I hope you all had a relaxing holiday and are looking forward to a busy term of learning. It is a very exciting term as we have our celebration of The Arts at the Hopgood Theatre on August 25th and we hope you can come and celebrate with the fantastic and talented students of Christie Downs. We will be sending more information home shortly regarding purchasing tickets and details for the evening.

I have included the final posters from our work as a community with Jane Kovacs on our new Vision, Values and Graduate profile. Everyone was given a chance to give feedback and I am really proud of the final product. We all had a voice in creating the next four years of direction, Vision and Values for our school community. Posters will go up around the school as of week 3 this term and we can now start living and celebrating what we want our school to be.

Schools are very busy places, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. At the beginning of the day classes are settling down for their learning and a routine is part of that settling in process. At the end of the day teachers are ensuring that children are picked up safely. If you would like to talk to your child’s teacher about their learning or something that involves a discussion then please make an appointment by ringing the office. Also it is very important that our parent/caregivers behaviour reflects the values of Respect, Responsibility and Teamwork. It is much more powerful for children to see the modelling of this behaviour by all of the adults around them along with staff. I have some concerns regarding parents behaviour in the school grounds by unsafe driving in the car parks, using inappropriate language whilst waiting and interfering with other children’s behaviour. DECD requires that all adults are not allowed to smoke on or near school grounds, as second hand smoke is the most dangerous for us. Please take care and appreciate the power you have in living our school values for all of our students. It takes a community to bring up a child so please think twice before you swear, smoke, yell or drive too fast. I would really appreciate us all taking responsibility for our own behaviour. I have also inserted the procedure for a parent raising a complaint or concern for your information.

I look forward to a very successful Term 3 and working together as a school community.

Thank you,

Gail Evans (Principal)
At Christie Downs Primary School we believe that good relationships between the school and its community give children a greater chance of success. However, it is only natural that from time to time grievances can arise. We all expect quality and expert care and teaching for your child in order that they achieve their potential. Working together will give us the best chance of solving a problem that may arise during your child’s years in preschool and school. We also recognise that at times things may go wrong. If you have a concern or a complaint, we want you to let us know. It’s important to learn from mistakes or misunderstandings so that we can improve your child’s experience and learning, and also improve processes where possible.

The first step in working through a complaint is to talk to your child’s teacher, and then, if you still are not happy, speak to one of the leadership team.

A complaint may be made by a parent if they think that the school has, for example:

- done something wrong
- failed to do something it should have done
- acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint may be about:

- the type, level or quality of services
- the behaviour and decisions of staff
- a policy, procedure or practice.

Sometimes a complaint is about something we have to do because of State or Federal law. In such cases we are able to talk to you about the matter and help you understand the requirements and why they exist. If you’d like more information visit the department’s website at:

or email DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au

There is also a Freecall number 1800 677 435.
In the last week of this term we are having the opening ceremony of the Christie Downs Primary Indigenous Fire Pit. The fire pit has been donated to the school by the school’s governing council. Braedon Talbot has been working with a group of students to create the stone base for the pit and an artist has designed and fabricated the cage.

Todd McGrath - (Senior Leader 1 Engagement for Learning and Well Being)

Important Information for families of students in the Disability Unit who receive services through DECD Transport Assistance

With the introduction of NDIS some changes have been made to requirements for children receiving either direct bus/taxi services or car allowance. Support through DECD transport services is funded by the NDIS once a child has a plan in place. Any forms related to transport are still filled in via the school however it is important that Transport is included as a support item in the child’s NDIS plan.

If your child already has an NDIS plan
If your child’s plan does not include transport please contact your Business Support Officer or Planner to request Support Item 05 003 be included in your child’s plan.

If your child does not yet have an NDIS plan
As you move through the process and attend a meeting with a planner, please ask for Support Item 05 003 to be included in your child’s plan.
If you have any questions please contact Leanne Jacobs at school on 8382 3266.

Thanks,
Leanne Jacobs (Senior Leader 1—Disability Unit)

Reading

At Christie Downs, we teach phonics (letter and sound knowledge) following the guidelines of the Australian Curriculum. Phonics is not confined to just any one programme and at Christie Downs we use a variety of resources. Children learn about how the letters make sounds and that there are combinations of letters that also make sounds. Whilst we teach the children to sound out words, this is only one component of reading and they won’t become good readers by just sounding out words. Teachers also focus on fluency, comprehension, oral language, phonemic awareness, expression, and vocabulary.

Some children will need extra support to help them to become competent readers and writers. We are currently expanding our intervention programmes to assist these children. Therefore this term we will begin to use a programme called Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI). This programme began in the USA and was devised by professors called Fountas and Pinnell.

Children are put into small groups of no more than three and are taken out of the class three times a week for half an hour. The programme will be taught by our team of intervention staff who will plan, monitor and evaluate the child’s progress. The hope is that, with extra support, the children will make accelerated progress and reach their end of year expected level for reading.

If your child is taking part in this new programme parents and carers will have already been notified of this by letter. It is hoped that we can begin more groups next year.

