Welcome to Grade 6 in 2012. It’s hard to believe it’s the final year of primary school for this group of students.

Grade 6 is an important year in so many ways. It is a vital year to consolidate and secure the basics of primary education. It is a year which allows the children to show their maturity and responsibility as the “big kids” of the school. And it is a year to prepare for the transition to secondary education next year.

The children have started the year in a very positive way. They have shown great responsibility with their new leadership and monitors’ roles and have knuckled down to their classwork.

We look forward to a productive and enjoyable year.

**You Can Do It!**

One of the key features of this term’s “You Can Do It!” program is the theme of “organisation”. The children are provided with lessons in class to build their skills and awareness of organisation to help them become more independent and responsible. This is an increasingly vital skill, especially leading into secondary school. The children have been given a diary for school and home use. Important school events and homework tasks will be listed in the diary. The children should be encouraged to use it for other events, such as family engagements, sporting events, music lesson, etc. In this way they will become accustomed to writing in it regularly and also referring to their entries. At the start of the year, the use of the diary will be dictated by the teacher but as the year develops there will be increasing personal responsibility for its use.

**Special dates for 2011:**

- Golf clinic 2nd March
- Gray St athletics sports 7th March
- Life Ed van 5th March
- Gray St swimming sports 14th March
- Gray St Cross-country 10th May
- Hootpetime basketball July
- Grade 6 Swimming Program 2 weeks starting 13th August
- Grade 5/6 Camp: mid-September – 4 days in Melbourne
- School footy Wednesdays terms 2/3
- Kanga 8s carnival November
- Transition – various dates (varies with different secondary schools)
- Human development – two sessions

**Human development** – two sessions
Specialist teachers:

Art – Ms. Emma Brown    WED
PE – Mrs. Sheree McGinley THURS
Music & ICT – Ms. Liz Robb WED & THURS

FIRST BUDDIES’ SESSION

Special Grade 6 activities:

Buddies – the children are all matched with a Prep child. They will have regular Buddies’ sessions together so they can build a relationship and guide the younger children in a series of activities. These include reading together, athletics practice and school orientation tasks.

Grade 6 jumpers – the children are very proud of their special uniform. It helps them to stand out in the school as our leaders as well as being a very smart item of school wear. Please reinforce our uniform by ensuring your child wears their correct uniform (including correct shoes and socks) on the appropriate day. Sports days are Monday and Thursday.

Money Matters – this is a program of life skills. It involves calculating money, recording tax, planning and operating a business and paying bills. The first session was held last week. At this stage it is at a basic level. It will become increasingly complex each week and by Easter the children will be allocated their businesses. The children will then prepare items for sale (picture cut-outs) ready for Term 2. Money Matters sessions will be held on Fridays.

Homework:

Primary aged children need time outside of school for play, hobbies, sport, music and other pursuits. However it is also important that children establish a regular routine with their homework - a “homework habit”. Parents and children need to discuss how to best manage homework tasks as well as all other activities. A regular place and time for homework can alleviate those desperate tears late on a Thursday evening! No task should take an excessive amount of time.

The homework expectations this year will mainly consist of:

· Learning weekly spelling words (distributed on a Monday) for the Friday test. If children correctly spell all words on two consecutive Friday tests they go up two more words.

· Reading, reading and more reading! Children need to read books of an appropriate level of challenge on a regular basis. Most children will be responsibility for much of their own reading at home and need little urging to curl up with a book. Some children, however, will still require a more structured home reading program and require greater assistance from parents with listening to reading and discussing the content. Encouragement should be given to try different genres and authors and to extend the range of reading as much as possible.

· Completion of unfinished work tasks, such as spelling work, Mathematics activities and stories.

· Recorder practice. It is best to concentrate on a couple of bars causing difficulty for a few minutes rather than endlessly repeating known tunes.

· Money Matters business preparation. This will start around the end of this term.

· Mathletics tasks, especially Live Mathletics practice, to improve multiplication tables and other automatic response skills.

· Short tasks relating to current class work. This may include asking a parent a set of questions or finding a set of data in a newspaper for a Maths lesson the following day.
Writing:

The whole school has commenced a new writing management system. This will involve using blue paper for all writing planning; yellow paper for drafting; green pens for revising; red pens for final editing before final presentation.

During the first term the initial writing genre is recount writing (recounting past events). This structure involves having an orientation (outlining who, where and when); a sequence of events in chronological order; and concluding with an ending providing a personal reflection. The children have already responded well to the writing tasks completed so far and we are looking forward to seeing many fine presentations on display over the next few days.

The next writing genre will be persuasive writing, commencing next week.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES:

Gray Street follows the Restorative Practices model of discipline. This involves making the children more aware of their actions and more involved in rectifying problems. It is also intended to make the children more comfortable and confident in standing up for them in an appropriate way. As in any discipline model, it is important that appropriate behaviour is recognized and rewarded.

For low level discipline issues this may involve face-to-face discussions with those involved and appropriate apologies or other necessary amendments. Staff will ask children:

- “What happened?”
- “What were you thinking when ...?”
- “Did you make a good or a bad choice?”
- “Who has been affected by your behaviour?”
- “How have they been affected?”
- “How can you fix things up?”
- “What can I do to help?”

For more serious discipline issues, or if for when there is a repetition of inappropriate behaviour, the range of responses will include parent interviews, internal school suspensions, external suspensions or other measures.

It is important that children deal with problems appropriately. If there is an issue at school, it is important they let a teacher know about it if they cannot manage the issue themselves. Sometimes we hear about problems several days after the event and from the parents. It is far better for the children to let staff know immediately rather than “stewing” over a problem at home.

For most children the Restorative Practices approach is an effective way of making the children more aware of appropriate behaviour and the effects on others when people behave inappropriately. It focuses on the effect of your own behaviour and actions on those around you.

The key element if RESPECT. Respect for others and respect for self.

Melbourne Camp:

The Melbourne trip is a tremendous educational experience but owing to the travel costs, venue fees and accommodation, this will be in the region of up to $300. We would love to see all children able to attend so start putting away $10 a week now to help pay the costs. If you would like to attend as a parent, please see Mrs Glenys Gleeson, Gr. 5/6 Area Team Leader, to indicate your interest.

The camp is in September.