

Grade 4 Parent Information 2017



The Patch Primary School
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Welcome to Year 4 at The Patch Primary School!

We look forward to working with your children this year and the successes and developments the year brings.

Communication between home and school is essential for a successful year. We encourage you to keep us informed about celebration, issues, problems or questions that may arise during the year.

Email is an easy and effective way of keeping in touch and we will be able to make a mutually convenient time to meet if required. We can also arrange a suitable time to meet to discuss any issues with you.

Thanking you for your support.

We look forward to working in partnership with you.

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SECTION ONE

Routines and Administration

Bell Times

8.50 am	All students in classrooms – Circle Time and Roll
9.00 am	Beginning of first learning session
10.40 am	Recess play
11.10 am	Beginning of middle learning session
12.50	Lunch eating time
1.05	Lunch play
1.50	Beginning of last learning session
3.30	School day ends

All Prep students are dismissed at 3.15pm. Older siblings of Prep students may leave at 3.15 with their younger brothers or sisters.

Term Dates

Term 1: Wednesday, 1st February to Friday 31st March

Term 2: Tuesday, 18th April to Friday, 30th June

Term 3: Monday, 17th July to Friday, 22nd September

Term 4: Monday, 9th October to Friday, 22nd December

Punctuality

All students are expected to be in the classroom ready to start the day at 8.50am. If for some reason they are late arriving at school, parents will need to sign in electronically outside the general office area and take a late arrival pass to the child's teacher. Punctuality is of the utmost importance as teaching sessions will begin at this time and students who are late arriving not only miss out on critical teaching and learning, but also interrupt the learning of others.

Timetable 4A and 4B

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00	Independent Reading Reading Focus	Book Circles	Handwriting Spelling	Art 4B Music 4A	Assembly Grade 1 - Peer spelling and reading
9.50	Writing Workshops	Writing	PE - Grade 4B Skills with Lissa Library - 4A With Pauleen Trish	Music 4B Art 4A	Reading
Recess 10.40	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
11.10	Numeracy	Writing	PE - Grade 4A Skills with Lissa Library - 4B With Pauleen	Digital Technology 4B Philosophy 4A	Writing
12.00	Numeracy	Numeracy	Grammar and Punctuation	Digital Technology 4A Philosophy 4B	Numeracy
12.50 1.05 Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1.50	Integrated Curriculum	Smiling Minds	STEM	Japanese - 4B Numeracy Games/Social Skills	Integrated Curriculum
2.40	Integrated Curriculum	PE - Both grades	STEM	Japanese - 4A Numeracy Games/ Social Skills	Integrated Curriculum

Class Communication

We will aim to produce a year level newsletter every two weeks. Please check it for important upcoming events, curriculum information and any special requests needed to support your child's learning. Class newsletters will be emailed out to parents.

At times there will be curriculum tips on how to assist your child's learning.

We will supply our email addresses to you for your convenience, but please remember that we don't always get to check and access our email, so if there is anything urgent please call school.

Class Newsletters will also be available on Tiqbiz and the school website: <http://www.thepatchps.vic.edu.au>

SECTION TWO

Behaviour Management

A culture of positive reinforcement, support and encouragement underpins all our interactions with children.

We, at The Patch Primary School, feel very privileged to be part of this wonderful community and teach such lovely students. The teachers work hard to assess the needs of each individual student to allow them to learn as effectively as possible. This process has been assisted through the training that teachers have been undergoing with Tom Brunzell from the Berry Street Institute. As a result of this, there are some changes that we are implementing this year. We believe that every child at The Patch Primary School has the right to learn in an uninterrupted, safe and predictable environment, and that part of our job is to assist children in learning how to regulate their own behavior. If a child is continuing to interrupt the learning of others, we need a process to ensure that all children can stay on task and respect everyone's right to learn.

