Dear Parents,

Welcome to 2016.

Each term our team will provide a newsletter to keep you informed of special activities and events relevant to the Junior School. This year we have 8 junior classes, located in the B and F blocks.

Junior School Staff 2016

**Class Teachers**
- Bree Jennings – JBJ
- Jessie Cassidy – JJC
- Kristy Sotiropoulos/Marg Trompf – JKS
- Sian Yallop – JSY
- Jacinta Mackenzie – JJM
- Jasmine Scott – JJS
- Liam Sommers – JLS
- Marc Purcell – JMP

**Support**
- Deb Letson
- Marg Trompf

**Specialist Curriculum**
- Visual Arts: Claudia Michielin
- Music: Kathryn Lane
- Physical Education
- LOTE: Libby Browning (Bu)

**Extra Specialist Support**
- Staff: Laura Yorke & Leah Colverd

This year we give a warm welcome to new teachers to the school, Jasmine Scott and Marc Purcell, as well as welcoming Liam Sommers to the team who taught in the senior school last year.

2016 Timetables

This year, to accommodate the larger numbers of students in our school, the timetable will operate in 50 minute blocks. Each class will have one session of Art, PE, Music and LOTE each week, as well as dedicated Library, ICT and Platoon sessions to complement the main curriculum areas.

**School Times**
- School starts – 9:00am sharp
- Recess – 11:30am
- Lunch – 1:40pm
- School dismissal: 3:30pm

Students will also have a break halfway through the morning session to eat “brain food” at times chosen by each class teacher. Brain food is a snack of fresh fruit or vegetables. Please ensure students bring their brain food in a separate smaller container that is clearly labelled with their name.

Please note: There is NO supervision in the yard until 8:45am. Please see the office for information on our Out of School Hours Care program if students need to be at school unattended prior to this time. All gates (apart from those leading to Campaspe Drive) will be closed at 3:45pm each day.
Junior School
As students move through the Junior School, we endeavour to develop their personal, social and academic skills. Our students learn in a supportive environment to develop skills to enable them to act appropriately in a range of social situations and to work together in partnerships, small groups and teams. This includes using good manners to peers, teachers and other adults. They develop skills to share resources fairly and stay on task to complete structured activities within set time frames.

It is important that students become more independent in caring for their personal belongings and items related to learning – lunch and snack boxes, school bags, clothing, borrowed library books, reading logs, satchels and 100 most used word lists.

To help students with this learning, please ensure that all personal items, in particular, clothing/hats are clearly named.

The Junior School spans two years: Years 1 and 2. There are specific learning outcomes required by the end of each year, based on AusVELS (the Victorian version of the Australian Curriculum). Successful learners at this level begin to organise ideas, use language to work with peers and master basic literacy and numeracy skills. They develop an awareness of other groups, cultures, times and places.

Students move through sequential developmental stages in Numeracy and Literacy that are observed in reading & viewing, writing, speaking & listening and mathematics. Personal and Social Learning is fostered in all areas of the curriculum.

Literacy
Writing
In the Junior School we follow the whole school writing program. This program provides learning and practice in various writing forms, developing spelling and grammar skills through daily writing sessions. Teachers model writing and editing skills in whole class instruction. Students generally make their own choices of writing topics, learning and using editing skills to bring some of their writing to final publication stage. Sharing is an important element of this program, where students read their own writing to classmates who offer feedback.

Students will also participate in formal handwriting lessons designed to teach correct letter formation, size, slope and correct pencil grip. All children are required to write using Victorian Modern Cursive.

At the beginning of the year, students will begin a Writer’s Notebook and will add to this as the year progresses. This is a personal collection of ideas, special words, images and memories for students to use as writing inspirations. To begin their Writer’s Notebook, students are invited to bring to school a range of different photos related to their hobbies, interests and any other content that will help them generate ideas for their writing.

Reading
It is important that the skills of reading are practised daily. Students will be encouraged to choose books to take home from particular reading levels to share with parents or other adults.

Sharing includes having the chosen books read to them, reading themselves or reading with someone else to consolidate the vocabulary and
comprehension skills that are being taught at school. Reading at home also develops confidence, fluency and enjoyment of reading. Therefore, the books being brought home should be easy for your child to read. Usually these books are 1-2 levels below the level of your child’s reading during instructional sessions at school.

