NEWS THIS TERM

IN news this term, we are looking forward to helping students kick some goals in Three-Way Conferences, we investigate the politics and trade of other countries in our Inquiry unit, Our Place in the World, and students look forward to making a splash with swimming (while also losing their goggles, undies and socks!) All this and more, in the enthralling third edition of the 3/4 Times.

Your indomitable teachers of Grades 3 and 4,

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THREE-WAY CONFERENCES: A TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR CHILD’S LEARNING

It’s almost time for our FIRST Three-Way Conference of the year! If you can recall, we had a student Learning Celebration instead of Three-Way Conferences in Term One this year, but we have still been busy in classrooms completing important portfolio content and setting and achieving our independent learning goals.

On Friday July 24th, you should have received your child’s portfolio with the ‘Pat on the Back’ form inside. If you haven’t already done so, please fill this out and bring to your child’s conference. We know you all say positive things about your child’s learning progress at home, but the ‘Pat on the Back’ helps to give these thoughts structure, which is useful for the meeting.

Three-Way Conferences are good for many reasons. Firstly, they allow a concrete meeting time for parents, as many parents are often too busy to have that quick, casual chat in the mornings or after school. Conferences are also great for letting students know that they’re doing well in their learning - especially for those students who have areas they struggle with. Conferences should be positive occasions for the student and should help generate a bit of extra confidence. The best part about conferences however, is that it clearly illustrates for the child everyone who is there to help them: the teacher, the parent and most importantly, themselves! Teachers and parents are both crucial supports for student learning in many ways. Remove one of those three supports and the child may start to topple. But at the end of the day, it is the student who is the single most important part of the triangle; they are the ones responsible for putting all those learning strategies, techniques and tips into practice. This is especially true in the senior end of the school, Grades 3-6.

At the end of the conference, you should have a clear idea of what your child can do to improve the learning or behaviour. You can continue to help support them by reminding them about their goals during the course of the rest of the year as well as the strategies discussed to help achieve them. Unfortunately, many students will forget about these in the weeks that follow – that is why we are there to help!

If there is anything you wish to discuss that the 10 minute time slots do not allow for, we will be more than happy to organise a follow-up meeting at a later date.
PARKHILL GROWS A NEW GARDEN TEACHER!

At the end of last term we had to say a fond farewell to Joanna, our Garden teacher who is now on maternity leave. Joanna was key in taking our terrific learning program in the garden up to another level.

However, after rain there is also sunshine! This term, Grade 3/4 would like to offer a huge, warm welcome to Carol Henderson who will be teaching our Garden program for the remainder of the year. Carol has a background in teaching and also runs the garden program at a catholic school in Melbourne’s west. As well as working with Cultivating Community, Carol teaches horticulture at CERES Environment Park and is studying the Master of Urban Horticulture at Burnley. She's looking forward to getting to know all of our 3/4 students and getting the garden ready for spring planting. Carol has four chickens at home, Poppy, Seed, Pepper Corn, Paprika and Thor, and her favourite vegetable (this month) is sweet peas.

SWIMMING

On Monday August 3rd, 3/4 students will attend their first swimming lesson this year! By now all students should have noted their swimming days in their school diaries so that they can be responsible for their own swimming kit.

Learning how to swim is a crucial step in any young life, but even more so in a country like Australia with its numerous beaches, swimming pools and sweltering hot summer days. The transition to Huntingtower pool was a smooth one last year and we look forward to using their excellent facilities again in Weeks 4-6.

After each swimming day, there is always a small collection of lost items in one or both of the changing rooms. Please take the trouble to label small items that may be easily mixed up with another’s, such as goggles and even socks and underpants! (Underpants are often the worst because no one has the courage to claim them!)

INQUIRY: OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

What do you know about other countries? Which systems of government do they have? What currencies do they use? What products or resources do they trade with the rest of the world?

It’s these sorts of questions we will be exploring during this term’s inquiry unit. Although, exploring isn’t really the right word… in true inquiry fashion children will be immersed in the topic this term as each of the four Grade 3/4 classes role-play a different fictional country. They will be given a system of government and will then set about creating their own laws, currencies, flags and more.

Will the monarchy choose to give their citizens equal rights?
Will the communist government be able to find the right balance between firmness and fairness?
Will the people in the democracy accept the asylum seekers who may wish to escape the harsh laws formed in the neighbouring dictatorship?

How can such different governments get along – or will they have more in common than they first think? All four countries will need to find some even ground if they are to survive the challenges that will be thrown their way… As part of our inquiry unit, students will attend an excursion to the Queen Victoria Markets on Thursday September 3rd. They will be investigating the influence of other cultures on food.

Stay tuned!
Camp planning has officially begun!

This year we return to the delightful Phillip Island CYC ‘The Island’, which has been a staple camp for this year level. It’s a different camp to ADANAC that the Grade 4 students experienced last year, but there are also many similarities. Yes, there are loads of awesome activities! Yes, kids sleep in cabins! And yes, they can look forward to enjoying the terrific camp meals!

For parents, this is a little heads up to start expecting a wad of forms heading your way soon as we’ll want medical forms, asthma plans and the like all up to date. There’ll also be behaviour contracts to be signed by the students, cabins to be organised and so much more! A Camp Information Night will also be advertised in the weeks to come, where interested parents and students can get some extra information and ask some questions.

Camp will take place on the 28th – 30th of October in Term 4. Teachers will be looking for a few interested parents with special skills if they are willing to volunteer their time.

**BOOK WEEK!**

Something that students and teachers are looking forward to this term is Book Week! While it’s always loads of fun getting lost in a wonderful book, it’s also terrific getting dressed up as your favourite book character! Our Book Week costume parade is taking place on August the 28th, so start planning your costume!

While we’re on books, often it’s difficult to find some engaging ones that are also age-appropriate. Here is a selection of some students’ favourites that they have read this term:

- 13th Storey Treehouse series – Mark
- Harry Potter series – Mozhda
- Diary of a Wimpy Kids series – Joseph
- Dork Diaries – Ruby
- Alice Miranda series – Ashley
- Roald Dahl books – Mia
- Tom Gates series – Isabella
- Billy B Brown series – Madeline
- The Floods series – Harmony

Just like our readers, books come in a range of shapes and sizes and sometimes it takes a few goes to find the right fit! The important thing is for the reader to find a genre, author or series that they like, then they can find ‘similar books’ more easily next time.

**CHOOK DUTY**

4B is on chook duty! This means they are responsible for checking the water, the feed and collecting the eggs each day. Students use the eggs for cooking in our terrific garden kitchen. Yesterday for example, we made some delicious omelettes. Our Parkhill chooks get the best care chooks can get. Thanks 4B!