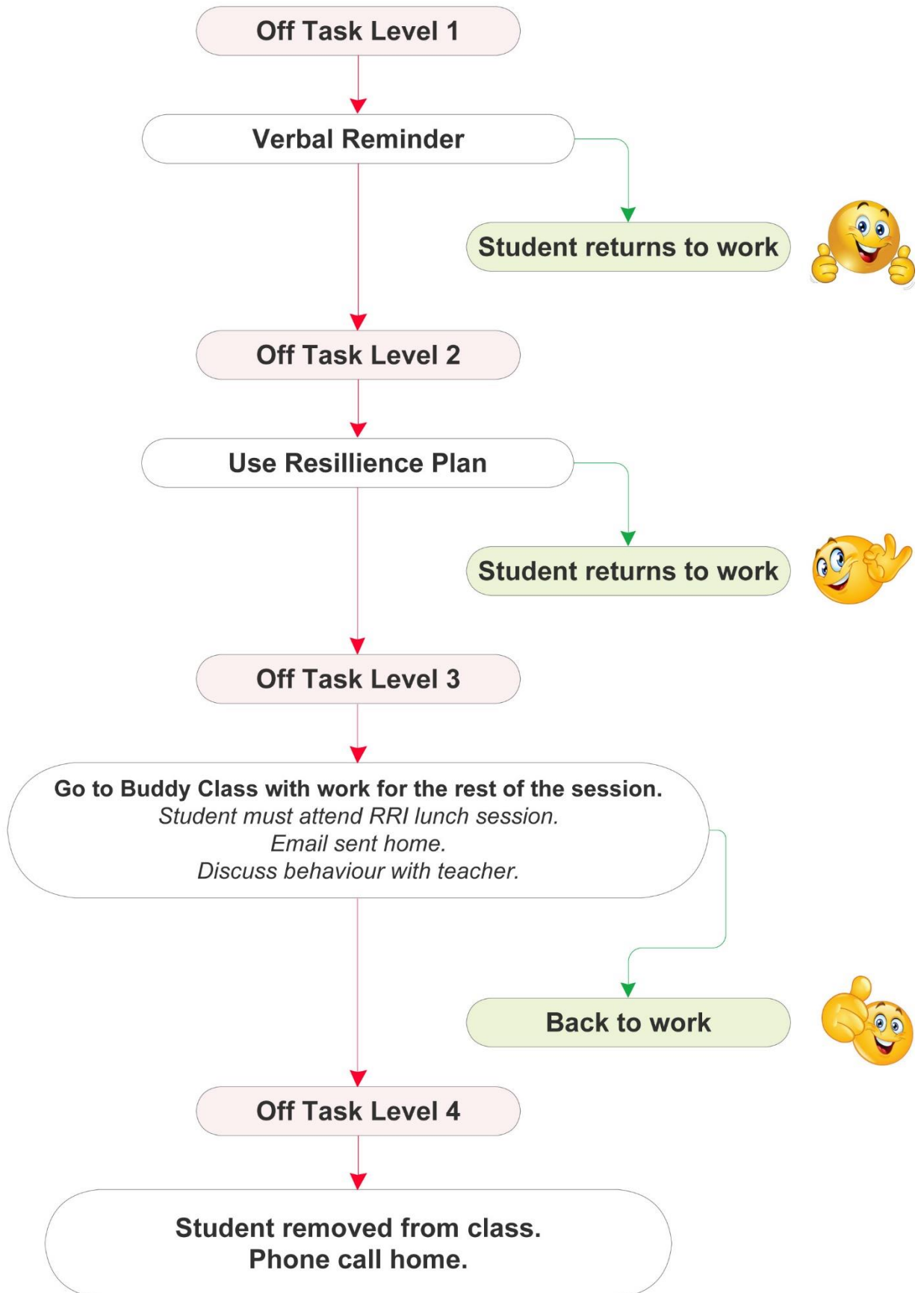
We have received feedback from some parents that they did not like the "Step Up, Step Down" process that we have employed over the last few years, and have therefore been looking for an alternative approach. In consultation with experts in the field, and in discussion with parents after the information night held last year introducing the Berry Street Educational Model, we have adopted a new, whole school approach.

