Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome!

Welcome to the Parent Information night for 2015. I am very excited about the year ahead and aim to create a happy, safe and enriching learning environment for your child. I hope you find the information in this pack useful, however if you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

My background

Although I had considered teaching as a career for a long period of time, I have come to this wonderful profession a little later than I anticipated! I have worked in a variety of occupations, including banking and finance, viticulture and tourism. I also owned and ran my own business in Clare for five years. I hold a Bachelor of Business in Tourism & Hospitality and a Graduate Diploma in Teaching & Learning. I believe my broad range of life and professional experiences hold me in good stead as both a role model for, and educator of your child.

My teaching philosophy

I find my philosophy on teaching and learning continues to change and develop, however several key philosophies continue to hold true.

Firstly, I believe children learn best when they feel they are in a safe and caring learning environment.

Secondly, each and every child is an individual with a unique set of circumstances. They grow and develop within their specific environment and they bring their unique perspective on life to school with them. Therefore, attempting to know and understand each and every child in my class is essential to being able to better cater for their needs.

Thirdly, every child deserves to achieve success in whatever form that may take. Tailoring their learning experiences according to their particular skill set is therefore the key to enabling them to feel the thrill of success. I believe children learn best when tasks are engaging, enriching and seem relevant to them.

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**Important Weekly Events:**

**Monday:** Line up

**Tuesday:** Japanese / Morning Fitness / PE (wear sports uniform) / Student banking

**Wednesday:** Line up / Wear sports uniform

**Thursday:** Lunch orders in (for Friday) / Fitness / Footsteps Dance (Wear sports uniform for weeks 1-5 only)

**Friday:** Library / Lunch orders

**Please note that there will no canteen orders until advised. Please check the School Newsletter.**

School begins at 8:50 and children are allowed in the classroom from 8:30 onwards. It would be fantastic if all children were at school by 8:45 am every morning. This will help set up children for a successful day at school.

Curriculum areas that will be taught by myself throughout the school week are:
English (Speaking and listening, Spelling using the Soundwaves approach, Handwriting, Reading – guided reading, independent reading, class novels, reading comprehension strategies, Writing – this term we will be exploring recounts, narratives and expositions)
- Maths (following the ‘iMaths’ program)
- Religious Education
- Visual Arts/Drama/Dance/Music
- Civics and Citizenship
- History
- Geography
- Health
- Science
- Design and Technology
- Digital Technologies (ICT)
- MITIOG
- You Can Do It! (Program Achieve)

**Communication:** Over the course of the term I will be communicating with you in a variety of ways. I will be regularly preparing class newsletters that will go home to you as a hardcopy and I will also put these on the school website. Please remember to check the school website regularly (www.stjoclar.catholic.edu.au).

In addition, I will be using a ‘blog-site’ called Edmodo. This site allows me to update you daily on the comings and goings of class life and share videos and other media with you and also with the students. Class diaries will be used by students to record important information, such as homework tasks or upcoming activities. It is also another way you can communicate with me on a daily basis. Each child’s diary must be signed by a parent and handed up to me to check every Friday morning. It is an expectation that the children ensure this occurs. If you would like to communicate with me via email my address is brackland@stjoclar.catholic.edu.au

**Responsibilities:** We have a job chart in our classroom that is changed every Monday morning. These jobs enable students to take responsibility for looking after their school and classroom. This enables children to work with other students to maintain a supportive learning environment.

**Fruit Break:** This will occur every day at approx. 10am. Please provide your child with a piece of fruit which they can eat during this short break. Please give your child easy to eat fruit/vegetables.

**Homework:** It is a school expectation that children in year 3 & 4 will read each night and record their reading in their reading log. Apart from reading, children will have a homework contract that enables them to choose activities to complete for homework. *Children should spend no more than 15-20 minutes per night on their homework activities.* Every Monday the children will receive their homework contract and stick it in their homework books. It is an expectation that you will sign this slip. Homework is set each Monday morning and due for completion by Friday of that week. Each Friday, students must hand up their homework book, diary and reading log. *All of these must be signed by you.*

**Behaviour Management:** At the beginning of this school year, the students were involved in establishing classroom rules. Each child has signed these, promoting ownership, enabling students to take responsibility for their own actions.

**Year 3 & 4 Camp(s):** This year, the year 3 students will be travelling to the Adelaide Zoo on the 13th and 14th of August (week 4 of term 3) to participate in the ‘Zoo-Snooze’ program. We will also be visiting the Adelaide Oval. Year 4 students will be travelling to Erappa to participate in their exciting ropes program from the 6th to the 8th of May (week 2 of term 2). You will receive more information about these camps later in the term. If you are free at these times and have a valid Catholic police
check, we would love your help. Please write a note in your child’s diary if you are able to help or alternatively catch me before or after school to let me know.

Curriculum

Our Theme:

This term our theme is ‘Taking Care of Mother Earth’, encompassing elements of English, Science, Geography and Civics & Citizenship.

Speaking and Listening:

Over the course of this term, students will have a wide range of opportunities to speak in front of others across a variety of curriculum areas. As we progress to year 3, scheduled ‘show and tell’ opportunities diminish, moving more towards communicating what they have learned or discovered about different topics through discussion, dialogic conversation and prepared presentations.

