Dear Families,

**What is a Mindset and why do we teach a growth mindset at the South school?**

Every so often a truly groundbreaking idea comes along. My professional and personal opinion is that this is one. Mindset explains:

1. *Why brains and talent don’t bring success*
2. *How they can stand in the way of it*
3. *Why praising brains and talent doesn’t foster self-esteem and accomplishment, but jeopardizes them*
4. *How teaching a simple idea about the brain raises grades and productivity*
5. *What all great parents, teachers, athletes know*

Mindset is a simple idea discovered by world renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success – a simple idea that makes all the difference.

In a *fixed mindset*, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success – without effort. They are wrong.

In a *growth mindset*, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities.

Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the world and at school. It enhances relationships.

Mindsets are beliefs – beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities. Think about your own intelligence, your talents, your personality. Are these qualities fixed traits, carved in stone and that’s that? Or are they things that you can cultivate throughout your life?
Children and adults with a fixed mindset believe that their traits are just givens. They have a certain amount of brains and talent and nothing can change that. If they have a lot, they’re all set, but if they don’t... so people in this mindset worry about their traits and how adequate they are. They have something to prove to themselves and others.

Children and adults with a growth mindset, on the other hand, see their qualities as things that can be developed through their dedication and effort. Sure they are happy if they are brainy or talented, but that’s just the starting point. They understand that no one has ever accomplished great things – not Mozart, Darwin or Michael Jordan – without years of passionate, difficult practice and learning.

Interesting at our school we undertook a recent survey with our years 6 and 7 students who have been exposed to this type of thinking and another group of students in the school that had not. What did we find? Well we found that the years 6/7 students all had a growth mindset and believed they had control over their success and intelligence through the amount of effort and grit they showed. Whereas the group of students that had not been exposed to the mindset work had greater levels of fixed thinking and used more often language such as “I can’t do this” I have never been able to spell well” “I have always had messy handwriting”, “I don’t like Maths”, “My dad said he wasn’t good at maths so that’s why I am not good at it” etc. This group of students believe that their level of achievement is contributed to their level of intelligence and family background experiences and are performing to this level of thinking.

To support the development of a growth mindset we are encouraging you to work with us on a couple of simple techniques. One being the “yet” technique. When your child says I can’t do something or I am not good at Maths... why not say “Yet” rather than yes you are, you are doing well or even worst I wasn’t good at either when I was a school. This will send a growth mindset message that they can learn the concept with effort and practice.

Another technique might also be to ask them what level of effort did you put into something difficult today rather than what did you learn or do at school today.

As most children will say nothing to the later, but will be able to evaluate their effort and set a goal to improve on it for the following day. This also reiterates the message that learning can be difficult and you have to work on it every day through your effort. I look forward to hearing any feedback about how you got on with trilling some of these growth mindset ideas at home with your own children.
Catering for all learners across the school –
“One Plan” school meetings for students with high performance in Mathematics or English.

At the South we believe that **intervention is for all learners** not just the children struggling and as such we have developed our own school based programs for meeting the needs of a diversity of learners.

Our school is well known for the programs in place for students with a disability in either the mainstream or special classes. But did you also know that we *cater for gifted and talented students, students who have strengths in one field but not another and or are demonstrating higher performance levels than their age group peers.*

**There are many ways we support high performing children to make continuous growth. We have students that have skipped a year level, are on individual learning plans/projects, are learning curriculum 2 years above their year group or are participating in wave 1 or 1.5 groups. These specific programs are in place to ensure our students are building a growth mindset and reaching their potential.**

Recently our staff have been arranging all “One Plan” meetings with families to develop literacy, numeracy and wellbeing goals for children at our school. At this stage we have been meeting with families with a child who has a learning disability to discuss and document a plan. If your child has a **disability**, is in **wave 3** at school or you are **concerned about their learning** then please make a time immediately to meet with your class teacher to document a “One Plan”. This plan will ensure your child has the necessary support, resources and modifications in place to achieve their goals and to feel successful at school.

**Students in Wave 1 or 1.5 requiring extension**

It is now time to also document a “One Plan” with the teacher for your child if they require **extension in Mathematics or English**. We have a range of systems and programs in place to cater for children who require a challenge and or unique approach.

Many families have already attended “One Plan” meetings with our teaching staff and support services from Regional Office which has already seen positive outcomes for their children. The “One Plan” parent/student/teacher meetings can be **negotiated directly** with your classroom teacher and are another form of reporting children’s learning and achievements to you.

One of the other ways we develop a growth mindset in every child at the South is through goal setting. One of our aims is to move all children from **“where they are”**(eg from where they begin when they arrive at school) **upwards in an accelerated way** as indicated in the amount of children achieving their fortnightly and monthly learning goals. This notion is about enhancing progress for all.

*This year we have over 190 student learning goals negotiated by children with their teacher and or parent. They range from: To use s a t i p n to make words To I am going to use lots of punctuation, dialog & alliteration and emotive language in my narrative.*

All children in our school are working daily on breaking their goals down into smaller achievable steps that are personally important to their learning. We encourage all families to get involved with their child’s learning by asking what their goals are or meeting with the class teacher to set goals that can be worked on at both school and home.

Developing family school partnerships is not easy and takes time and a commitment by all to respect each others opinions and ideas. We would like to thank the many families that go out of their way to support the school and work in partnership to make it a great place for kids to be!

Kind Regards,
Catherine Cox-Walliss
This year World Autism Awareness Day is being celebrated at our school in Week 9 on Friday 1st April 2016.

Autism Awareness Day aims to increase our awareness about people, especially children, with Autism.

We will celebrate World Autism Awareness Day on Friday 1st April to LIGHT IT UP BLUE by

- Students and staff wearing BLUE
- All students receiving a BLUE iced biscuit  
  (Please speak with your class teacher if you have any allergies or other dietary requirements)
- Holding a Special Assembly at 2:30pm
- Releasing a BLUE balloon after assembly

We encourage all families to attend the special assembly and balloon release at 2:30pm!