Year 5/6 Information Book 2011

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**General Class Expectations**

The general aim in Years Five and Six is to provide a relaxed, happy and cooperative learning environment for all students. Students are encouraged to share their experiences in an atmosphere that promotes success and a feeling of self worth.

Students are encouraged to do their best, to value their individuality and that of others. **Nothing is Impossible** – the year 5/6 motto was democratically voted on by all children, its aim is to promote resilience and a positive attitude.

**Respect and Responsibility**

As a whole each class will focus on the development of self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Students will be encouraged to develop organisational skills applicable to both the classroom and the world beyond school.

**Fostering Independence**

Students need to be responsible for remembering their equipment and materials for school such as homework, library books and projects. Students are also encouraged to be responsible for notices and newsletters.

Overall students are encouraged to be independent, self-disciplined thinking people responsible for their own actions and prepared to face the consequences of these.

**The Victorian Essential Learning Standards**

The curriculum at Syndal South is based on the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). At level four (Grades Five and Six) it is expected that each Year 6 student will have established the Level 4 standards by December. Within the Standards, there are three core strands. (Website: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)) Within the Standards, there are three core strands.

- **Physical, Personal and Social Learning**
  - Health and Physical Education
  - Interpersonal Development
  - Personal Learning
  - Civics and Citizenship

- **Discipline-based Learning**
  - The Arts
  - English
  - The Humanities
  - Languages Other Than English
Maths
Science
Interdisciplinary Learning
Communication
Design Creativity and Technology
Information and Communications Technology
Thinking Processes

Student Wellbeing

At Syndal South we implement the Restorative Practices approach when dealing with student misbehaviour. This is achieved in the following ways:

- Common language used across the school by all staff.
- Common approach to resolving issues.
- Circle time – each class makes time to sit in circles to discuss issues. There are rules for this process and all students are heard and their contributions are valued. It is an effective way for the group to solve problems and identify new and more effective ways to build and maintain relationships within the classroom.
- On yard duty teachers have scripts with focussed questions to deal with issues as they arise in the yard.
- More serious conflicts are dealt with by teachers using ‘Student Reflection Sheets’ and using mediated Student Conferences to restore relationships.

English

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards includes English in the Discipline-based Learning strand; this includes Writing, Reading and Speaking & Listening. Our program aims to develop students’ skills in all three areas in formal English lessons and also through our Integrated Inquiry unit activities.

The program has been developed to link stages of development to teaching strategies. This helps teachers make decisions about appropriate practice in light of students’ development, valuing their individual differences and cultural diversity.

Students are encouraged to become reflective learners, responsible for their own learning but working co-operatively, sharing discovery with others.

Spelling

Spelling will be incorporated into literacy lessons. The students will be shown a variety of spelling strategies to assist them become better spellers. Personal lists of words are sometimes given and may include words from lists of the most commonly used words or extension lists of special interest or words from our inquiry unit.
**Reading**
Students participate in regular reading sessions. They are encouraged to utilise books borrowed from class novel boxes, library sessions, regional libraries and their home library. Books selected in the classroom will suit the children’s individual capabilities. Students will have a set amount of reading to be completed for their literacy circle activities, this may be done at school or at home as needed.

**Writing**
Students’ writing is based on our Inquiry unit, excursions, personal experiences and relevant class topics/discussions. Students are encouraged to plan, compose and work with peers (on occasions) to present completed tasks.

As part of the writing program formal strategies are taught in context to ensure that learning is meaningful. This may involve individual work with a student when having a conference about their writing. On occasions formal language skills may be taught as part of a word study or reading activity.

**Speaking and Listening**
Speaking and Listening is a vital component of the English program. Activities range from impromptu talks about topics of interest, to presentations of projects, drama work and, presenting sports and other reports to school assemblies.

Students will participate in regular circle time discussions. All students are expected to participate in discussions and listen to others.

**Mathematics**
As with English, Mathematics is in the Discipline-based Learning strand of the Essential Learning Standards. As a domain, Mathematics is divided into five dimensions:

1. **NUMBER.** This involves an understanding of place value as students learn to count, order, compare, estimate and use numbers.
2. **SPACE.** This involves dealing with geometrical language to describe figures and objects.
3. **MEASUREMENT.** This involves the use of formal units and equipment to measure, describe and compare attributes of objects.
   - **CHANCE AND DATA.** This involves probability and predicted outcomes for simple experiments, for example, dice and spinners.
4. **STRUCTURE** – computation, operations, algebra, logic, sets.
5. **WORKING MATHEMATICALLY** – problem solving using mathematics concepts.