We recognise that all students can have an "off" day. Rather than giving these students a punitive consequence, we want to encourage them to get themselves back on track in a positive way that will allow them to continue with their learning. With this in mind, all students will be writing "Resilience Plans" at the beginning of the year. This plan will include individual student lead activities that will assist them to re-focus back on their work. We will encourage students to be aware of their own behaviour and take note of when they are off task, and give them strategies (or have them come up with their own strategies) to get back on track. Some examples of this may be for a student to move seating positions, or sit on their own, to get a drink, to meditate for a minute, to use a "fidget" toy, to read, etc. Students will be able to ask the teacher if they can "enact my resilience plan" if they are feeling like they cannot stay on task, or feel "heightened". The teacher may notice that the student is off task, and suggest they enact their plan. Teachers will also be providing several "brain breaks" throughout the lesson. These are short fun activities intended to provide a break, so that children can return to their learning with a fresh approach, and hopefully, not lose focus in the first place.

If, after being given verbal reminders and trying several different strategies to refocus, students are still not staying on task, they may be asked to go to a "Buddy Classroom" with their work until the end of that session. The purpose of this is not to punish the student in a punitive way; rather, this break is often just what the student needs to settle and refocus. Once they have been sent to a Buddy Classroom, they will need to attend a supervised lunchtime where they can catch up on any work that they have missed. We are calling this the "RRI lunchtime session" (Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity – our school values). Please be assured, this will be done in a supportive environment – we want nothing more than to help our students to learn effectively. If this occurs, we will let you know via email. For more severe behaviour issues – particularly those involved in the safety of the individual student or others - parents will be called to collect their child and, on return to school the next day, students will be asked to work in another classroom for a longer period of time. We expect that this consequence will not be required for the vast majority of our students.

Behaviour Management Plan

Unsafe behaviour = Straight to Off Task Level 4 



SECTION THREE

Curriculum

The new Victorian Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum F-10 is the new curriculum for Victorian schools. It is being implemented in all Victorian Government and Catholic schools this year and incorporates the Australian Curriculum but provides Victorian standards and priorities. The curriculum is accessed from the [Victorian Curriculum F-10 website](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au), (<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au>)

Digital Technologies

This year Grade 4 students will have numerous opportunities to use a range of information and communication technologies across the curriculum. They will use a range of software programs that promote creativity, problem solving and thinking processes and develop their skills in the area of Digital Technologies. They have access to a number of resources including networked computers, notebooks, iPads and interactive whiteboards.

As part of our Digital Technology program, students will also be taught about appropriate uses for computers and safety on the internet. We will be focusing on:

- Respectful communication/netiquette
- Protecting personal information
- Behaving ethically online
- Cyberbullying
- Identifying appropriate online content/places
- Cybercitizenship—interaction with online communities

As a parent, you play an important role in helping your children have safe and positive experiences online. Become aware of how children and young people use the internet, some of the risks they face and strategies to manage these risks. Guide your child to enjoy the best of the online world. We recommend visiting <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Parents.aspx> for information, tips and advice to help you and your family make the most of being online and staying safe.

Indigenous Education

The Patch Primary School's Indigenous Education is underpinned by the School Vision statement and is based on the agreed values of Respect, Integrity and Responsibility. We acknowledge the land as part of the Kulin Nation and specifically as a Wurundjeri Place.

As a school we show respect towards the original custodians of our land at assemblies, with "Welcome to Country" and raising the three flags at assembly – the Australian flag, the Torres Strait Islander flag and the Aboriginal flag. We celebrate focus days of importance for Aboriginal communities such as Close the Gap and incorporate Wurundjeri Studies in the curriculum. Our outdoor environmental program fosters a multidisciplinary approach to Indigenous studies by providing an Indigenous Tree Trail and Wurundjeri words are used throughout the school.

The school curriculum in Australia has made Indigenous Studies a priority because it provides opportunities for all learners to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the world's oldest continuous living cultures. This knowledge and understanding enriches students' ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia as they see similarities and differences between people and become more aware of diversity in the wider community as well as the concept of change over time.

