Year 8, Semester One, 2014

Welcome to the first edition of Year 8 Curriculum News for 2014. The Curriculum News will continue to be sent 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. We are very pleased to share with our Parents that we are currently in the process of a whole school curriculum review. This review ensures that we provide an up to date, engaging and relevant curriculum to best fit our student’s educational needs. Any improvements to our school curriculum will be communicated to parents as soon as the review process is finalised and recommendations are approved.

At this time, students are very busy completing a range of assessments across many subject areas, as teachers prepare to write the Semester One reports. It is very important that all students always work to be best of their ability in all classes and organise their time effectively to complete assignments and prepare for tests. If any students are experiencing difficulties in completing any of the set work or in relation to level of understanding, then it is vital that they communicate these concerns with their classroom teachers, so that they can offer additional support or resources to assist.

If you have any queries regarding curriculum matters please contact me.
Ms Kaylene Kubeil

**ENGLISH** - In English, students began the year by studying the novel ‘The Outsiders’. We are hoping that students discussed the text with their parents, as it focuses on family and relationships. Students were required to complete an analytical response to the text as well as present their understanding of the text verbally to the class. This will hold them in good stead for the oral presentations they will be expected to complete in future year levels in the study of English. The focus for Term Two is on the study of fiction print texts, with students studying ‘Trash’ and science fiction later in the semester. Your child will be encouraged to read the text at home, and we ask that parents ask their child details of what they have read. By telling you about the story, this will allow your child to verbalise their understanding of the text and therefore contribute confidently to class discussions.

**EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)** – We began 2014 with introductory activities where students shared information about themselves and then interviewed others. This lead to the writing of short biographies about friends or family. The class read the novel Parvana by Deborah Ellis and completed chapter activities and summaries in their workbooks. The novel tells the story of a young girl growing up in war torn Afghanistan. Term Two will see us complete more extended writing in response to the novel. Our student teacher will introduce the concept of newspaper issues and “Letters to the Editor”. Students will also be working on Oral presentations and a unit on science fiction from their workbooks.
**NUMERACY** - Numeracy support is continued into Year 8, capitalising on the success seen in Year 7. The focus is on why this maths is being learnt rather than just learning new concepts. The aim of the program is to continue the success seen in the classroom and to apply this success to more structured assessments. The program is used to reinforce the key concepts covered in year 7 and to allow the more complicated ones to be introduced due to the confidence of the students being higher. The students started the semester looking at basic number skills and focusing on how and when they may be used in real life situations. This was also supported by the continued work on timetables allowing students to practise using them and recalling them. Continued work on these at home will support the learning in class, both directly but also allowing all students to carry out calculations more easily by knowing the tables better. The Mathletics program can also be used to support work being done in class and to engage students in other activities.

In term two students will move on to fractions, decimals and percentages and look at their use in their day to day life. The focus will be on how they will use decimals in their own calculations, again looking at bills and costs. This can be reinforced by looking at shopping lists with students using them to calculate prices and costs. The topic of percentages will focus around sales and best buys which will allow students to be able to use this information with you at home, demonstrating best buys and being able to calculate why this is the best buy and how much is saved in a particular deal.

**MATHEMATICS** - Year 8 students have studied topics including integers, positive and negative numbers, and how to carry out mathematical operations including these types of numbers. Bank statements including deposits, withdrawals, being overdrawn and in credit, are a good place to start discussions about positive and negative numbers and how calculations are performed in these situations. The other area where this can be linked to real life situations is temperature and temperature change as shown on weather reports. Students then moved onto indices, percentages and decimals. Percentage and decimals can be discussed using bills, sales and shopping receipts. Students should be able to calculate best buys, reductions and totals of shopping bills. The more conversations that are had regarding the use of these types of numbers will reinforce how often they are used in real life situations and therefore the importance of what they are studying in the classroom.

The Mathletics program, which the students have purchased access codes for, 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** - The Year 8 Geography students are currently looking at weather hazards. In particular they are doing a major assessment task whereby they choose a weather hazards case (e.g. Black Saturday Bushfires) to research and act as a Disaster Management Consultant write a report. They provide information on how the hazard started, what damage did it cause and how did people respond. They then provide recommendations on how the damage could have been avoided or decreased using an online simulation game to test their ideas.

