

NEWSLETTER

Available online and Flexi buzzed each week.

2019 Thursday 22 August

KEY REMINDERS

Curriculum/Student Free Days remaining for 2019
Friday 1st November
Monday 4th November
Reminder that students do not come to school on these days.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Year 5/6 Camp Doxa
21 - 23 August

Year 1/2 Museum Excursion
Wednesday 28 August

Year Prep CERES Excursion
Friday 30 August

Father's Day breakfast
@Sunshine Social
Friday 30 August 7:30am

Year 3/4 Botanical Excursion
Tuesday 10 September

Year 5/6 City Excursion
Monday 16 September

Year 2 Sleepover
Friday 11th October

Principal
Alex Artavilla

School Council President
Gordon Mckenzie

School Supervision Times
8.45am - 9.00am
3.15pm - 3.30pm

'We are a child safe school and compliant with child safety standards. Child safety policies available on website.'



SUNSHINE
HEIGHTS
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers,

Just a reminder to families that there are two more Curriculum/Student Free Days for 2019. This includes

- Friday 1st November
- Monday 4th November

Please note that Big Child Care will be operating for both days from 6:30am to 6:00pm. For bookings and information, please contact Big Child Care on 86829400.

Speaking of Curriculum/Student Free Days, I thought I would use the newsletter this week to share with families how we allocate Curriculum/Student Free Days each year. The first day of every school year is a Curriculum/Student Day that is allocated by the Department. Each year we have used this day to revisit our priorities for the year, reconnect staff, and prepare learning environments.

The other days are allocated to support the work that we are focusing on which is outlined in our Annual Implementation Plan. The Annual Implementation Plan includes focus areas, goals and targets, actions to achieve goals and targets, and expected changes in behaviour/knowledge if we effectively implement our actions.

Once we are clear about our yearly focus, we then think about all the different resources that we can access to support teachers to support students. This includes:

- Role of school based coach
- Professional Learning Teams
- Working parties – resource includes releasing teachers to be part of a WP
- Professional Practice Days
- Consultants
- Curriculum/Student Free Days

The reason as to why we would use a Curriculum/Student Free Day to support a focus area of our Annual Implementation Plan, is because we get the opportunity to work together as a whole staff for a full day. Other times that we get to work together as a whole staff is after school (which is not the most optimal time to have deep discussions).

Examples of how we have used Curriculum/Student Free days in the past has included:

- Working with a consultant around supporting students as writers
- Working with a consultant around supporting students as readers
- Reviewing and refining a new initiative that we are implementing – which gave staff the opportunity to have input/ownership.

Currently we are reviewing our 2019 Annual Implementation Plan to prepare our 2020 Annual Implementation Plan. This includes thinking about the dates and focus for Curriculum/Student Free Days for 2020. The first Curriculum/Student Free Day for 2020 is set by the Department of Education and is scheduled for:

- Tuesday 28th of January 2020

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 03 8311 7100

 1-19 Mailey Street, West Sunshine 3020

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 @sunshineheightsps

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State School no. 4744

Although it is likely that Wednesday 29th January 2020 will also be a Curriculum/Student Free Day, dates will be finalised and communicated after the next School Council meeting.

In thinking about our key focus areas for 2020, we will be continuing to strengthen and deepen our understandings and practices of the following areas:

- The culture of the school and how teachers collaborate to support student learning developments. This includes the implementation of an Inquiry/Knowledge Building cycle that ensures teams have greater ownership of their professional learning that is based on student needs. The strength of the Inquiry/Knowledge Building cycle, is that it is focused on teams working together to support and enhance their practices.
- Enhancing the way in which we deliver the Victorian Curriculum to ensure deep learning occurs for the students. This is referred to as building a Guaranteed and Viable curriculum. Within a Guaranteed and Viable curriculum, as a staff we need to make decisions about the 'essential' things we expect students to learn each year. This year we have engaged consultant Chris Egan to support us with this work.
- Strengthening the way that we support the varying learning needs of the students. We have been doing this through enhancing our practices and understanding of small groups, and the techniques we use. Moving forward with the work we are also strengthening the role students play within small groups so that they lead and take ownership of their learning.
- Strengthening the way we deliver a lesson so that students are even more engaged and focused. This includes strengthening the questions we ask, the way we tune students into a lesson, the way we support the students to reflect on their learning. We have also recently explored research about how the brain works and how this impacts on moving new knowledge for students from the short to long term memory.
- Strengthening how we track and monitor student learning so that we can intervene as soon as possible.

In thinking about our future focus areas, one thing that we need to be disciplined about as a school is to 'Embrace the Power of Less – Mike Schmoker'.

A trap that schools fall into is trying to take on too much rather than focusing on a small number of key initiatives and doing these really well. It is a challenge, but there is strong research to support the 'power of less' which makes sense when you think about the process of how people learn. They need time to understand, practice, reflect and refine etc. If you have too many balls to juggle you are likely to have no impact at all.

This is why as a staff and leadership team we will be continually reviewing our focus areas and thinking about what this would look like over the next 12 months. We will be thinking about whether teachers have enough time and space to take on the work, and whether we have got the right resources in place.

This way of thinking has been a strength for our school, and is reflected in the results we achieve not only in regards to student learning, but also results about the culture of our school.

Hope all this makes sense! I just wanted to share some of the ways we think as a staff to give families some insight into the work we are doing.

If you have any questions or comments feel free to catch me in the yard or send an email.

Hope everyone had a great week.

Alex Artavilla
Principal
Sunshine Heights Primary School