SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS PROGRAM

At Reynella Primary School, we want all of our students to experience success in all aspects of their learning and in their relationships with others. For this reason, teachers spend a large part of the first 2 weeks of every school year working with their students to establish a positive learning environment within their classroom to ensure that all members of the class community feel safe, secure and ready to be successful. We call it our Successful Learners Program.

As part of the program students from reception to Year 7 attended a performance called “The Magic Words” by the award winning touring group Brainstorm Productions on Wednesday 28th January, our second day of school. This performance forms part of our effort to promote positive relationships among our students, reduce bullying and encourage healthy active lifestyles. As usual it was totally subsidized by the school budget to ensure that every student could attend.

I am sure that every parent has asked their child at some time or other “What’s the magic word?” and waited patiently for him / her to say: “Please!” “Thank you!” “Sorry!” or “Excuse me!”

In the play Rolf and Rhiannon have been asked to work together on a project. Unfortunately Rolf snatchers things, cheats and tells lies. He’s always in Time Out and he doesn’t have any friends because he’s seen as a bully. Rhiannon is rude and teases Rolf because he has only done some drawings and hasn’t written any words. They argue and Rolf yells at her so loudly that his voice goes all the way into space causing much distress on the planet Zilch. Zanna is sent to Earth to find out where all of the bad feelings are coming from. She explains to Rolf that her mission is to find the secret to success and happiness - what makes us feel good, win friends and influence people. Rolf explains that having heaps of cool clothes and toys is the answer but this does not register on Zanna’s Happymeter. Rolf decides that his idol Torah Bright, the Olympic gold medal winning snowboarder will know the answer and they set out on their adventure to find her. Through the journey, Rolf comes to learn how his behaviour affects others and that he needs to show respect and use good manners. He needs to set a goal and never, ever give up.

Brainstorm Productions has provided age appropriate resource materials for class teachers to follow up the messages of the performance with their students. If you would like more information, feel free to contact me at school - or better still, ask your children.

Karen Thorburn - Assistant Principal
HOMEWORK POLICY REVIEW
Staff have been reviewing our policy on homework in line with current research. It has been enlightening to see the work of numerous researchers around the world as well as locally who agree that homework in the traditional sense is not as effective as we once thought.

In particular, the research consistently reports that “Year level appears to be a determinant of homework’s academic effectiveness” (Blazer, 2009; Cooper, 1989).

Most researchers conclude that for primary students, there is little evidence that homework lifts academic performance. There is only a small correlation between homework and achievement in middle school (Cooper, 1989; Walker, 2011). Only in the senior years of high school does homework clearly raise academic performance.

At the same time, there is research that indicates that it is not about having no after school learning activities at all, but rather the types of learning activities. John Hattie is one such researcher who has found that “Homework has been found to have no effect on the progress of primary school children. To get it right without getting rid of it, children at primary level should be given less projects and more activities that reinforce what they learnt in the lesson that day instead.” (Hattie, 2015)

We acknowledge Woodcroft Primary School has recently carried out a similar review and we have based our actual wording of our revised policy on theirs. You will note that the activities in line with Hattie’s research are reflected in our revised policy. Daily reading for all students, completion of unfinished work, other relevant tasks such as tables practice, instrumental practice for our students learning an instrument or helping at home are all included. The teacher may, at their discretion, add in a range of other tasks during the year as required.

At school we have established a ‘completion time’ in the resource centre at lunchtimes to assist students who require that extra time to complete their work. This replaces the previous ‘homework room’ that was located in Billabong.

Governing Council received information about this review and the changes this week and has agreed that it is a positive move in relation to homework. It does not rule out the tasks that teachers may set as per the policy, but allows to a greater degree the inclusion of other after school activities and commitments such as sport etc.

The policy has been included in this Grapevine and will shortly be placed onto the Reynella Primary School website.

Steve Freeman
Principal

REYNELLA PRIMARY SCHOOL HOMEWORK POLICY
At Reynella Primary School, we do not set homework for homework’s sake. We acknowledge that children need time after school for extra-curricular activities, for relaxation and for family time.

However, we do believe that all students benefit from reading at home on their own and/or with family members on a daily basis. Therefore daily reading at home is considered to be homework for all R-7 students. Parents are asked to support this practice. There is a significant body of current research that shows a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and higher levels of school achievement, particularly in reading.

