

Richmond Primary School Newsletter



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Learning and Caring for Life

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Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Term 4, Week 9 2020

Week ending Friday 11 December

Ella Blake
Principal

Stacey Eichenberger
Deputy Principal

Thuy Pham
IELP Assistant Principal

WELCOME

Dear families,

A challenging year comes to an end. Time to reflect, to congratulate each other, and to look forward to continued successful teaching and learning at Richmond Primary School in 2021.

We have a couple of additional staff farewells to acknowledge, having already shared the news of other departures; Stacey, Alicia, and Alana.

Skylar Warren-Blake, who taught Reception/Year 1, Term 3 and 4, will be heading off on an adventure, exploring Australia by travelling in her own bus! Voula Karahalios

and Soula Anthony will complete their 2020 contracts in our IELP classes and will hopefully assist where needed next year, as it is currently predicted that our IELP program will reduce in size in 2021. We welcome Rebecca Martin to our school. Rebecca is a talented educator and will be teaching Year 5, alongside our other 2021 Year 5 teacher, Rob Oien. Next year there will be a change in roles for Anna Pok, Year 1/2 class teacher, Lou Bradshaw, EALD teacher (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) and Diana Harris, Year 1 mainstream class teacher.



We also have some current staff who will change year levels previously taught. Mikheala Reyes and Deirdre Kelly will teach Reception classes, shared with Jenine Baohm, and Jodi Farmer, Mark Miels and Chris Tertipis, Year 6/7.

Currently there remains a few positions we are yet to confirm, due to the possibility of a returning staff member and further consideration of IELP staffing.

Once we can confirm, we will be keen to share this news with our community.

Today your child's report and 2021 class placement letter will be sent home. In the coming days I hope you are able to share your child/children's report as a family and reflect in a positive and affirming manner. The link and message below may assist you.

A report card is not a defining factor of a child's success in life –it's just a little picture of 'now'. And 'now' looks different for us all.

<https://keytokids.com.au/3-things-to-consider-when-reading-your-childs-report-card>

Finally, congratulations and best wishes to all of our Year 7 students and an extra special farewell to our families who are leaving Richmond Primary School and not returning in 2021. Best wishes for all that lies ahead!

We will share our Year 7 Graduation awards on Friday via Skoolbag. Thank you for all for our ever-present community support.

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." —Seneca

Kind regards and happy holidays,
Ella

DIARY DATES

TERM 4

DECEMBER:

Thu 10th Yr. 7 Graduation - 5.45pm for 6pm start

Fri 11th End Term 4 - Early dismissal 2pm.

2021

JANUARY: Wed 27th Term 1 commences

Welcome Back!

WHAT A WONDERFUL CONCERT

Happy viewing, please be reminded each family has been sent a concert link via skoolbag this week. We are proud of our performances and have enjoyed sharing this in our classrooms this week.

THANK YOU BRAD AND FAMILY

Brad, Tania, Phoebe, Banjo, and Ted were the masterminds behind the success of our school Fun Run, from sharing the idea at Governing Council, managing the event, through to distributing the prizes this morning. Collectively we raised an enormous amount, \$17, 709! Thank you to everyone who raised funds, aimed at improving our playground facilities in 2021.



HAPPY HAT WEARERS



Honesty

Inclusivity

Courage

Empathy

COMPOSITE CLASS STRUCTURE

Please see below, an interesting article about mixed/composite classes, also included in last week's newsletter. Our student numbers dictate how many classes we have, and what structure we have, each year.

If there are 35 Year 3 students for example, there will be one Year 3 class (approx. 25 students) and one Year 2/3 or 3/4 class (approx. 10 students). Each teacher is skilled at teaching multiple year levels and students are placed in classes to best cater for their individual needs.

The following is written to help parents understand composite class structures.

A composite classroom is one which children from two year levels are combined within one class. This is common practice in many schools around the world. They define classes in which students of varying ages, abilities, or interests might be grouped together. Extensive research shows it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight or a multi-age class. Furthermore, it is the teacher and their relationship with the students that plays a key role and is significant in the development of students.

