Term 2  Week 6  10th June 2016

From The Principal

Dear Families,

I am really grateful for the feedback that many families have been providing to me about how the school is going throughout the first 5 weeks of this term. We have such a professional staff team and all children are highly engaged in their learning as witnessed daily when I visit classes.

I would like to formally welcome the following staff to our teaching community:

Mr Kaylem Short who will join the Primary Team and will be teaching students in Room 15.

We also welcome Mrs Sharon Riggs, Ms Tanya Cornish, Ms Michelle Pietsch, Ms Amanda Karam, Mr Adam Benjamin and Mr Sam Hedditch who are a part of our teaching community here at the South school.

We are very conscious of the large number of new families in the school and how schools do things differently, and wanted to offer some updates to questions that I have been approached about. I hope this helps in some small way for all new families to settle into Mount Barker South Primary School.

Parking
There is a shortage of parking around the school and this is abundantly evident at the end of school most days. Parents are asked to observe parking signs which have been erected with the safety of children in mind. Parking within the school grounds is not encouraged for the same reason.

Please remember the staff carpark is now only for DECD staff and the disability busses/permits. Thank you for your assistance and respect by abiding by this parking system.

Messages
Messages to teachers can be sent through the student diary or Communication Books or note. Telephone messages through the school office to your children during the day should only be requested on an emergency basis.
Attendance
Once children turn six, they are legally obliged to attend school daily unless unwell or for certain special circumstances. Parents are responsible for regular attendance of younger children once they have been enrolled. It is important that children’s regular attendance is encouraged and that they are not kept at home unless absolutely necessary. Good habits and practices start early in life. If your child is absent, please let his/her teacher know. A written note in their diary or phone call to Ursula or Jane at the front office is required. If you wish to remove your child from school for 1 week or longer for holidays etc then you must seek in writing permission from myself to exempt your child from school. Exemption forms are available at the front office.

Early Collection
When this is necessary an early collection form or a note must be completed. Early Collection forms are available at the office and must be completed by the adult collecting the student. Once a student has arrived at school they will not be allowed to leave without written permission.

Medication
Children who require regular or daily medication must have a Medication Management Plan signed by a medical professional. Please check with the office that your child’s medical plan is current and up to date. If you require any medical forms to take to the doctor for a review or yearly update, these can be obtained from Jane in the front office. If you are unsure about whether or not your child needs a medical plan please speak to Jane in the front office.

Accident and Illness
If a minor injury or illness occurs, your child will be looked after by their class member. Staff members hold a current basic casualty course certificate. Children must first see a teacher on yard duty if hurt in any way. They will be sent to the office when necessary where we have staff with current senior first aid certificates. Students will be given a ‘First Aid’ note to inform you of first aid given.

In the case of illness or major accident, parents or guardians will be notified, and the appropriate action taken. An ambulance will be called if required. It is therefore important that parents make sure that the emergency contact information is up-to-date at all times. In the event that emergency contacts cannot be made, the school will take whatever action is required for the safety of the child. If necessary, an unwell child will be seen by a local doctor, usually the family doctor. Parents are advised NOT to send sick children to school.

Excursions/Camps
At our school teachers are encouraged to plan excursions, performances and camps as part of their educational program. We attempt to provide parents/caregivers with as much prior notice as possible. Our aim is to provide at least 6 weeks’ notice to families, but sometimes a fantastic opportunity will appear and we may need to provide a shorter timeframe in order for the children to access the event. Children will not be permitted to leave the school grounds on school excursions without the written consent of their parents. Aquatic Consent and Medical Forms must be completed for any activities involving swimming. On an annual basis consent for short walks is requested via the Student Information Form. Parents are encouraged to discuss with the Principal or office staff any financial difficulties that may hinder a student’s participation in these activities as we can make some alternative arrangements. Students are expected to abide by the school dress code on all excursions and outside events.

Wet weather
Children remain indoors under supervision during wet weather and the bell goes early in the morning if it is raining. At recess and lunch time a wet weather bell is sounded to indicate to students to return to class. We also aim to have both the Library and Hall open for children to have a play when it is wet weather. Please feel free to send your child with a wet weather jacket and gum boots on these days so they can play outside safely and happily.

Homework update
It is not a DECD policy that schools provide homework to students and the research states that it does not improve student’s learning outcomes until they are in high school. At our school we like to respect the different opinions of parents on the topic of homework and are happy to provide regular home work to families that request it, otherwise reading and learning times tables fluently are our recommended homework suggestions. Please see your class teacher if you require homework in addition to the expectation of reading daily and practising the different times tables.
Student Reports

We noticed that quite a few families did not attend the 3 way learning interviews in term 1 that were arranged by teachers to report on your child’s progress. If you did not attend one of the interviews it is critical that you see your child’s class teacher to discuss how your child is going in both maths and literacy. We expect all families to work in partnership with our staff to support each child’s development and wellbeing and are noticing quite a few students requiring additional support and resources. If your child is not at the year appropriate level or DECD standard of educational achievement, then we are requesting that you meet with the class teacher to formulate a collaborative support plan immediately. Furthermore student reports will be issued by the class teachers before the end of term for you to see how your child is performing. An A-E scale will be applied with C being at year level and A and B being above year level. We ask that you take the time to read the student reports carefully in order to know what your child needs to focus their improvement efforts on.