**Thinking Skills**
The Thinking Curriculum is embedded across all domains. In Level 4, the teaching of thinking involves explicit instructions in a range of strategies that unlock the analytical, critical and creative thinking abilities of students. The Thinker’s keys are a
set of twenty different activities designed to motivate and engage students in a wide range of thinking tasks. De Bono’s Six Thinking Hats are utilised to encourage children to provide different perspectives on problems and situations. Students are encouraged to use Graphic Organisers to plan, structure and interpret their research. Gardener’s Multiple Intelligences are accommodated in the classroom through open-ended activities, a choice in the ways that individual students work and provision for students to work individually or cooperatively in a group.

In Level 4 the Teaching about Thinking is encouraged through engaging students in reviewing and reflecting upon their learning. The students set academic, personal and social goals regularly monitor their progress. They complete self and peer assessments and homework rubrics. The students use a Learning Journal to keep a record of their journey as learners.

**Science**

The two dimensions of science that students will be involved in are: Science knowledge and understanding, and Science at work. The activities will incorporate knowledge and skills from various areas of science, for example biology, physics and chemistry.

Students will be asked to analyse a range of science-related local issues and describe the relevance of science to their own and other people’s lives. Classroom activities may be supplemented by additional activities with students from Deakin University.

**Design, Creativity and Technology**

Over the year students will be participating in activities covering the three dimensions:

- Investigating and designing
- Producing
- Analysing and evaluating

The classroom program will be supplemented by input from various sources; these may include parents with skills in areas being studied and Engineering students from Monash University. Solar Car and Solar Boat sessions will compliment this domain.

**Solar Car and Boat**

Syndal South Primary School has been involved in the Victorian Model Solar Vehicle Challenge since 1998. The challenge is to design, build and race a model solar boat and car, which children have made out of recycled materials. It requires that each team member makes a commitment to work as part of a team. Over the few terms the teams plan, design, build a prototype, test and make a model solar powered vehicle. They are judged on the process to get to the challenge, poster (explaining the process), team costume and finally the boat or car performance.
Homework

Homework is a set of weekly tasks, the content of which varies from week to week. It may consist of:

1. Mathematics. The mathematics given is taken from concepts already presented at school. An effort will be made to link homework to real life mathematics. Practising tables and automatic response is also beneficial.
2. Classroom units or project work.
3. The development of research skills.
4. Reading. Students are encouraged to read a variety of books at home during the week. We would like parents’ assistance in signing their children’s diaries each week that their child has completed their two hours reading. When possible it is always beneficial if you can discuss your child’s reading material with him or her. Areas for discussion can include: the plot, characters, the setting, the language used, and genre.

The day when homework is due will vary to prepare students for Secondary School, due dates will be recorded in school diaries.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM LITERACY AND NUMERACY (NAPLAN)

The Year 3 & 5 students will be involved in NAPLAN testing in mid May 2011. This national benchmark testing is replacing the previous AIM testing program. It is important that your child participates in the series of assessments as the results are used both at a school level as data collection and as part of the students’ individual assessment by class teachers.

Specialist Programs

Music – Glenys Ferguson

Music Education develops in the student knowledge of self and appreciation of this creative art form.

Some of the goals that the music program seeks to develop are:
- To develop skills and techniques as a musician
- Singing, playing, creating, moving, listening to a variety of music
- To experience and use musical instruments: piano, keyboard, percussion instruments, xylophones, recorders, drum stick rhythms.
- To be disciplined to practise and polish pieces for performance
- To listen, form opinions, discuss and analyse music
- To appreciate music from other cultures, times, and contexts, eg special extra music unit.
• Experience a live performance by professional musicians

OVERVIEW for 2011
Level 4 students further develop their musicianship through a variety of activities: choir, recorder ensemble and the ‘user pays’ programs. General class lessons will strengthen students’ interpretation of simple rhythmic elements, the knowledge and presentation of songs (from the ABC Sing book for 2010). Activities enable students to work individually, in small groups or whole class.

Visual Arts – Merrilyn Mann

Students at Level 4 have a one hour lesson in the Art Room with Mrs Merrilyn Mann each week. During the year they have the opportunity to work both independently and collaboratively to experiment and apply a range of skills, techniques and processes using a range of media, materials, equipment and technologies to plan, develop, refine, make and present art works. They discuss traditional and contemporary arts works and have the opportunity to explore techniques employed by artists.

Whenever possible the Visual Art Program works to integrate lessons with the classroom curriculum.

Health and Physical Education – Charlie Kenez

Skills based, major games oriented with an emphasis on interschool sporting activities
• One hour lesson with the Physical Education Teacher
• 1 1/2 hours school sport or interschool sport each week – including District athletics, cross country, Summer Sports, Winter Sports, Soccer Round Robin, Basketball Round Robin, Bike Ed. Challenge
• An intensive swimming program in Term 1
• ½ hour sessions of Brain Gym and the Joggers’ Track

Languages Other than English (LOTE) – Eriko Miyagi

Students learn Japanese during a one hour lesson, which is taken by Mrs Eriko Miyagi every week. Students have the opportunity to listen, speak, read and write in Japanese through experienced-based activities. Students continue to learn the ACTLAN (Action Language) using Japanese mime through the topic “Let’s Go To Japan”. Students knowledge of Japan is extended, allowing them to learn about family and school life, traditional customs in daily life, different gestures and table manners.