Feel free to extend and expand their love of reading, by reading library books (picture story books) with, and to your child by visiting the local library.

A Reading Log is a useful method for recording your child’s daily reading. Students are encouraged to write their responses to the text in the comments section.

At home you can further support your child’s reading by helping them learn the common sight words. (See attached ‘Take Home Reading Program’ notice)

In classrooms, a typical ‘guided reading’ session will involve a teacher directed group being supported through a text. The group will be explicitly taught reading strategies and comprehension skills such as prediction, finding literally stated information, understanding the inferred meaning, applying their knowledge, making connections and understanding the author’s intent.

During this time, the other students will work on strategies such as reading to themselves, reading to others, listening to reading, completing structured reading tasks and word work.

Speaking and Listening
Speaking and listening is a vital part of all learning, both formally and informally. Formal speaking and listening tasks include: making presentations during I.L., sharing items of personal interest to the class, listening and retelling stories or working in a group.

It is important at home to reinforce correct pronunciation and grammar when speaking, but also all the elements of listening.

Numeracy
Maths learning provides hands-on activities, real life connections and practical uses for the skills being used. Students will be encouraged to respond to open-ended questions and tasks that allow them to build on their prior knowledge and to extend their current understandings.

During term 1, students in the Junior Level will participate in a wide variety of activities:

Number – Exploring numbers to 99; counting by 1’s, 2’s, 5’s and 10’s forwards and backwards; odds/evens, ordering from smallest to largest and largest to smallest; numbers before and after; addition and subtraction strategies and place value – grouping in tens and ones.

Recognising coins and solving addition and subtraction problems using money.

Measurement & Geometry – recognising 2D shapes and measuring using informal and formal units of length and time.

Chance and Data – classifying chance events; collecting and displaying data in
simple graphs.

Soon your child will be provided with a **Mathletics login** that can be used at both school and home by students to practice and challenge themselves on Maths tasks.

**Investigative Learning (IL)**

Investigative Learning will be undertaken in all Junior School classrooms. The children will continue to actively explore, investigate and create projects based on a variety of subjects that are of interest to them. We use a wide range of materials during our investigations and appreciate donations. Small cardboard boxes, clean lids, wool, beads, buttons, magazines and anything that could be used for costumes.

If you have something that you think might be useful don’t hesitate to speak to any one of the Junior School teachers.

**Platoon**

Platoon is a rotational system to provide extra PE skills to all students. Students will rotate around various groups and work with a different teacher each week. Junior Platoon will run on Thursdays.

**Homework in the Junior School**

Homework for the Junior School consists of daily reading of ‘Take Home’ books to a supportive adult and practising their common sight words.

Please encourage your child to establish a routine for reading each day. This may be at night or in the morning. Students at this level will not only be concentrating on reading skills and developing a broad word knowledge, but also a further emphasis will begin on comprehension. For this reason, it is important to actively monitor what is being read. It is vital that students discuss what they are reading and demonstrate comprehension by answering questions posed to them.

Children who regularly practise reading in a supportive environment show improved skills and develop a healthy attitude towards reading.

Also enjoy the library books your child borrows. It is ok for you to still be reading your child picture storybooks as this provides a good model for them.

**Term 1 Theme**

**Wow, I’m Growing!**

This term the theme is ‘Wow, I’m Growing!’ Through integrated studies in literacy and numeracy, students will explore the ways that we change and grow over time; explore our similarities and celebrate our differences to others; and learn about staying safe and healthy. This term we will have an incursion relating to this topic - Lazy Town will be coming to visit on the 2nd March for some great fun and learning about being healthy!

**The Resilience Project**

With a whole school focus this year on mental health and wellbeing, we will be following a whole school resilience-building curriculum created by ‘The Resilience Project’. For more information about The Resilience Project and the wonderful work they do with schools, visit theresilienceproject.com.au
Daily Routines for School

We know that children who have an established regular routine manage school life with ease. Now is a good time to reinforce this including the sensible time for going to bed and the need for a good start to the day. A morning routine that allows time for a good breakfast, limited screen time, if at all, and a walk or drive to school with plenty of time so there is no anxiety linked to being late and forgetting things.