DECD Standards of Educational Achievement are:

NAPLAN Proficiency Bands expected at each year level:
- Year 3: Band 3 or above
- Year 5: Band 5 or above
- Year 7: Band 6 or above
- Year 9: Band 7 or above

Reading Levels expected at each year level:
- Reception: Level 5 or above
- Year 1: Level 15 or above
- Year 2: Level 21 or above
- Year 3 and above: Level 30 and or novels.

Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) PAT Mathematics expectations:
- Year 3 students: 110 points or above on test
- Year 4 students: 115 points or above on test
- Year 5 students: 120 points or above on test
- Year 6 students: 124 points or above on test
- Year 7 students: 125 points or above on test

Results are in: how student wellbeing impacts academic results

Eating breakfast every day, academic self-concept and perseverance are the three wellbeing factors most strongly related to young people’s achievement on year 7 NAPLAN reading tests, according to new analysis undertaken by the department. By linking student wellbeing survey responses to NAPLAN records, the department has been able to examine which factors are most closely related to academic achievement. Since 2012, the department has been measuring the social-emotional skills, school experiences and social supports for middle years students.

In 2014, data from 17,620 students in year 6 to year 9 was collected as part of a self-report survey using items from the ‘middle years development instrument’ and the ‘perseverance’ scale from ‘EPOCH’ (University of Pennsylvania). These students were from 189 schools, across all 3 schooling sectors.

In recent years, experts and policy makers have placed greater emphasis on the importance of social skills, self-regulation, persistence and self-confidence in education systems. However, despite a growing international focus on measuring wellbeing (e.g. OECD 2013) there is still limited evidence about the link between wellbeing and academic performance.

There is still not a clear understanding of what skills matter most, how to measure them, and to what extent schools can help to improve them. In particular, few studies have used Australian data or data collected at a whole-of-population scale.

Important questions for planning how education systems respond are:
- Which wellbeing factors matter most for learning and achievement?
- To what extent can these factors be changed by education systems?

For government school students who participated in the wellbeing survey in 2014, it was possible to link their wellbeing responses with their achievement in NAPLAN in the same year. This has enabled preliminary analysis of the extent to which the students’ wellbeing is associated with educational outcomes (measured by NAPLAN), including academic achievement in year 7 reading; and academic progression in reading from year 5 to year 7.
Key findings

The key findings identified wellbeing factors including eating breakfast every day, academic self-concept and perseverance can strongly affect young people’s academic achievement.

Academic self-concept was measured by asking students to rate how certain they were that they could learn the skills taught at school, whether they could ‘do a good job’ on school work if they had enough time, and whether they believed they could learn the material taught at school, even if it was hard.

Perseverance was measured by students’ reporting how frequently they stuck to a plan once they had made one, persisted with schoolwork until they were done with it, finished whatever they begun, and whether they were a hard worker.

Breakfast habits were measured by students’ reporting how frequently they ate breakfast during a typical week.

Perseverance levels, academic self-concept and breakfast habits influenced reading achievement over and above the influence of student demographic factors, such that:

- Students with high perseverance scored approximately 17 points higher than children with low perseverance, equivalent to one quarter of a standard deviation or one third of an achievement band.
- Students with high academic self-concept scored approximately 18 points higher than children with low/medium academic self-concept, equivalent to one quarter of a standard deviation or one third of an achievement band.
- The effect of eating breakfast regularly differed for male and female students — eating breakfast 5 or more times a week is associated with a 16 point score increase for males, but only a 5 point increase for females.

In addition, these wellbeing factors were associated with better academic progression between year 5 and year 7, over and above the influence of student demographic factors, such that:

- High perseverance was associated with increased growth in reading between year 5 and year 7, equivalent to 6 points or 0.1 of a standard deviation, relative to low perseverance.
- High academic self-concept was associated with increased growth in reading between year 5 and year 7, however it has a greater impact for students with high prior achievement than students with low prior achievement. For students who scored in the higher bands in year 5, those with higher academic self-concept gained an additional 17 points over those with lower academic self-concept. However, for students scoring below the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement in year 5 there was no additional ‘boost’ to year 7 performance, regardless of how they perceived their academic abilities.
- Eating breakfast at least 5 times a week is associated with increased growth, although to a lesser extent than academic self-concept. The size of the gain is dependent on prior achievement. The gain is 11 points for students in the higher bands in year 5, reducing to 5 points for students with average prior achievement, to no gain for students below the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement in year 5.

These results are preliminary and further work will be undertaken on a wider array of longitudinal data.

Today I will finish off with a Growth Mindset thought of the day....