Students are to continue this study of natural hazards by looking at earthquakes and volcanoes in greater depth. They will be reading annotated diagrams, maps and graphs to investigate how volcanoes and earthquakes form and what impact they have on human environments and behaviours. Further to this, students will begin a unit on Endangered Species next term in which they will attend a fieldwork excursion to Healesville Sanctuary. While there they will investigate the role of a zoo and investigate the part they play in protecting, nurturing and educating the public on native animals.

*A Time to Build*
**SCIENCE** - In Term 1, students completed the topics of Science Skills and Physical and Chemical Change. While completing Science Skills, students refreshed their memories, from Year 7, on what scientists do, collecting and presenting data and the key components of conducting scientific experiments and research. In addition to this, students also learnt about health and safety issues surrounding practical work and the need to include these in their practical assessments. Students then focused on physical and chemical changes and used the Particle Model to demonstrate key differences between these two changes and explain how chemical reactions occur, including looking at some of these basic reactions. Currently students are learning information about Elements, Compounds and Mixtures. They are also taking a closer look at Atoms, including the sub-atomic particle of Protons, Electrons and Neutrons, which is new and exciting. The Periodic Table is also central to all this knowledge and it is expected that students are able to learn some of the common Elements, including their symbols from the table. An inquiry project will also be completed in this chapter, in which each student will be focus on an Element, along with the third assessment practical: Forming Alum: A Lattice Compound. It is hoped that by the end of this term, all classes will start work on looking at Cells, specifically plant and animal cells. We will study structures and functions, which will involve extensive use of the school microscopes. Finally, it is important to remember that Chapter (Topic) Tests, Practicals and Homework continue to be vital for understanding and it is expected that all students study at home several evenings prior to the chapter test day. Students should have registered their online textbooks at home by now, allowing them to study and use the interactive components of this resource.

**HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION** – What a great start the year level has made to the beginning of the year. 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 covered the units of “Values and Decision Making”, “People, Identity and Culture” and “Conflict Resolution”. During Term 2 students will focus on the topic of “Risk Taking Behaviours” and will learn about the risks associated with alcohol, drugs and sexual health. In practical classes students will be involved in the sports of Basketball, Hockey and Badminton, with a focus on skill development and learning the rules of each game. They will conclude the semester by taking part in two weeks of Hip Hop lessons conducted by professional dance teachers.

**ART** – In Art Students have undertaken ‘refresher’ notes on the Art elements of line, shape and colour. This was supplemented by painting where the students learnt how to mix primary and secondary colours using acrylic paints to create an artwork based on their names. Students have been studying early Australian landscape painters and have created their own, using the techniques of water colour and water soluble pastels. They are currently investigating the ‘Urban Environment’ by undertaking ‘The mighty challenge drawing’. In Term Two, students will complete a written assignment on an Australian Artist/artwork as well as complete a practical task involving printmaking.

**Music** – In Music, students learn how to play a Mozart piece ‘Eine Klein Nachtmusik’ on the keyboard for their practical assessment. Throughout the semester, students learn about Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig Van Beethoven which ties into their assignment. The written component for music is a research project on the life of Beethoven. In theory classes students continue to learn basic theory which enables them to read music.
FOOD TECHNOLOGY – The year 8’s have been building on and refining their skills from the previous year, enhancing their prior knowledge and developing a passion for food. They have completed a range of topics such as investigating and taste testing a range of cheeses to find out how to evaluate ingredients using sensory descriptors so that they can make informed choices about what they eat. The students have been able to learn how to modify ingredients to make a recipe healthier and also incorporate that into an assessment task. Some of the recipes that have been included in this semester have been the Chicken and Leek pies as well as Nasi Goreng. The food cooked at this level requires more skill from the students and really tests their culinary ability. It has been great to see a lot of enthusiasm from the students this semester.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY – The students in our Year 8 classes have built on the skills and techniques developed in Year 7. They have constructed a cake server from acrylic plastic, requiring skills in sawing with a coping saw, grinding with the belt and disk sander, filing and thermo bending. Their second project was a pencil box with a sliding lid requiring skills in measuring, cutting with a tenon saw, chiseling, assembling with glue and nails, sanding and varnishing. The third project was a copper repousse using a range of copper tooling techniques. All production activities, drawings and evaluations were recorded in their log books. Safety procedures were an important part of the program. The students were required to complete a research assignment on Plastic Materials. Most of the assignments were completed by the due date and to a good standard. Many projects were completed to a very high standard.

LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTRE - It is encouraging to see many Year 8 Classes visiting the library, whether to choose reading books for English or to conduct research for various assessment tasks. Teacher Librarians have been conducting information sessions on ‘How to Write Bibliographies’. It is vital for students to include bibliographies in their completed work to acknowledge the sources of their information, as well as to use other people’s ideas ethically. Students will view a demonstration on how to use a subscribed access to Online Referencing Generator website. This website assists students to produce a correctly formatted bibliography. In addition, instructional handouts will be provided.

LANGUAGES - MACEDONIAN - Term one saw the year 8 Macedonian class revise their knowledge of year 7 whilst learning how to describe themselves and their family members. Students also looked at the unit of Our House which required them to look at and practise their Future and Present Tense. Like other language students Macedonian students looked at the tradition of Carnivale. Students Cultural assessment task for Term One was Carnevale in Strumica. Term Two will see Year 8’s looking at Orthodox Easter, Food, shopping and also the History of Macedonia. The semester will finish off with a look at Macedonian Easter.

LANGUAGES - FRENCH - Students spent about three weeks working on dialogues which focussed on “A day in Paris”. This project was performed collaboratively, in groups of 3 & 4 and presented in the form of a poster, which included both writing & pictures. Year 8 students have also been studying grammar and have had written tests on the vocabulary learnt. Students will continue to study more complex sentences in French, as well as extend their reading & listening skills. They will focus on “food” for their next topic and prepare a menu in French for their Cultural assignment.

LANGUAGES – GREEK - The Year Eight Greek class began the year with some general revision of the alphabet, days of the week, the months etc. Through a PowerPoint presentation we saw how “Theofaneia” was celebrated in Australia in 2014. As part of the revision unit, we learned the names of the animals in Greek from the YouTube clip- “To Poulaki Tsiou”. Our first major unit was on “The House” where we used the new vocabulary and grammar to complete a reading task, a written test and project on “My Dream House.” The focus for term two will be “Celebrations”. Term Two will focus on celebrations such as Easter and Greek

‘A Time to Build’
Weddings. By the end of the semester the class will watch “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” and complete the relevant activities.

**LANGUAGES – ITALIAN** - The year 8 Italian class had the very difficult task of learning about ‘Verbs’, a tough part of the Italian grammar, students made verb machines on their computers in order to assist them in practising. Term two will see the year 8’s looking at School life in Italy and also the family. Students will be practising their ICT skills completing a family tree. Throughout the term year 8 will also be practising those verb skills they learned in term one. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in the Swinburne Junior poetry Competition.

**Learning & Improving Literacy**

Learning is a lifelong process. Everything we do should be part of this. You may be surprised to discover that many simple everyday activities can in fact, help you improve in a variety of school subjects. There are many ways to learn and some of which are the most useful are fun and even relaxing. Below are some very simple suggestions that could be easily incorporated a student’s routine each week.

1. **Read, Read, Read!** Language is power and the more you read the bigger your vocabulary will become. It doesn’t have to always be a school text or novel, but anything grabs your interest, including newspapers, magazines or even reading information from the Internet.

2. **Keep a Journal or Diary.** Why not keep a personal journal or diary? Not only does it provide a record of an important stage of your life, but it provides you with an outlet to be creative, record your thoughts or just let any frustrations or feelings about your day to day experiences. Many writers often developed their love of writing by maintaining a journal in their earlier years.

3. **Complete Word Games.** Crosswords, find-a-word, Pictionary, Hangman or Charades are just a few word games that can be played. If you had access to a computer then you can create all sorts of games that can be used with a partner. These can be based on selected words, for example, you can have a race with your friend to see how many words you could create based on the letters of another word. The advantage of all word games is that you expand your vocabulary and at the same time you're improving your mental fitness by thinking creatively!

Article adapted from LSC School Diary, 2014 page 46