mathletics Live. New students will receive their logins shortly, whilst passwords remain the same for existing students. More details can be found at www.mathletics.com.au.

ICT

ICT will be integrated into all areas of the curriculum and used in a variety of ways to support our programme. We encourage students to think critically about their use of ICTs and develop the skills to be successful users of a variety of technologies.

The Year 4 classes will be implementing a year level blog to keep families in touch with the learning happening in our year level.

Year 4 Blog: <http://Year4.jimdo.com>

Literacy

Skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, handwriting and critical literacy form the basis of the English programme.

Oral Language – Speaking and Listening:

Oral language occurs naturally in many curriculum areas. Students will generate, discuss and share their ideas and opinions during class discussions and during pair and group work. They will listen critically to others' point of view and develop skills to ask questions for clarification.

Reading

In Year 4 students are expected to be independent readers. The students will be reading daily within the classroom. As it is important to read for meaning, students require reading texts that are appropriate for their age group and reading ability (Just Right books). We ask that you support your child in their reading by listening to them read and sharing their thoughts about the book with you.

The formal reading programme has several components:

- Using the library in class time, to select appropriate personal reading books
- Participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge
- Shared and partner reading – oral reading and discussion of class novel
- Guided Reading Groups
- Class Novels – novel study (Rowan of Rin by Emily Rodda) with critical analysis
- Daily Independent Reading
- Focus on “Just Right” books and book selection skills
- The class will develop information research skills, where they will develop skills to locate, select and organise relevant information from non-fiction texts
- Development of a variety of reading strategies – prediction and visualisation
- Reading Eggs - <http://readingeggspress.com>
- Reader's Notebook – to deepen student's ability to think, talk & write about their reading.

Word Work

Learning to spell is part of learning to write. Writing provides the context for spelling development, as spelling is one of the tools a writer uses to communicate effectively. Our Word Work programme is individualised to suit the needs of all students and aims to encourage the students to develop a range of strategies to learn and remember the spelling of words. Activities encouraging the learning of spelling rules, word building, word sorts, sentence construction, grammar and formalities will be included.

Writing

Students will participate in a wide variety of writing activities throughout the year. We strongly believe that writing should be purposeful, relevant and shared with a wider audience. This term our focus is on the genres of description and exposition. These genres are explicitly taught with the opportunity for the students to practise and develop the structure of different writing forms.

Grammar and punctuation are important aspects of writing. We will be focusing on using correct conventions (grammar, punctuation and spelling) in context.

The Writer's Notebook is an important part of our Writing programme as it allows students to brainstorm topics, play with leads and endings, tweak a new revision strategy, or test out a genre for the first time. It is a place for students to collect their ideas, discover their voice and to learn to write like an author. Throughout this term the two main writer's traits that we will be focusing on will be word choice and ideas. Students will explore ways of using rich, colourful, precise language that enriches their writing and how to generate fresh and original ideas.

Handwriting

It is expected the students in Year 4 will work towards writing in cursive. Students will have the opportunity to practise and improve their writing through regular handwriting lessons. During this time students will have correct letter formation and linking modelled by their teacher.

Specialist Teachers

There will be specialist teachers for Physical Education, Music, French, and Visual Arts. These teachers will endeavour, where possible, to integrate these subjects within the Year 4 units of inquiry and Curriculum.

Physical Education

Physical Education in Year 4IB will be on Tuesdays and Fridays. Year 4CB will have Physical Education every Monday and Tuesday.

The first five weeks of term will be a focus on Volleyball. This is very new to the Year 4 students and proves very challenging. We teach and explore the basic skills and strategies that are required for developing success in the sport.

In Week 4 of this term, students will be participating in an Education Department run swimming program at Unley Pool every morning except Friday. Students' swimming ability will be assessed on arrival and they will be placed in the appropriate class to learn aquatic skills. This is an exciting addition to our Physical Education program and we look forward to seeing the students improve with their aquatic skills.

In Week 6 we introduce the sport of Athletics to all students and discuss in detail the safety and techniques involved in the sport. This is in preparation for the Year 4-7 Athletics Day, Athletics training and possible representation at SAPSASA and Catholic Schools events.

Mrs Tracey Cramond & Mr Andrew Khabbaz

PE Teachers

Music:

Year 4 students will learn to play various chords and melodies on the ukulele. The focus in term one will be centred upon gross and fine motor skills that enable us to perform a variety of tasks. Students will apply music reading, singing and instrumental Music skills with the use of ukuleles every Wednesday and Friday (term one). To further support this inquiry, a Music technology component will be introduced later in the term. Throughout the remainder of the year, opportunities will be provided for all to play varying un-tuned and tuned percussion instruments. Students will participate in Music activities that will continue to assist listening, singing, music reading and memorisation skills.

Ms Loretta Bowshall

Music Teacher

Visual Arts

This term in Visual Arts the students will have opportunities to work with a variety of media. Some of the media they will be experimenting with includes: paint, inks, pencil and markers. To begin the year, students will be investigating the technique of illuminated lettering such as seen in medieval texts. They will plan and create a variety of different outcomes for their initials taking on a decorative format.