Students will also be given the opportunity to achieve awards by completing the hiragana (Japanese character letters) reading assessments. Students are encouraged to practice hiragana reading at home for the assessment.

In Term 3 and 4 there will be extra transition lessons for those grade 6 students who would like to achieve the VELS Level 4 standard.
Since 2006, Syndal South Primary School has had a sister school in Japan. Each year we host a group of Japanese students from Mino Jiyu Gakuen in Osaka and we send a Japan Study Tour group every two years. These exchange visits give our students a lot of opportunity to communicate with Japanese students.

Inquiry Units to be studied during 2011

Inquiries Units allow the integration of the strands, domains and dimensions of the Essential Learning Standards. Included are the elements needed for students to meet their learning needs during the middle years of schooling. Units assist with the development of skills and knowledge in a meaningful context.

Term 1: How can I make the most of my brainpower?

In this inquiry the students will be investigating the developing brain and associated body systems in a bid to maximize their learning potential. As a whole class we will be reviewing key aspects of the various learning styles. Some key concepts will be explored as a whole class and others will be explored in response to students’ questions and interests. This inquiry should involve the children gathering information from a wide range of sources including internet, books, experts and data gathering. This inquiry may lead towards students creating/designing the ideal classroom and homework environment.

Areas students may choose to explore include:
- Responses to stimuli
- Models of the brain
- Review brain food/brain gym
- Memory
- Graphic organisers
- Personal traits

Term 2: How has the past made us who we are?

In this inquiry, students will investigate several significant events in Australia’s history and will consider how they have impacted on Australia as it is today. Some key events (such as the 1850’s gold rushes) will be explored as a whole class while other events and issues will be explored in response to students’ questions and interests. Strategies such as ‘jigsaw’ grouping can be used to help students investigate and share knowledge about Australian history. Students will be asked to compare the history and culture of Australia and Asia. This inquiry should involve children in gathering information from a wide range of sources including visual images, first hand accounts, oral and electronic records, fictional and non fiction representations of early Australia. This inquiry may lead towards students sharing their understanding with others through the creation of a grade 5/6 expo.

Term 3: What is it made of and why?

In this inquiry the students will be investigating the characteristics of chemical and physical change to various substances. As a whole class we will be reviewing materials and their properties. This inquiry should involve the children gathering information from a wide range of sources including internet, books, experts (such as
solar car engineers) and data gathering via conducting experiments. This inquiry may lead towards students completing the design and construction and testing of a product of their own choosing. Students will reflect on their designs and modify their product after evaluation of the product.

**Term 4: Change: Challenge or Opportunity?**

In this inquiry the students will be investigating the challenges, changes and transitions they will experience as they grow. Some key concepts will be explored as a whole class (e.g. Puberty) while other issues will be explored in response to students’ questions and interests. This inquiry should involve the children gathering information from a wide range of sources including internet, books, teen novels, experts, parents & grandparents, previous students and health services.

**Excursions and incursions are planned around these units.**

**Camps**

Our Camp is to Camp Weekaway.  
It is booked for the week beginning October 17th to 21st October.

Camps provide rich learning experiences for students in virtually all learning areas.

**Information Communication Technology**

Each week students will spend both time in the Library/Computer room and in using their computers in the classroom. A wide variety of programs will be used and skills will be taught and developed. Programs will be chosen to supplement and enrich learning areas. Students will become more proficient in the use of ICT for the purpose of sharing knowledge and acquiring information. Students will be responsible, in conjunction with teachers, for the setting up and management of the Ultranet.

Students will also use a wide range of ICT tools to support their thinking processes and to create information products for a variety of purposes. Examples include the use of Inspiration and Google SketchUp. Students should also become more proficient in the use of internet research tools.

**Leadership**

Year 6 students will be involved in a leadership program on a regular basis, where we investigate the roles and responsibilities of being the school leaders.

**Buddies**
Year 5 students will be involved in regular sessions with a Prep buddy for the year. The intention is to develop responsibility and leadership skills. It should enhance the transition process for the children.

Summary

Year 5 and 6 will enjoy a stimulating, challenging and productive 2011. Some weekly sessions will employ team teaching strategies to use teachers’ skills to the best advantage. Parents are invited to meet with teachers both formally and informally. It is important that teachers and parents co-operate closely in the best interests of every student. We look forward to 2011.

Nothing is Impossible.