Please encourage your child to be responsible for packing their own bag with their satchel (plus take home book), lunch box, drink bottle and brain food. **Prompting may be necessary but we are trying to develop independence and ownership through routines.**

So that valuable teaching and learning time can begin promptly at the start of the day, could you please ensure that your child has been to the toilet prior to entering the classroom at the start of the day.

Late Arrivals and Early Departures

It has been great to see all the children at school on time ready for the 9.00am bell. We do have a concern for those few children who are here on their own too early, as yard supervision begins at 8.45am. An Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program is available for those who need care before and after normal school hours and during vacations. If your child arrives after 9.00am you will need to sign them in and collect a ‘late arrival’ slip via the Compass kiosk in the office. The same applies to early departures. Kiosk slips need to be given to the class teacher for inclusion in the attendance roll.

Absences

All student attendance is recorded through our Compass system. Schools are legally required to maintain attendance and absence data on every student. If your child is absent from school, please provide reasons either directly through the Compass system or with a written note to teachers. If you have planned a holiday let the teacher know in advance when your child will not be attending school. Please remember that even if you have discussed an absence with your child’s teacher we still require a reason in writing or online by logging into Compass.

Student Behaviour

To ensure a positive and productive learning environment for all our students, each class has developed Class Behaviour and Expectation Agreements. You should have received a copy of this agreement from your child’s class. The student behaviour code for outdoor play has been discussed and you can find a copy on the school website. Please discuss these expectations with your child so that you may assist them to understand and manage their behaviour, emphasising the reasons for these expectations and agreements is for everyone to be to be safe with the best possible opportunity to achieve their best at school.

Birthday celebrations

Most students enjoy being able to share something with the class to celebrate their birthday. However, it is very important to check with your child’s teacher to ensure that you are not sending along something to share that may be a problem for other students.
Rubbish Free Lunch
Having a rubbish free lunch is a great way to reduce our waste and also educate the children on how to be more environmentally friendly. It has been great to see students with fruit and other goodies in reusable containers and the very small amount of waste at the end of eating times. Remember Monday is our Rubbish Free Lunch day and we’re all aiming to reduce our waste and see if we can be completely rubbish free.

Brain Food and Water Bottles
It has been our practice over the past several years to allow students to sip water and snack on healthy brain food during class time. Teachers will designate specific class times for children to enjoy their brain food or have water bottles at their tables.

Brain food snacks are in addition to each student’s normal recess snack and lunch. All students are encouraged to bring brain food and a water bottle to class each day.

- Water bottle that is named and contains fresh WATER
- Brain food to be brought in a CLEARLY LABELLED, SEPARATE container from snack and lunch boxes.
- Chopped fruit / raw vegetables. NO NUTS PLEASE
- Students are not to share their brainfood
- Examples of suitable brainfood: carrot sticks, celery sticks, chopped apples, sultanas, strawberries, peeled oranges or mandarins.

School Pride Areas
Friday is school pride day. Each class is allocated a particular area to look after. It has been fantastic to see the Junior

School classes keeping their areas looking neat and tidy.

Uniform /Hats
Please remember that as we are a Sunsmart school, hats are to be worn during Term 1 and Term 4. We would like all children in suitable sport shoes and sports uniform for Phys Ed and Platoon. If there is a need for your child to be out of uniform on any given day please send a note to your child’s class teacher. The school’s uniform policy is available to parents on request.

Head Lice
Please check your child’s hair regularly as unfortunately head lice is always a possibility. If your child has long hair it is best to keep it tied back. Please let us know if your child has been treated for head lice so we can let others know.

Circles
Will take place fortnightly on Mondays from 2:40- 3:20pm.

Rationale for Circles
• To develop relationships within the school community.
• To support the development of values.
• To create a sense of engagement and belonging.
• To improve student attitudes to school and their peers.

Many students will remain with the same groups and teachers as 2016, however we have a number of new teachers in the school so a reshuffle may be necessary in some instances.
Message from our Art Teacher

Students will continue to create art work using a variety of materials, techniques and skills that will assist in their creative development.

This term students will explore the Chinese New Year - Year of the Monkey, their traits and characteristics to create a collage piece. Students will explore Pop Artist Andy Warhol, whose work is on display at the National Gallery of Victoria, through the common theme of insects/bugs. Each week we will look at a different skill/art style, focusing on colour and repetition, to then combine into a “Warholesque” montage.

