Welcome to the first edition of Year 7 Curriculum News for 2014. Curriculum News will be issued each semester, in addition to the ‘Lalor Eagle’ newsletter, as a part of our commitment to sharing the responsibility of the education of your child with you, the parents. At Year 7 your child has just entered an important stage of their the education and the information contained in this circular will help you to keep in touch with what your child is learning in the classroom. By establishing and encouraging particular areas of interest you will be assisting your child with the development of future pathways. We also include a ‘parent interest’ reading. In this edition, the article relates to supporting your child with their Homework and development of behaviours and habits now that will be essential for success not only in Year 7, but also in the years to come. We are currently in the process of completing our whole school curriculum review, which is a way that we can ensure that our curriculum is up to date, engaging and relevant to our student’s needs, interests, and therefore allow them to obtain their highest possible educational outcomes. I hope you find this information of use. If you have any queries regarding curriculum matters please contact me.

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ENGLISH - The focus of English in Year 7 is to engage students by studying a variety of texts for enjoyment. Students listen to, read, view, interpret and evaluate texts designed to inform and persuade. Semester One in English begins with a focus on personal writing, where students write autobiographical pieces. This allows our teachers to become familiar with our new Year 7 students, and therefore provide a grounding for engaging with the students. The idea of getting to know our new students is continued through their first assessment tasks that require students to write about themselves and others. Once teachers and students get to know each other through these tasks and related activities, students begin to study texts in the media – exposing students to persuasive techniques and how the news is presented. We suggest that parents, when watching the news, ask their children not only what was the news item about, but what view they came away with and what in the news item made them feel the way they do. This will help when students move along the year levels in English. In Term Two Year 7 students will be studying ‘The Lighthouse Girl’. This is a new text, introduced in 2014. Teachers eagerly anticipate teaching this text for the first time, and believe that students will enjoy it just as much. Students will be primarily expected to read the text at home so we ask that parents remind their child to do this, going further and asking them to explain the elements of the story line they have just read. Students have been preparing for the NAPLAN tests which have just been completed. This was to help them to become familiar with the test, with the layout and the type of questions that will be asked. This will hopefully contribute to their confidence in sitting the test.
EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) – In EAL classes students study and respond to spoken, written and visual texts. As an introduction, students wrote a time capsule about items they cherish from their childhood and shared these by presenting them orally to the rest of the class. In addition, students wrote a letter to themselves which they will read when in year 12 about their experiences in secondary school so far and goals for the future. As a class, students are enjoying reading the novel ‘Boy Overboard’ and have been discussing the themes of conflict and family relationships. They will be completing an assignment early next term where they will be able to choose their preferred choice of assessment from a brochure, postcard, letter to the government, or a poem.

NUMERACY - Numeracy Support is a recent initiative currently in its fourth year having seen many different individual successes last year. The successes are most evident where students’ levels and confidence have increased dramatically over the year allowing them to demonstrate a higher level of understanding of key concepts within Mathematics. Numeracy support is designed to support students who find understanding Maths concepts challenging and are often lacking in confidence as a result. The focus for Semester One is times tables with students practising them on a regular basis as all mathematical concepts can be improved by a better recall of times tables. This is an area that can be reinforced by practice at home and through the Mathletics program. The focus started this semester on basic number skills and moved onto whole numbers and integers. The area of number skills can be used in many different concepts in day to day life for example calculating the cost of shopping or the change given in a shop.
In term two the focus moves to decimals and fractions using these in terms of money and real life situations. Both of these allow for reinforcement at home by their use of the concepts every day.

MATHEMATICS - Year 7 students have studied a number of topics this term starting with a review of numeracy skills and where they might use what they have studied in Maths. The other topics covered this term include Index laws and square numbers including prime and composite numbers. They have also reviewed orders of operations and integers. They then moved onto working on Decimals and being able to carry out calculations with decimals. In Term 2 the students continue to look at decimals and then move onto fractions. Students should be able to explain what fractions are and using visual aids will help them to identify fractions. For example when dividing food up such as pizza or pies get the students to calculate the fraction each person should receive to be equal and how best to share up the object. The use of fractions and converting to decimals is one of the topics covered and can be discussed in the same way as fractions where students divide up an object into fractions and then give the decimals for the different sections. The topics that are covered in Semester One are all about the numbers and figures around us on a daily basis and the more this can be reinforced to the students the better an understanding they will have of why they are learning these topics. Household bills are effective illustration decimals, percentages and associated mathematical concepts in operation in daily life and can be used at home to reflect and complement what your children are learning in class.

The Mathletics program, for which the students have purchased access codes, can also be used at home and to support student learning and reinforce ideas covered in class. This can also give students the chance to develop their basic mathematical skills by completing activities with help, if needed, or competing against other students in live Mathletics.
HUMANITIES – Geography - We are now implementing the Australian Curriculum for Geography in Year 7 and this has seen not only a continuation of core skills and concepts, but an introduction of some new and exciting topics and activities.