Japanese

At The Patch Primary School, the Language Program focuses on Japan and the Japanese language.

By the end of Grade 6, students will have had experience in learning about the Japanese culture – including the festivals that are celebrated in Japan, and the customs and popular children’s activities associated with these festivals. Students will study life in Japan, looking at the experiences of Japanese children and comparing this with their own Australian experience. They will explore the concept of tolerance - that their way and the Japanese way, although different, is not better or worse. Students will investigate what values and concepts are important to Japanese people, and how this impacts on their culture, and in particular, the Japanese language.

Students also have the opportunity this year to communicate with schools in Japan, sending messages online in English and Japanese through a password secure site, as well as participating in the “Teddy Bear Project”, which involves a Teddy from Japan arriving at The Patch Primary School and be given a VIP tour, with photos, letters and work from us accompanying the Teddy back to Japan. In conjunction with Monbulk College, students from their sister school will be visiting us, and giving our students the opportunity to practise their language skills with native speakers.

Students will explicitly learn Japanese grammar structures and word order, and compare and contrast this with English grammar structures. While this allows children to learn the Japanese way, it also allows them to become more familiar with the grammar of English, and reinforces and supports the work done in their own classrooms. Numeracy is also supported through activities such as telling the time, counting money and calculating change, and exchange rates – converting the Australian dollar to Japanese yen. An understanding of the Japanese writing system is fostered, and recognition of hiragana, katakana and kanji characters is developed, as well as the correct stroke order for writing them. The Japanese way words and sentences are formulated will be introduced and reinforced through a variety of learning activities and games.

Numerous studies have indicated that learning a second language has many advantages other than being able to speak another language. Studying a second language in the earliest years of primary school is shown to advance the age of readiness in English. Language skills are transferable; what we learn in one language helps us with any other language. Learning a second language enhances the student’s ability in writing and maths as well as advancing cognitive development. Research has also shown that people who learn a second language at a young age are more likely to have more advanced grey matter in their brains.

We hope that students at The Patch will find learning Japanese a fun and rewarding experience, and that students will choose to continue Japanese at high school, where available. If you have any queries, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact our Japanese teacher, Jane sensei, to make an appointment Tuesday – Friday.

がんばって ください！

Library

The Library program provides instruction for students on how to use a library effectively, how to access resources and how to borrow selectively and responsibly. It also offers opportunities to promote literature through book discussions, reviews, clubs, open times and shared reading.

Students will be visiting the library on Wednesdays.

Students are allowed to borrow 3 or 4 books for 2 weeks. Please ensure books are looked after by providing a library bag e.g. plastic bag / blue reader folder.

If books are lost please let your teacher know. The lost book needs to be replaced with a book of similar quality, topic and value.

Literacy

Our literacy program is designed to develop strategic readers and writers through the explicit teaching of reading and writing strategies. We believe that constructing meaning is the goal of literacy instruction. We want students to monitor and enhance their understanding, acquire and actively use knowledge and develop insight. We want our students to learn strategies for: finding ideas for writing, writing with clear intentions and purposes, developing a working knowledge of the qualities of good writing, developing an understanding of the purpose of revision and learning to edit using appropriate writing conventions.

What is meant by explicit teaching of reading and writing strategies?

Explicit instruction can be broken down into six specific steps:

- Teacher explains *what* the strategy is e.g. making connections in reading or using voice in writing.
- Teacher explains *why* the strategy is important.
- Teacher explains *when* to use the strategy.
- Teacher models *how* to perform the strategy in an actual context while students observe.
- Teacher *guides students* as they practice using the strategy.
- Students *independently* use the strategy.

Literacy instruction in Year 4 is divided into 4 parts.

1. Independent Reading/Conferencing
2. Explicit whole group instruction.
3. Independent Literacy Practice
4. Sharing of our literacy tasks.

Music

Music is an important part of school life at The Patch. We currently have two specialist music teachers and several visiting instrumental teachers. Students attend weekly music lessons in the music room as part of our rotations program. During this session, it is The Orff approach which is the underlying teaching methodology used by both specialist teachers.