Homework is necessary at times for students who have not completed set work during school hours. This is set at the discretion of the teacher.
Occasionally class teachers may choose to set an overnight task that is directly related to an aspect of the day’s learning. We understand that many of our students have after school commitments so if your child is unable to complete an overnight task, parents are asked to write a note in the school diary. Some teachers may also set a task for the week to be time-managed by the student.

Physical activity is very important for the children. We encourage children to participate in physical activity – structured or recreational – regularly each week.

We also encourage student to undertake responsible tasks that assist the family and/or the community, such as household chores and litter collection. “Children need time to learn to be part of a family and a community. Children must learn their responsibilities in helping to maintain a household and participate in community life.” (Donahoo, 2007)

Students who enjoy having homework could negotiate a task with parents and/or the class teacher. For example they could research a topic that interests them. There are also many Internet sites with educational games and challenges.

In summary, the expectations are:
- Daily reading for all students.
- Finishing off work that should have been completed at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Possibly a weekly task, at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Regular practice for students learning a musical instrument.

In addition we encourage:
- Physical exercise at least once a week for all students to create healthy life habits.
- Home chores and/or community responsibilities, to be determined by each family.

The best homework is that which helps children become confident learners, happier human beings, and well-rounded individuals.


BEING NEIGHBOUR FRIENDLY
I have had a request regards children playing in the ‘ditch’ between the school oval and the neighbours’ homes out of school hours. While most children do the right thing, a small number are choosing to throw items into people’s yards and even climb the fence if a ball or other object goes into a yard. This area is an easement and while we endeavour to keep it tidy and free from litter, it is also what I would call an ‘uncontrolled area’. Climbing into a person backyard is unsafe and trespassing. It is not a place that students regularly go to during the school day. We recommend strongly that children do not play in this area and that if as a parent you allow your child to play in this area, that you provide direct supervision. If you can assist with this we will continue to have good relations with our neighbours.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AT SCHOOL EVENTS
We understand that some parents may wish to film their children’s participation in school events such as sports day, assembly, grandparents day etc.

In order to ensure the privacy of all students, please be aware that any vision or photographs taken must be for personal use only.

Images taken of students other than your child should not be placed on public forums such as Facebook or You Tube.

We appreciate your respect and co-operation.

Regards,
Steve Freeman
Principal
SCHOOL WATCH THANKYOU

A huge thank you to the 15 families who spent part of their holidays ensuring that any damage to our school facilities was kept to a minimum.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of:

Christy Arbon, Karen Bell, Sharon Brown, Andrew Fisher, Gail Hancock, Kelly & Matthew Hendry, Nathan Inglis, Nick Hodgson, Jun Pretila, Karina Matson, Leanne Ross, Bianca Russell, Emily Turner, Scott & Amanda Whitehead and Rohan Young.

Thanks also to Leon Mickan, Karina Romanovskis and the staff and students who attended VACCARE for watering our garden compound to make sure that the crops planted by during term 4 made it through the holidays especially on the very hot days.

Karen Thorburn

REYNELLA PRIMARY SCHOOL UNIFORM FOR SALE WORN ONCE

2 RPS maroon monogramed size 8 polo shirts
1 maroon size 8 polo shirt with iron on logo.
1 size 8 maroon fleecy windcheater
1 RPS maroon school bag.

If interested phone Sharlene Brown on 0413 521 757

FOR SALE (Cheap)
Reception table and chairs
Phone Leon on 0401 121 648 or phone the school on 8381 1493

FUNDRAISING PARENT GROUP

As you would have read in our volunteering brochure, the Fundraising Parent Group plays a vital role in planning events to assist the school in purchasing a range of items not covered in our regular school budget. If you have some great ideas to raise money or would just like to help the school in a practical way, please come and join us at our first meeting for the year to be held tomorrow Friday 6th February in the staffroom commencing at 9:00am. to start planning our events for 2015.

We are currently working towards creating a nature playspace between Kaurna and Billabong for all students. In previous years, money has been directed towards replacing the older classroom air conditioners with more effective split systems. We also contributed funds to upgrade the canteen, improve our ICT resources by purchasing additional SMARTBoards, as well as many other valuable resources for the students.

If you would like some more information, or would like to join this group, but cannot attend the meeting, please contact me at the school.
Karen Thorburn

SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

All babies, children and young people under 18 years are welcome to attend the School Dental Service. Dental care is FREE for most children.

SA Dental Service participates in the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. A small fee may apply for children who are not eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

All dental care provided is FREE for preschool children.

To locate your local School Dental Clinic, or for more information about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, please visit www.sadental.sa.gov.au.