Students will require a smock each week; an old t-shirt or jumper will be enough to cover their school uniform. Art Academy will be running again during Monday lunchtime. Students will have the opportunity to explore creative ideas in both group and individual group settings.

Communication and Reporting
Reports are sent home in June and December and 3-way conferences take place in June. Meetings will be held on Wednesday 17th February in the Getting to Know You Interviews.

We value parent/teacher communication and believe that it is a vital part of education. If at any time you have a concern or need to discuss something feel free to contact your child’s classroom teacher but please let them know in advance so that adequate time can be scheduled when they are not teaching, attending meetings or participating in Professional Development outside of school. It is preferable for you to send an email or write a note to the class teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Teachers can be contacted by email through Compass. See the school website for our ‘Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy’.

Contact Details
Please make sure the school has up to date details to contact you if necessary. Addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts must be current.

IMPORTANT DATES:
School Photos: Thursday 11th February
Getting to Know You Interviews: Wednesday 17th February
First Indoor Assembly: Friday 19th February
Junior School Incursion – Lazy Town: Wednesday 2nd March
Labour Day: Monday 14th March
School Fair: Sunday 20th March
Resilience Project Parent Info Night: Monday 21st March
Term 1 Ends at 1:30pm: Thursday 24th March

Campaspe Drive, Croydon Hills 3136 Phone: 0725 1206 Fax: 9723 4320
Email: croydon.hills.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au Web: www.croydonhps.vic.edu.au
Dear Parents,

Take Home Reading is an important part of our reading program in which you can assist your child by listening to them read and sharing books with them. We value your support and would like to clarify our expectations of this program.

**What is the Take Home Reading Program?**

Home reading supports the focused program that takes place in the classroom enabling students to share positive reading experiences with significant others in their lives.

Home reading is beneficial in supporting ALL readers (beginners and proficient). It encourages children to become more independent with reading and more importantly provides essential practice of the reading skills and strategies learnt in school. Home reading is designed to foster enjoyment and a love of reading whilst encouraging children to read a wide variety of texts.

**What will my child bring home?**

Your child will bring home a book along with a reading journal/log to record the reading they are engaged in. These will be sent home in the blue plastic satchel for protection. Please ensure that books are kept in the folder, cared for and returned so that others may enjoy them.

**What level will the Take Home Books be?**

The take home books that your child will bring home are intended to be at their independent or ‘easy’ reading level (generally 2-3 levels below a student’s instructional or Guided Reading Level). This means that students should NOT be bringing home books that are overly challenging. Reading ‘easy’ texts allows them develop the use of reading behaviours necessary to become effective readers. The focus for home reading is on fluency, expression, comprehension and enjoyment of books.

Students work with a range of texts at a more challenging level—called their instructional or Guided Reading Level, at school with their teachers. This is where the teaching of important reading skills and strategies takes place, in order to help your child progress.

**Who will select the Take Home Books?**

Most often children will be encouraged to select their own take home book although teachers may, at times, have students take home a particular book.
How often will my child bring home a Take Home Book?

Take home reading books are generally changed daily. Please keep in mind that especially for early readers, it is good to read texts more than once. Therefore students may choose to keep a book for a few days. Similarly, proficient reading texts are often longer and more detailed and may require a few sittings to complete.

What if my child does not like what they are reading?

Reading is about making meaning. Therefore, particularly for children reading longer texts, if they do not understand the book or are not enjoying the content, don’t force them to read it! Encourage them to try something different. If this becomes a repeated problem please speak to your child’s teacher.

Supporting your child’s reading

Your child’s teacher will offer more specific information on supporting your child with his/her reading however, please keep the following points in mind.

In the initial stages of reading your child needs to understand the mechanics of books e.g. where to start reading, the direction of print, page turning, the difference between a letter and a word. Initial reading may start with the child remembering the structure of sentences and repeating them, using the pictures to tell a story and repetition by remembering some familiar words within the story. It is important to realise that using memory in this way is the beginning of reading. Covering the pictures does not help reading development. Reading is a meaning making experience. It is important at this (and all stages) that your child has positive and pleasurable experiences with reading.

Once your child becomes a proficient reader, the focus can then be moved to extending vocabulary (learning the meaning and use of more challenging or unfamiliar words), comprehension (understanding what is read), reading with expression and fluency (the smoothness and ease of reading).

We expect that take home reading should take about 10-20 minutes per night.

The Junior Team