This approach is designed so each child can contribute according to their ability, catering well for the range of different levels encountered in a typical class. The approach uses speech, singing, movement and instrumental playing to teach the elements of music. The emphasis is on practical music making activities rather than theory. Children learn to create their own music before learning to read and write music. Improvisation, or spontaneously created music is also a key part of this approach.

More formal music tuition is provided on an elective fee for service basis for violin, voice, guitar, piano, keyboard, brass and woodwind instruments. Information on these is available from the school.

Grade 4 students will participate in music classes on a Thursday morning with Leanne.

Numeracy

The Numeracy program at The Patch is delivered in a variety of ways. Explicit teaching of key mathematical skills underpins our approach, facilitated via whole group, small group and in some cases, individualised learning activities. We encourage our children to explore problem solving in a safe environment where errors are seen as learning opportunities, and open-ended tasks encourage risk taking and multiple solutions to problems.

Comprehension in numeracy is just as important as it is in literacy. We plan for students to develop their comprehension through focused activities, class discussions and the attainment of a rich mathematical vocabulary. ICT is made available to engage and support learning, with Mathletics accessible for students in the classroom and from home.

Regular formal and informal assessment is used to develop a maths curriculum that caters for each student's point of need. Where necessary, students will be supported in small group work to consolidate and extend their understanding of key skills and concepts.

Our goal is to develop confident, creative thinkers who can apply their numeracy skills to solve problems in a variety of real world contexts.

Philosophy

Philosophy is an exciting subject that encourages students to ask questions, listen carefully, evaluate reasons, uncover assumptions, clarify ideas and concepts, make judgements and draw inferences.

Philosophical inquiry is primarily concerned with the search for meaning through activities help us to develop a framework in which questions of how we think and know are considered alongside equally fundamental questions of how we ought to treat one another and the world itself.

The practice of philosophy in schools is implemented through the community of inquiry where both abstract (conceptual) and concrete thinking are explored.

Although it is ideal to form communities of inquiry across all disciplines and subject areas when it comes to teaching children to be inquirers the discipline of philosophy has a special role to play. Philosophy commits us to persistent and disciplined thinking with social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components.

Philosophy is not so much concerned with final answers as it is with coming up with and exploring better questions and tentative answers. Our Philosophy sessions also incorporate Inquiry, based within the 'Kids Matter' curriculum: Social & Emotional Learning.

Physical Education

Physical Education is the process through which sport, sport education, outdoor adventure activities, dance, gymnastics, aquatics, ball handling and athletics are used to help students learn motor skills and to learn about and achieve physical fitness. Physical Education activities also assist in the development of personal and social skills in students.

Students in P-3 develop the essential fundamental motor skills - catch, kick run, vertical jump, overhand throw, ball bounce, leap, dodge, punt, forehand strike and two handed side arm strike. Mastery of these skills by students is necessary for later higher level skills to occur. They use their newly developed skills while regularly participating in moderate to vigorous activities as part of an active and healthy life. They begin to form understandings about the links between physical activity and health. They also learn that they need energy to maintain their activity levels.

During years 4-6, students refine basic and complex motor skills and apply them to increasingly complex games, activities and sport-specific situations. Students participate in outdoor adventure activities in natural environments, which develop skills, knowledge and behaviours to enhance and promote safety. They use skills such as strategic thinking to solve real-life problems to improve game performance. Activities in this group include basketball dribble, modified netball, bat tennis and modified baseball – (T-ball).

A healthy, physically active lifestyle is conducive to more effective participation in all that society has to offer and greater levels of success within and beyond school. This requires students to develop the knowledge, skill and behaviours that enable them to:

- Maintain good health and live a healthy lifestyle
- Understand the role of physical activity in ensuring good health
- Engage in physical activity
- Examine physical, social, emotional and mental health and personal development
- Examine the factors that influence food selection and the role of nutrition on health growth and development

In addition to the PE skills lessons on Wednesdays, students in Grade 4 will participate in games together on Tuesday afternoon.