Reading and Viewing:

Each week, students will be involved in a number of different reading activities. These will include independent reading, guided reading, buddy reading and blue box activities. A focus this term will be on explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies. I will listen to each child read on a rotation basis and this should occur once a fortnight. Our library visits are on a Friday. Children should borrow at least one ‘reading’ book during that time, although some children will be given other readers appropriate to their skill set. Children should record their reading in their reading log.

BTN: Children will watch BTN once a week. I believe it is important for children to be in touch with what is happening in the world around them. BTN is able to deliver this in a way that is engaging and we complete a variety of activities associated with this program.

Spelling:

Children will be given new spelling words every Monday and tested on their weekly words on Friday of the same week. They have a list of weekly spelling activities that will help them to learn their list words. The school follows the Soundwaves approach which focuses heavily on developing the phonemic awareness.

In a nutshell, the English language is a beautiful and expressive language. It is a phonographic language – ‘Phono’ being Greek for sound and ‘Graphic’ being Greek for writing.

For children to begin to spell more words accurately in their own writing it is essential that they be taught to ‘hear’ the sounds in words and then choose the correct letter combinations to represent the sound in writing.

In class, children will be exposed to certain terminology, such as phoneme, graph, digraph, trigraph and quadgraph. It is important that a ‘shared’ language be adopted between school and home. If you would like to discuss the Soundwaves approach, please feel free to speak to me about it.

Handwriting:

Each week children will have handwriting lessons. This will aim to teach correct posture, grip, letter formation, spacing and style skills.
Writing:

Throughout the school year, the class will focus on different writing genres including: recounts, expositions, narratives, poetry, procedures, reports and reviews. Our focus in the first term will be on recounts, narratives and expositions.

Maths:

Following a whole school approach, we will be using the ‘iMaths’ program that aims to teach maths through investigation activities. The children will begin the term looking at ‘number’ and in particular mental computation and problem solving strategies.

Throughout the year children will also look at other maths topics including; multiplication, division, 2D & 3D shapes, measurement including length, perimeter, area, volume and capacity, fractions and decimals, money, problem solving, symmetry and location and position.

Religion:

We have our Welcome Mass on Friday the 13th of February, beginning at 12pm.

This term, students will explore the key idea that humanity is made in the image of God and grounded in God’s love and that we are called to demonstrate reverence for self, others and the whole of creation. Daily prayer will be run by the students and will take place every morning. The year 3 & 4 class generally participate in three Friday Masses during the term – please check your newsletter for Mass times. Our class will also prepare their own class liturgies throughout the year. You will be advised in advance of these occasions.

Year 3 students may participate in the Sacrament of ‘Reconciliation’ and Year 4 students in the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion. This will be taught in Religion lessons during term 1. If you would like to enrol your child, please contact myself or Paula Clark directly. A Sacramental meeting will be held at school on Thursday the 12th of February 7pm.

Science:

In science this term we will be exploring the ‘Material World’, in particular the idea that natural and processed materials have a range of physical properties and these properties can influence their use. Year 3 students will also be exploring how a change of state from a liquid to a solid can be brought about by adding or removing heat.

Technologies:

In keeping with our theme of ‘Taking Care of Mother Earth’, this term we will be exploring sculpture created from recycled materials in Design and Technology. In Digital Technologies, students will examine how to investigate and create using ICT.

Civics and Citizenship:

This term students will explore how and why people make rules and laws, community and our cultural heritage.

Health (Encompassing Made In the Image of God – MITIOG, Program Achieve and the Child Protection Curriculum):

In Health this term we will be exploring the Program Achieve concepts: Confidence, Organisation and Getting Along. Students will investigate the concept of ‘safety’ as part of the Child Protection Curriculum. In addition, students will continue to develop skills that will enable them to develop positive relationships with others and examine how success, challenge and failure strengthen their
personal identity.

**PE: Mrs Schmaal – Sports Day preparation and athletics skills.**

**History:**

This term, the year 3 students will be exploring the life of families living at ‘Bungaree’ over time. This year we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, and as such this will also be a focus. Year 4 students will be completing a unit of inquiry on navigators and explorers of the 18th century. *History will be taught in the 1st Semester and Geography in the 2nd Semester.*

**Fitness:**

‘Fitness’ will include a range of activities that will keep all children active and increase their heart rate during a 10 minute time frame. Short movement activities will also be conducted throughout the school day to help keep student’s brains working to their full potential.

**The Arts:**

This term we focus on dance and movement activities. In keeping with our theme of ‘Taking Care of Mother Earth’, students will also explore sculpture and design using recycled materials as part of their learning in Visual Arts.

**Buddies:**

This year the year 3 class are buddies with Mrs Lemon’s reception / year one class.

**NAPLAN Testing:**

NAPLAN is an annual assessment for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9. It tests the types of skills that are essential for every child to progress through school and life, in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. The assessments are undertaken nationwide, every year in the second full week in May.

During the first term, I will be providing a number of activities designed to familiarise students with NAPLAN style tests. As this is their first experience of NAPLAN, many students may become anxious at the thought of having to sit these tests. If you have any concerns about NAPLAN testing, please feel free to contact me. Alternatively you may view samples of the tests on the NAPLAN website: [www.naplan.edu.au](http://www.naplan.edu.au)

**Important Term Dates:**

Please refer to the term planner on the back of this document.

**And Finally……**

Thank you for attending the Parent Information night! I look forward to working with both you and your child this year. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any queries or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Brendan Ackland