Welcome to Grade 6, 2013! We hope that everyone has enjoyed a restful break together with their family and friends and are now re-energised and ready for a new school year. We look forward to a fantastic first term working together with you and your child.

In the first couple of weeks of this term, the grade six students will be exploring the issues of organisational learning through our Learning how to Learn unit. This involves us attempting to understand the creation of self directed and self-motivated learning communities with a capacity to sustain our learning.

Teachers and students will be getting to know each other, with students being guided to understand their strengths, skills, goal setting and determining how they may best learn.

The grade 6 department will be working with students to continue the school’s ethos for lifelong learning. Promoting learners who are active citizens, this connects closely with the principles of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and The Department of Education’s Essential Learning Standards. Through interactive activities we will be teaching our students how to learn and develop skills which will contribute to lifelong learning. We also aim to develop positive attitudes to the learning process, improve motivation and promote adaptability and flexibility in approaches to a variety of circumstances encountered in learning and everyday life.

Through this interactive program we have started to explore the key elements of:

- Self-awareness including individual learning styles.
- Learning environments, incorporating brain friendly practices (movement breaks, hydration, stimulus music and healthy snacks) and the teacher as a learner too.
- Organising ideas including colour coding, visual prompts and Mind Mapping.
- Reflection and discussion. Students will further be re-introduced to a variety of thinking tools and strategies, which assists them in working towards continuous improvement: Mind Mapping will be incorporated into all subject areas to assist in organisation of ideas and thoughts, visualisation and memory recall.
- Graphic organisers like Y Charts and Venn Diagrams, to organise, plan and aid thinking.

Over the month of February, each grade six class will unpack the 10 Learner Profiles of the Primary Years Program and use these to develop and discuss their Essential Agreement. This Essential Agreement will outline each grade’s mission and vision in 2013. Each individual grade will also work with their teacher to develop a Classroom Management Plan using the PYP Attitudes and Learner Profile. Classes will also determine their rewards and consequences, with the focus being on positive behaviour.

Students will be setting goals for both the short term and long term achievement in all aspects of their learning. Students will then be asked to collect work samples as evidence to support their achievements, which will help them to develop their portfolios and begin the process towards our ‘Student Led Conference’ sessions.

Portfolios assist students’ understanding of what they are learning, what they have learnt and what improvements they as learners can make, as well as giving them greater involvement and responsibility for their learning.
ENGLISH

In English, teachers will use the First Steps Continuum for Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening to guide and encourage students to track their individual progress. The writing focus for this term will be Explanation Writing.

Students will have opportunities to transfer their knowledge gained through the inquiry process, to explore and write the two main types of the Explanation genre, explaining how things are and explaining why things are (some may combine both elements). Text organisation will follow the framework of:

- Definition or statement of the phenomena
- Describing components or parts
- Operation which is a logical description that outlines how or why
- Application describing when or where it works and how it is applied
- Evaluative summary

The language features that will be explicitly taught and applied for this genre will include:

- Generalised non-human participants
- Time relationships
- Cause and effect relationships
- Mainly action verbs
- Some passives
- Timeless present tense

Students will visit all of the elements of the writing process (plan, draft, edit, publish) to write structured and detailed explanation texts. Writing will involve using appropriate language for particular purposes or occasions, both formal and informal, to express and represent ideas, issues, events, experiences, characters and emotions. Through modeled and interactive writing sessions students will develop a broader range of vocabulary, a variety of sentence structure and use punctuation more accurately.

Spelling will be connected to reading and writing activities, with the focus on the use of the Spelling Continuum to cater for individual needs. Students will:

- Use knowledge of word parts including prefixes, suffixes and compound words.
- Use an understanding of visual and phonic patterns.
- Use more difficult homonyms correctly e.g. sore/soar, poor/pour
- Use knowledge of word meanings e.g. creative/creativity, enthusiastic/enthusiasm.