QuickSmart Numeracy

Students are assessed in Numeracy at the beginning of each school year. Some students from Grade 4 to Grade 6 who require extra support may qualify for inclusion in the QuickSmart Numeracy program.

QuickSmart Numeracy is designed to improve students' recall of number facts and basic computation skills. It is a structured program when selected students work in pairs for three 30 minute sessions a week with a facilitator. Over the years, we have seen students who are involved in the QuickSmart numeracy program showing a marked improvement in skills. Academic research of the program has shown an average 2 or 3 year improvement in one year. Feel free to have a look at the QuickSmart website at <http://www.une.edu.au/simerr/quicksmart/pages/index.php>

Science

Science at The Patch Primary school covers all aspects of The Victorian Curriculum and is assessed in two areas:

- Science Understanding.
- Science Inquiry Skills

The learning outcomes in Science contribute to developing students' scientific literacy. Scientific literacy is described as an individual's:

- scientific knowledge and use of that knowledge to identify questions, acquire new knowledge, explain scientific phenomena and draw evidence-based conclusions about science-related issues
- understanding of the characteristic features of science as a form of human knowledge and enquiry
- awareness of how science and technology shape our material, intellectual and cultural environments
- willingness to engage in science-related issues, and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen

There are 5 areas covered by Victorian Curriculum Science Understanding strand - Science as human endeavour, Chemical, Physical, Biological and Earth and Space Science) from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6.

STEM Education at The Patch Primary School

According to the National STEM strategy (2013) "STEM is everywhere. Our nourishment, our safety, our homes and neighbourhoods, our relationships with family and friends, our health, our jobs, our leisure are all profoundly shaped by technological innovation and the discoveries of science".

This year at The Patch PS, we are introducing STEM education into the whole school curriculum. The acronym stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, but it is more than the sum of its parts. It also covers the interrelationship between these areas, allowing learning to be delivered in an integrated way, helping a deeper engagement in the four disciplines. (The engineering component is found in our design and technologies curriculum which also includes the digital technologies).

STEM covers a wide range of disciplines and skills, which are increasingly in demand in our rapidly changing world. STEM skills and knowledge are important for all stages of our learning, jobs and everyday lives.

STEM education will absorb our environmental education, science and sustainability programs and be taught at all levels throughout the year. Students will participate in a transdisciplinary program that provides authentic contexts for modern learning and develops skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and effective communication. Some activities will be stand alone, others will form part of rich learning tasks spread over the semester or year.

Our STEM educators are Nina (prep and year 2/3), Tania and Megan (year 1) and Michelle (year 4, 5 and 6). Feel free to chat with them about their programs.

We shall be providing more information about this program in the coming weeks. Please read our school newsletter and check our website for updates.

STEM classes are taken every week for 50 minutes.

Visual Arts

Creative learning experiences in the visual arts during schooling provide individuals with necessary skills, understandings and confidence to participate fully in the arts throughout their lives. Learning in the visual arts at The Patch Primary School takes several forms. Through arts practice students learn to develop ideas by drawing upon experience, exploring feelings, observing and researching. In order to communicate ideas, students learn the elements, principles, processes and techniques as well as the cultural and aesthetic values associated with specific art forms.

In responding to the visual arts, students learn to analyse and interpret art works. They learn how the visual arts are practised and valued in different societies and cultures, past and present. They form personal judgements of their own and those of others. They understand the skills and intentions of artists and the social or cultural contexts in which their works were produced.

SECTION FOUR

Extra-Curricular Activities

Camps & Excursions

Excursions form an integral part of the learning experience of pupils at The Patch Primary School and it is expected that all children will attend. Costs of individual excursions and the number of excursions each year are kept to a minimum.

Information will be provided for all excursions. Please ensure that all details on permission slips are completed before returning to the school with payment by the due date. **Payments cannot be made on Fridays.**

Children from grades 3 to 6 attend school camps. The school has a range of venues that are used to provide appropriate experiences at each year level.