Despite favourable research regarding student cognitive and social growth in composite classrooms, negative perceptions persist, particularly among parents. Many fear their children will be unable to keep up with work; will have fewer friendships; that younger children will be overlooked or that older children will not be sufficiently challenged; that children with learning difficulties will suffer more anxiety; or that the curriculum for each year level will be inadequately covered. According to experts, education is about more than academic achievement and age is not an accurate predictor of a child's development. Wide-ranging student abilities exist in children of the same age, and not just in composite classes. Multiple studies conclude it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight or a multi-age class. Experts agree the most important factor in determining how well a student does is the quality of the teacher.

Composite education is backed up by the theory of teaching by 'stages, not ages'. Students are able to work to their own developmental level, rather than grade expectations. Composite classes have become a common feature in many urban Australian schools, almost half of all state primary students are taught in composite grades. This theory that children should be taught 'by stages, not ages' points out that in life, age stratification does not exist. As it has been established, the age of a student does not define the learning outcomes. What does play a significant role in the positive outcomes is more dependent upon quality teaching than anything else. The quality of teaching, combined with student interest and engagement, are considered more important than class structure, whatever form it may take. Research, which has been predominantly conducted in primary schools, suggests there is no visible difference between composite and straight grade classrooms in terms of academic performance.

Here are some key benefits of composite classes:

- Older students are able to practice and reinforce their own skills as they teach them to younger students as mentors and experts.
- Older students provide a model of appropriate behaviour for the younger students – this also means less behavioural problems in the classroom because younger

students integrate quickly into established class routines as modelled by the older students.

- Younger students are able to seek help from a wider range of people rather than relying on the teacher to help them all the time.
- Changing the focus of learning from achieving a certain 'grade' to individual personal best alters the nature of the learning experience to lead children to value learning and the learning process.
- Students develop a greater respect for individual differences across the board.

Where needed, composite classes will be the chosen structure. This is primarily in response to the problem of uneven grade enrolments; for example, when there are too many students to form one 'straight' grade but not enough to form two. Combining students in this way is an appropriate solution that not only allows us to ensure more consistent



class sizes, but also enables us to address gender balance issues within each class and maximise school and teacher funding and resources. From year to year the class structures will differ to cater for the needs of individuals in the best possible way, so therefore became our preferred structure.

Schools should be providing a 'differentiated' curriculum: one that caters to all children as individuals, according to their needs. Teachers manage workloads for a range of ages and abilities in any given class, not just composite classes. There will always be a mix of ages and abilities whether it is a straight or composite class

We have extremely dedicated teachers who foster positive relationships with our students and we are confident this in turn will develop good learners. Research shows that constructive teacher student relationships have a positive impact on students' academic results

Whatever choices we make in relation to grade structure will most definitely have the students and their learning needs at the forefront of the decision making process.

RICHMOND PRIMARY OSHC

OSHC services are available during the School Holidays. Bookings are essential

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YEAR 2 & 3 ART GALLERY EXCURSION

On Friday the 4th of December Miss Angela and Miss Poppy's students attended an exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

We had lots of parent volunteers and Mr. Hart and Ms. Glasper came too. We had a fun bus ride to the city and then split into 3 groups. Each group had a turn at viewing the exhibition, then attending an art workshop and finally viewing the permanent art collection.

The main attraction was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander exhibition. A tour guide took us through the exhibit and we learnt about art and culture. We ate our lunch on the lawn of the gallery café and many kids were surprised that there was an art sculpture outside the gallery too.

When we got back to school we took the artworks we created during the excursion home with us to show our families. We had a wonderful day and felt proud of our behaviour and our artworks. Room 9.



ROOM 9 – MS POPPY'S CLASS



This year Ms Poppy's class decided to collect recyclable drink containers to exchange for money. We raised \$150 dollars and spent it on 2 backpacks and filled each of them with school supplies.

We then donated the backpacks to The Australian Migrant Centre. A representative from the centre has visited with our class twice this year, and both times we learnt a lot about refugees. These experiences gave us empathy for other children who have had a tough time. Akeem from the centre came to collect the backpacks from our class on World Kindness Day.

It was an interesting experience and we learnt to be good citizens.