Speaking and Listening this term will be strongly connected with our unit of inquiry. Students will explore the ways formal and informal oral language is used to convey and receive meaning. This will involve the development and demonstration (in small and whole class groups) of knowledge about the appropriate oral language for particular audiences/occasions, including body language and voice. Students will explore different spoken texts including everyday communication, effective group discussion and formal presentations and speeches. This term we will also focus on the development of active-listening strategies fostering respect during class discussions and interactions. Shared reading will provide students with the necessary skills to understand, interpret, critically analyse, reflect upon and enjoy written and visual, print and non-print texts. This term teachers will be introducing students to autobiographies, as well as popular fiction works, newspapers, illustrations, posters and films. Our focus for reading comprehension this term will include the following two strategies: Summarisation: Summarising aids comprehension. When you summarise, you reduce a text to its bare essentials by understanding and putting what you have read into your own words. You summarise constantly as you read, sorting out significant ideas and events and other bits and pieces of information.
Summarising will allow our students to produce a shortened version of another’s text that includes all of the main points of the original, but reduces the detail of the original text by pulling it back to its essence. When teaching summarizing we will be focusing on the following elements: keep the main points of the text; delete unimportant ideas; maintain the author’s point of view; sequence the information logically.

Think-aloud is when readers recognise and talk out loud through the process that is occurring in their head (metacognition), as they read. Students who think metacognitively can monitor their own thinking processes, adjust their thinking to achieve clearer comprehension, and use that adjustment for any future refinement in making meaning as they read. Think-aloud has been shown to improve students’ comprehension both when students themselves engage in the practice during reading and also when teachers routinely use Think-aloud while reading to students (Duke and Pearson, 2002).

Whole Class Instruction will take place every day as an important way to address specific learning needs we have identified across our class. Teachers will routinely present explicit demonstrations of strategies good readers use to their entire class, and will deliver this in a variety of ways to cater for individual preferences for receiving, processing and adapting information. Whole class instruction is explicit in content, and brief. During whole class instruction, there will be a focus on showing our learners what to do, rather than telling them.

Instructional practices that will be applied are: Read Aloud and Shared Reading. Small Group instruction will also take place in all grade 6 classrooms and will allow teachers to differentiate learning to meet the range of learning needs within classes. Small group instruction will be based on observations and students' needs, enabling small instructional and discussion groups for specific teaching purposes to take place. The small groups are flexible and will be used for: Book club discussions and Small group read aloud sessions.

Individual practice will also take place in classrooms as students will need time every day to independently practice the skills and strategies taught during whole and small group class instruction. This means students will be guided to select and read ‘just right’ texts that are matched to their reading ability and interests, every day, and across genres and content areas. Students will be guided and encouraged to read for at least 30 minutes independently each day.

To monitor student engagement and progress during this reading time teachers will support individual students through conferences. All students will participate in regular conferences and will discuss their reading goals and needs with their classroom teacher.

MATHEMATICS

Within the domain of Mathematics students will explore the dimension of number, which will involve the consolidation of the concept of place value to determine size and order of whole numbers and decimals. Students will be guided to explain: what each digit represents in whole numbers and decimals with up to three places, and round and order these numbers. They will also use knowledge of place value and multiplication facts to 10 x 10 to derive related multiplication and division facts involving decimals (e.g. 0.8 x 7, 4.8 divided by 6).

Additionally, students will identify the rule for a given sequence. For example, for the sequence of numbers 1, 3, 7, 15, 31, students will be guided to predict the next number by saying that you double the number and add 1 to get the next number in the sequence. They will be encouraged to identify whether a particular number will or won’t occur in a sequence and explain their reasoning.

When exploring integers, students will use a number line to order a set of positive and negative numbers. They will explore and find the difference between pairs of negative numbers, or one positive and one negative number, in context. Students will estimate the position of numbers on a number line and justify their decisions.
Problem solving will be an integral part of all concepts covered in mathematics. This key learning area will allow students many opportunities to read, write and speak mathematically, thereby developing an enjoyment of mathematics and the ability to explore and use mathematics in a variety of contexts and applications.

Lessons will be structured around whole class, small group and independent work and teachers will provide students with “hands on”, open-ended activities in order to assist students with their conceptual understandings.

INQUIRY LEARNING
In term one, students in grade 6 will explore the notion of leadership. This inquiry will be conducted through the transdisciplinary theme “Who We Are”. The disciplines to achieve major emphasis through this inquiry will be Social Studies: Social organisation and culture. Students will explore the PYP attitudes of integrity, confidence and cooperation and will be given opportunities to develop their social skills including:

- Group decision making
- Accepting responsibility
- Cooperating

The central idea for this unit of inquiry is;
‘Individuals can have an impact on the beliefs and values of others’
This will involve an inquiry in the following aspects;

- Our beliefs and values.
- The influence of leaders on beliefs and values.