Grade 4 Camp: YMCA Camp in Mount Evelyn Wednesday 16th August – Friday 18th August.

SECTION FIVE

Assessment

Assessment at Your Child's Level

Assessment at Grade 4 level includes the following:

- Essential Maths online testing
- OnDemand Testing (online Australian Council for Educational Research – ACER – testing)
- PAT Reading and Numeracy (also ACER testing)
- SWST (Standardised Single Word Spelling Test)
- Running Records of reading (during individual reading conferences – known as “FP Testing”)
- Individual reading and writing conferences
- Teacher observations and records
- Moderation rubrics
- Class tests

At The Patch Primary School we upload information for analysis to both the Victorian Department of Education and our own web-based data bases. Data analysis is used to inform the future teaching of your child.

SECTION SIX

How to Help Your Child

Homework

We strongly believe that grade 4 children need time to debrief when they get home from school. They need time to play, imagine, talk, and rest. They have, after all, been asked to think all day. With this in mind we are asking you to do the following with your children for up to 30 minutes per day.

Reading

ALL students are required to read for a minimum of 20 minutes MOST nights or mornings at home. This can be to parents, siblings or to themselves. Students are required to fill in their diaries with a record of their reading, stating the name of the book they are reading and how many pages they have read. We would appreciate it if parents could sign the diaries at least once a week.

Spelling

Your child will bring home a personal list of spelling words most weeks. We will provide you with ideas for simple fun activities you can do with your child at home to help them learn their spelling words. Spelling words will be tested every week.

Maths

We recommend your child spending approximately 45 minutes per week on Mathletics. This may be spread across several nights or completed in one night. This may include individual set activities that will tie in with studies at school. In addition you will be asked to practise basic number facts (such as tables) with your child.

Parent Assistance

As school and home is a partnership in educating your child we welcome your assistance in the classroom. The following are just some of the ways you may assist your child:

- Classroom assistance: Weekly spelling testing, reading, maths
- Excursions
- Involvement in Community Group Activities
- School Fundraising Activities
- School Camps
- School Council Membership
- Garden Team
- Working Bee Involvement

If you think you have any special or extra skills, interests or hobbies that would add to our program, don't hesitate to let us know either personally or through the parent questionnaire.

Tips on Helping Your Child at Home.

Some tips on helping your child at home:

- As your child moves towards the end of their primary school years it is really important to help them develop independence, initiative, problem-solving and time management skills. Help guide them through these processes but in the words of the wise “Do not do for them, what they can do for themselves”.
- The aim is to get your child to think for themselves, to reason, to understand deeply, to build knowledge, to leverage their thinking with others and put knowledge to work in their own lives.
- Give your child roles and responsibilities as it makes them feel valued and worthwhile and helps to make them independent.
- Give your children clear boundaries and realistic expectations for behaviour.
- Develop resilience.
- Never underestimate the importance of speaking and listening to your child as it underpins all their learning. Engage them in lots of talk. Through talk, help them to wonder and question the world around them.
- Talk to them about their learning, what they find difficult, easy, puzzling etc. Help them clarify their thinking by throwing in lots of why questions and ‘because’s’
- Encourage them to be critical thinkers, readers, speakers and listeners.
- Introduce them to ‘powerful words’. This develops their vocabulary and encourages them to use interesting words.
- When learning spelling encourage looking at word patterns, word building, usage and the origin of words.
- Display, in prominent places, things that need to be learnt, like times tables, spelling words etc.
- Use real life, everyday situations, like cooking and shopping to help them develop their mathematical skills and thinking.
- Involve them in the use and handling of money when shopping. Compare prices, weights etc. and discuss ‘best buy’.
- Still read to and with them. Talk to them about their reading, even read what they are reading. Discuss things like, what inferences are made, what predictions are reasonable and what conflict and resolution takes place. Stop and discuss interesting words and descriptive, emotional (beautiful) passages.
- Share their music with them and discuss the lyrics.
- Encourage your child to make connections in their learning and with the world around them.
- Finally discuss social issues with them to help develop their awareness, thinking and understanding of the world around them.