It is required that students wear smocks to protect their uniforms and to enable them to participate in all lessons. Students who do not have a smock will be restricted as to the media they can use. The green school smock is able for purchase from the College Shop.

If you have not done so already, please send in your child's Art Portfolio to class teachers so they can be collected and returned to the Art Room. If you are using one from a previous year, please clear last year's work before being returned. We look forward to an exciting and creative start to the year.

Ryan Stor

Visual Arts Teacher

French

Bonjour tout le monde!

I hope everyone had *bonnes vacances!* Welcome or *bienvenue* to new parents and students.

French lessons for both Year 4 classes this year are held on **Monday** and **Tuesday**.

This year, the Year 4 students will be starting the second book of the “*Alex et Zoé*” French course. In Term 1, the students will revise their knowledge of **family** members and conjugate the **verbs “avoir” and “être”** in order to describe their family in detail. They will apply this verb knowledge to their second unit of the term when describing **feelings**.

The vocabulary the students are learning is available on the Junior School French website:

<http://mcjsfrench.weebly.com>

This website also has links to French sites where students can practise their skills using language games.

In Year 4 the children are set French homework to support their learning in the classroom. The homework might simply be to speak French at the dinner table or to survey their family in French. They will also be using the iPad application “Duolingo” as a homework tool. If your child is unable to complete French homework, please write a note in his or her diary or send an email to: broberts@mercedes.catholic.edu.au

Merci beaucoup!

Belinda Roberts

Junior School French Teacher

Class Meetings

Class meetings will occur and tie in with the College’s Student Representative Council. Students learn the art of democratic decision-making, the sharing of ideas, expression of concerns and how to operate as a fair and proactive group. SRC representatives will be elected during Week 3.

Morning Organisation

- Upon arriving at school, all students are expected to wait under The Rose Garden from 8:20am until the bell rings at 8:35am. Students who arrive before 8:20am will need to go to OSHC.
- Students are then to go to their class, organise themselves and have their books ready for the day’s lessons. Students are to place their fruit snack and water bottle in their tray and bags in their lockers.
- If a student is later than 8.50am, they are to take their diary to Strathspey upon their arrival and sign in using their barcode.
- Lunch orders need to be placed at the College Tuckshop before school.

Healthy Snack

- A healthy snack is designed to enable students to maintain the energy needed to focus on their classroom activities.

- We ask that all students only bring in fresh fruit or vegetables (preferably cut into segments) for their healthy snack. Due to allergies no nuts or nut products are to be brought into the classroom or to school.

Diary

- The diary is the main communication tool between home and school. The expectation is that the diary will be filled in every night with all homework tasks (even if they have already been finished) and any notes.
- The diary is to be signed by a parent/caregiver at the end of each week.
- In Year 4 there is an expectation that students develop their organisational skills. You can support your child in their development by placing the responsibility on them to ask you to sign their diary.
- The diary is to be with the child both at school and at home.

Bookwork

- In Year 4 students are expected to give their best efforts at all times.
- Their work is to be of a neat and well-presented manner. This may include ruling a margin on their page in lead pencil, writing on every line unless instructed otherwise and not rushing their work.
- Students are working towards writing in link script in their books.

Stationery

- We ask that each piece of stationery that the students bring into the classroom be clearly labelled with their names if possible.
- Please regularly check that your child has all items on the initial booklist and replace items as needed.
- Students will need to have one Mercedes College pencil case only.

Homework

- Homework will be set on Monday through to Thursday. There may be slight variations on this depending on the daily activities. If there is no homework recorded in the diary, learning of multiplication facts should be consolidated and Mathletics and Reading Eggs activities could also be completed.
- In Year 4 students are expected to complete 30 minutes of homework each night. These times are meant as a guide.
- We understand that there are times when students are unable to complete their homework. On the occasions this occurs, we would appreciate a short note in your child's diary.

Mindfulness

Smiling Mind is modern meditation for young people. It's a simple tool that gives a sense of calm, clarity and contentment. Practising mindful meditation on a regular basis helps combat stress, improves focus and increases resilience. It's a key to maintaining a healthy mind and we will endeavour to have 2-3 sessions a week.

iPads

Students in Year 4 are required to bring their iPads to school every day. Teaching and learning programs will make use of the device to benefit students' learning: to assist in inquiry collaboration and new ways of demonstrating knowledge. Students are expected to charge their device at home and bring it to school every day for use.

Growth Mindset

Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity. When students and teachers have a growth mindset, they understand that intelligence can be developed. Students focus on improvement instead of worrying about how smart they are. They work hard to learn more and get smarter.

5 ways to teach children the growth mindset

- Reward effort, not attainment.
- Encourage them to take risks with their learning.
- It's okay to make mistakes. Use it as an opportunity to learn what could improve the outcome next time.
- When praising your child, focus on the strategies and skills they employed to learn about a specific subject, rather than their innate talent or skills.
- Be mindful of the messages conveyed at home. For example, referring to yourself as 'bad at maths' or 'no good at spelling' can reinforce the idea that intelligence is fixed.

This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Throughout there will be opportunities for the children to continue to develop their growth mindset.

We look forward to working with you as partners in your child's learning throughout the year.

Yours sincerely

Janine Crookes, Melissa Buske & Franca Iskra

Year 4 Class Teachers