Teachers will pose the following questions as part of this inquiry;

- What does it mean to be a leader?
- Which leaders have shaped society?
- How can we be responsible and effective leaders?

From this inquiry we aim for our students to draw on the valuable lessons of established leaders, combining them with the vitality of new and developing ideas. We further aim to instill the belief that people working together, have the power to make positive changes and most importantly we want our students to be motivated and challenged. This inquiry unit will further allow students to focus on the role they see themselves fulfilling in the School Leadership Program to commence early Term 1.

E-LEARNING
Student will be exposed to a range of ICT skills that support their unit of inquiry. They will be encouraged to use different media software where they can express their ideas thoughts or concerns. With the MacBook program continuing this year, teachers and students will continue the learning journey and discover how to use both platforms. Students will be given opportunities and choices in a range of applications to support their learning tasks.

GRADE 6 SPORT
Lastly all year six students will be participating in Interschool Sports practice every Friday, the summer sports for this term are cricket, rounders, softball and basketball.

We look forward to maintaining a close partnership with you and your child. Thank you.

Erin Hayes, Georgia Jennings & Michael Bell

Grade 6 Classroom Teachers
HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION - Blair Ganley & David Trott

During term one, the grade six children will be introduced to a variety of Fundamental Motor Skills activities. The focus will be on throwing, catching, bouncing and foot striking. These skills will be practised using various games and sports. Through modified major games (for example, games with modified rules, equipment, playing field, length of game or numbers on a team such as modified netball), students will begin to apply their skills in sport-specific settings. They will explore game tactics such as: introducing the concepts of attack and defence and describing the roles of various positions. Children will participate individually and in partner and group based activities. A major focus will be on integrating a fitness component into all sessions.

Children will have the opportunity to participate in school swimming trials and a district swimming carnival. They will also be involved in and have the opportunity to compete in Interschool sports such as Basketball, Softball, Rounders and Cricket.

As part of the Physical Education program, the P.Y.P Attitudes such as cooperation, commitment and enthusiasm and the Student Profiles such as risk taking, caring and reflection will be linked to the way children work and participate in Physical Education sessions.

ITALIAN – Ros Savoia, Paula Thomson & Laura Di Sisto

This term in Italian, the children will focus their language and cultural learning on ‘Expression of feeling’. Students will be exposed to a lot of related phrasings and vocabulary to do with the topic. Various oral and written language tasks and activities, dramatisation, performing actions and writing in the language will allow the students to develop many varied and appropriate responses to do with emotions and feeling. Previously learnt language and current vocabulary will be used to determine new meanings. The students will learn to recognise familiar words and identify some common elements in the language that differ from, or are similar to English.

ART – Julie Comer

The Children will make art works in the art forms of textiles and painting. The children will be exposed to a range of sources to generate their own ideas. They will look at and discuss the artwork of a range of selected artists working in a range of art mediums from different periods in time. The children will generate their own ideas and attempt to manipulate arts elements, principles and conventions as they explore the potential of their ideas. One of the artists that will be discussed will be Eubena Nampitjin.

The PYP Learner Profile will be used to guide the children to understand how good learners learn and therefore take responsibility for their learning in the art room. The Learner Profile encourages all children to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. This term there will be a particular emphasis on being:

- Caring. They will show empathy and, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of other children in the art room as well as showing commitment to their work in the art room.
- Thinkers. The children will be encouraged to give thought to their work before they take action and weigh up the possible outcomes of the different opportunities that can be explored when developing their artwork. When creating an artwork the children will sometimes be presented with the challenges and they will be encouraged to be problem solvers.

ART – Paul Cochran

At Level 4, students independently and collaboratively experiment with and apply a range of skills, techniques and processes using a range of media, materials, equipment and tools to plan, develop, refine, make and present arts works. In their arts works, they communicate ideas and understandings about themselves and others, incorporating influences from their own and other cultures and times. They evaluate the effectiveness of their arts works and make changes to realize intended aims. They consider purpose and suitability when they plan and prepare arts works for presentation to a variety of audiences.

During term one the focus in art will be the exploration of the art elements/principles of line, shape, pattern and colour. Using Bob Graham’s book ‘Greetings from Sandy Beach’ as a starting point, the students will combine art techniques and materials learnt in previous years to develop a 3 dimensional art work based around an Australian beach scene.