The year began with a close look at mapping skills and introducing students to the key concepts called SPICES (space). In class students have studied various types of maps and constructed their own. Currently students are studying one of the new topics on water. This has allowed them to look at the water cycle, how water is used as a resource and what issues we face with its use. Students are working on a water assignment currently that will be due early in Term Two.

Term Two sees students investigating another new unit called Places and Liveability, which will encourage students to understand the concept of place and how we determine whether a place is liveable. Students will also be investigating their local environment, as part of their fieldwork, to investigate its liveability.

SCIENCE - The Year 7 classes are currently being taught skills and content in line with the Australian Curriculum in the school’s Science Centre. The Year 7 classes are also blocked together, resulting in multiple classes being run at once, allowing for collaboration between the classes which have access to desktop computers, netbooks and state-of-the-art Interactive Whiteboards.

The Year 7’s began the semester by learning safety procedures in a laboratory, scientific equipment and terminology, and how scientists use experiments to ask and answer questions. There has also been a focus on research and presentation skills, use of ICT and an introduction to inquiry tasks. Classes are now studying the topic of mixtures where all students are completing a series of scientific experiments which help demonstrate the application of scientific techniques used to separate mixtures. This topic will be followed by ‘Earth and Space Science’, which will allow students to explore our planet and its place in our Solar System and the Universe. Year 7’s will also be given the opportunity to attend Science Club, run at lunchtimes in the Science Centre, allowing them to gain more experience in conducting experiments, safely using laboratory equipment and focusing on connecting science to everyday life.

Students should have registered their online Science textbooks at home by now, allowing them to complete homework tasks and use the interactive components of this resource to strengthen their understanding of science concepts learnt.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION – What an energetic start it has been in Health and Physical Education this Semester. The year level has made a very enthusiastic effort in terms of wearing the correct HPE uniform, including the hat, which is compulsory during Term’s One and Four. Each class has taken part in the various Athletics events, which made a fantastic lead up to the Lalor Secondary College Athletics Carnival. Students have also taken part in Fitness Testing activities which measure fitness components such as muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. The aim is to record each student’s individual fitness levels, and each year, compare them to the previous results. Results will be printed on a certificate and placed in the Semester 1 reports. In theory classes students have covered the unit of “How my Body Works” which allowed them to learn about the various body systems, as well as the changes that occur during puberty. During Term 2 students will continue with the units of “Changing and Growing” and “Active Lifestyles”. In practical sessions students will be introduced to the basic skills of Netball and Softball, and will also get involved in various fitness activities such as jogging, skipping, sit ups and push ups. They will conclude the semester by taking part in two weeks of Hip Hop lessons conducted by professional dance teachers.
**SPORT** - In year 7 Sport, the students participate in their chosen sport for the whole term. Term one the students are given a choice of Cricket, Tennis, Volleyball and Softball. During term two, the sports that can be chosen from Netball, Football, Badminton and Soccer. This will include skill based activities, knowledge of the game as well as the further development of team work, game strategies and tactics. In these classes, teachers are more like ‘coaches’ and everyone is expected to participate to the best of their ability and hopefully improve throughout the semester. Many students will and have been given the opportunity to represent the school in their chosen sport during the inter-school sport days.

**ART** – In Year 7 Art, student have been investigating various forms of nature to develop their observational drawing skills. They examined a range of organic shapes by completing a number of sketches in their visual diary. In addition, students have experimented with techniques in water colour using their water soluble pastels to develop an abstract painting based on the Art elements of colour and shape. Students have further improved their drawing and painting skills by creating a still life painting which focused on developing their blending techniques and understanding of mixing secondary and tertiary colours. In early term 2, students will be undertaking the Art Appreciation Assignment.

**MUSIC** - In Music, students learn how to play the keyboard. They cover basic keyboard skills and learn songs using their right and left hand. Throughout the semester, students cover the topic of Instruments of the Orchestra which ties into their assignment. The Year 7 assignment is ‘Making an Instrument’ which is creative and practical. In theory classes students learn basic theory which enables them to read music.

**FOOD TECHNOLOGY** – This year we have had an excellent start in Year 7. The Year 7’s have been very keen to learn how to use equipment safely and understand the basic fundamentals of learning to cook in a kitchen. They have also been learning and demonstrating how to handle food safely in order to prevent food poisoning. The food produced ranges from cakes and biscuits from scratch to main meals such as Stir Frys.

**DESIGN TECHNOLOGY** – The students in our Design and Technology classes have been developing their thinking and reasoning skills by constructing a range of projects from a variety of materials. They have made a sugar scoop from acrylic plastic using thermo forming techniques. They made a pen holder from tinplate requiring skills in measuring, folding, metal punching and soft soldering. They are in the process of constructing a spice rack from pine timber requiring skills in measuring, cutting with a coping saw, filing, assembling using glue and nails, sanding and varnishing. Workshop safety is emphasised during all of the production activities. They have recorded all of the production details in their log books and have evaluated each of the completed projects. The students were given a research project on Pine Timber and most of them have completed this task by the due date. Many of the projects are of an excellent standard.

**LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE** - The Year 7 students have familiarised themselves with their Library Resource Centre by completing an Orientation lesson. A new reading program has been implemented in collaboration with the English Faculty, and English classes have regularly come to the library as the year unfolds. To further support students in developing their reading habits, most students are registering to participate in the annual Victorian Premier’s Reading Challenge. The focus next term will be on encouraging students to undertake the challenge to read 15 books by September. In the interim period, Teacher Librarians have been supporting students with widening their research skills as they undertake various History and Science assessment tasks.
**LANGUAGES - MACEDONIAN** - In Year 7 Macedonian students started with learning the alphabet, months, days of the week and colours. Part of their cultural assessment was to look the country of Macedonia and all students completed an Assessment on ‘Macedonia’. Part of this assessment involved students looking at the Macedonian national anthem and also the traditional costumes of Macedonia. Term two will allow students to discover the traditions of Orthodox Easter. Students will also complete a unit on ‘Family’ where students will learn the correct Macedonian terms for all the family members, students will be creating a family tree to assist them in remember the correct language. Grammar focus was Nouns & Present Tense.

**LANGUAGES - FRENCH** - Students have studied greetings, the alphabet, numbers, colours, gender & nouns, definite & indefinite articles & the concept of conjugating verbs, in particular, the verb “to be.” They will also study subject pronouns & the verb “to have”, read simple dialogues, learn about France & its regions, as well as learn to conjugate “er”, “ir” & “re” verbs. Students will have opportunities to practise short dialogues in French and be assessed on their oral skills via a short test. Mini written & aural tests are also scheduled throughout the semester.

**LANGUAGES – GREEK** - For many Year Seven students this is their first ever opportunity to learn a language other than English. This study can only broaden their knowledge and enrich their education. By this stage all students have learned basic greetings and engaged in simple conversations in Greek. We have discussed name days and other Greek traditions. Students have learned the days, months and seasons in Greek too. We have covered the topic of ‘the school’ which has involved learning the names of subjects and other related vocabulary in Greek. The cultural component of the course will be covered with a variety of activities on ‘Easter’. Units on ‘The Family’ and a ‘Greek Orthodox Christening’ will continue through Term Two.

**LANGUAGES – ITALIAN** - Term one of Year 7 Italian is always exciting as all student are very eager to practise their Italian skills from primary school, or learn Italian for the first time. Students looked at the alphabet, colours, greetings and expressions. Students got the chance to discover their Italian name and learn about ‘Onomastico’ the days that celebrate those names. Students also had a chance to look at Patron saints of Italy and how they link to popular Italian names of today. The year 7’s performed a dialogue to practise their greetings and also completed reading and writing assessments. Term two allows the year 7’s to look at schools in Italy and Australia, whilst learning all the vocabulary for describing their favourite and least favourite subjects at school. Students will also look at the cultural aspect of Soccer and its importance on the Italian way of life. Students will also have a chance to participate in the Swinburne poetry competition to practise their beautiful Italian accents. To assist them in this year 7’s will be creating dialogues and performances in class.

### Homework Help

Homework is an opportunity for you to help and be involved in your child’s learning. Homework reinforces what they learn at school and encourages them to maintain lifelong study habits. The homework set for your child will vary depending on each subject. The degree of difficulty and length of homework will also be quite varied. Homework will become more challenging in the later years of secondary school, in particular during the final years, so it is very important that good habits are established early.
Types of homework your child may receive include:

**Practice Exercises**
Practice exercises give your child opportunities to apply new knowledge, or to review and reinforce recently learned skills. They include:
- Completing Math’s exercises
- Reading
- Essay writing and other creative tasks.
- Completing text book questions

**Preparatory Homework**
Preparatory homework gives your child the opportunity to gain background information so they are better prepared for future lessons. For example:
- Reading English texts for class discussion
- Researching topics for class work
- Collecting newspaper articles
- Revising information about a current topic.

**Extension Assignments / Inquiry Tasks**
Extension assignments and Inquiry Tasks encourage your child to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively. For example:
- Writing a book review
- Making or designing an artwork
- Completing projects and assignments
- Researching local news or community opinions
- Investigating material on the internet

**How Can You Help?**
There are many ways you can help your child with their homework including:
- Encouraging a regular daily time to complete homework
- Providing a quiet space, free of distractions
- Discussing key questions or suggesting resources to help with homework
- Helping create a balance between time spent doing homework and recreational activities
- Celebrating your child’s successes and achievements
- Attending school events, such as parent teacher interviews, productions or displays your child is involved in
- Communicating with teachers to discuss problems with homework.

**More information**
For questions about your child’s homework, contact the school and/or subject teachers. All teachers’ school email addresses can be found on the school website. The department of education has also set up a website that may be used access a range of safe websites which may assist your child with their homework, [https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/secondary/pages/Default.aspx](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/secondary/pages/Default.aspx)