Discovery Groups

In the Junior Primary we continue to look at how to use the Reggio principles to engage our children in the curriculum. Following an inspiring trip to Alberton Primary School the team has decided to begin Discovery Groups three afternoons a week. This half term the focus will be on Science and the topic related to Dinosaurs. The team will plan closely together using the student’s questions to direct the learning and the activities. The children will have more choice and voice in their Science learning.

Reading Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club continues to be a great success but just a reminder that parents and carers are welcome to attend too on a Wednesday morning. This is the time when the children are able to read and engage in other reading activities like games and craft. It’s a good time to sit with your children and enjoy a book too.

History Expo

Thank you to all the parents and carers that visited the History Expo in the library at the end of last term. It was so good to see the children talking about their learning in the day with other classes. Thank you to the children and staff for all their hard work.

Science Week and Book Week

Science week is week 5 and the children will engage in a variety of class based activities to encourage their inquiry skills. Week 6 is Book Week and the children will be able to dress up as their favourite book characters on one of the days. Get your costumes ready now!

Hope you all have a great term 3,

Nikki Garner (Senior Leader 1—Curriculum)
Pizza Oven

Have you noticed something happening near Lucy? The SWAT Team (Students Working Always Together) have been very busy creating a Cob Pizza Oven for our school community. A group of students went on a road trip to Wood ‘N’ Logs to hand pick the moss rocks needed to create the body of the oven. The students chose perfect rocks, 1.6 tonnes to be exact! We had the rocks, cement and sand delivered to our school and then we began to construct our oven. We are very lucky to have Daniel Hamlyn, our pizza oven guru, to help us build our oven. During lunch times we have had many students helping out with digging soil and making cement. The next step is building the dome of the pizza oven - the messiest and most exciting part. The pizza oven is located next to the cola. Students across our school will be involved in designing and creating delicious pizza! YUM!

Breakfast Club

Our fabulous Breakfast Club is now open on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 8 am. We have cereals, toast, warm oats and scrumptious fruit. On Wednesday mornings parents are welcome to come along and play some games, make something crafty or read with their kids!

Attendance

The first step to success is attendance.

As parents we need to make a commitment that our kids make the most of their precious time at school. That means that we have to send them to school every day, on time so they can make the most of the school day.

If we have concerns about your child, we are required to contact the DECD Attendance Counsellor. DECD Attendance Counsellors work with schools to check school records which include late arrivals, early departures and unexplained absenteeism. Please remember to contact the school if your child is absent. After 3 days absence, a parent / caregiver must provide a medical certificate. Please feel free to contact Jo on 83823266 with any issues regarding attendance.

Jo Swift (Counsellor)

Outdoor Learning

Throughout term 2 more learning environments were created on site. A boat that was donated by Henley Surf Life Saving Club has been placed near the oval with 12 spotted gums placed around it in a circle. This space is for students to play with in outdoor play as well as a teaching space for classes to use. A nature area and a creek has also been dug out that will allow the students to play in. This area is called the forest and it is located near the gym.
Leadership and staff now attribute the positive culture the school enjoys to the ownership and commitment generated through this visioning process. The vision has guided the improvement activity and decision-making of the school over the last four years.

Earlier this year, the fourth in the school’s planning cycle, stakeholders were invited to reflect on achievements and again have input to the school vision to inform the next strategic plan. A refined school purpose, values and behaviours and a graduate profile, were agreed. The process was very similar to that used four years previously with all students, staff and families inputting their ideas. However, this time the school team (again comprising students, parents and staff) in collating the data and drafting the key elements decided to summarise and communicate the school direction by way of an image: that of a tree.

All stakeholders are really excited about their tree metaphor. The trunk of the tree comprises the supporting elements of the school vision – ‘learning, innovation, diversity, and environment’. These underpin the strategies in the school strategic plan. The values of the school are reflected in the stakeholder who sits beneath its branches that reflect the graduate profile.

Congratulations Christie Downs!

So what is different about this approach?

This collaborative process involves everyone in the school community - everyone has a ‘voice’. It celebrates diversity, allowing for a richness of ideas to flourish. This is not possible when only a few in the organisation are involved. There is shared understanding. Importantly, there is ownership and commitment.

Taken from a draft blog by Jane Kovacs

The importance of shared vision

At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, “What do we want to create?”


A shared vision is a mutual agreement as to the desired future state key stakeholders are working together to create. It helps to align effort, optimise contribution, maximising organisational performance and improvement.

Most organisation improvement models now recognise the importance of establishing a shared vision The National School Improvement Tool (ACER 2012) describes the need for an explicit improvement agenda’. The Australia Business Excellence Framework (SAI Global 2011) defines an excellent organisation as one that “defines its purpose, vision and values for organisational success and ensures it is understood and applied across the organisation’.

How to create shared vision

So if stakeholder commitment to a shared vision of excellence is critical how do we make it happen?

Christie Downs Primary School in South Australia has done so - to great effect. The school, of 270 students, has 90 learners with special needs supported by its integrated Disability Unit. Four years ago the school was established through the merging of two sites, an existing primary and special school. Two different cultures and organisations needed to come together to work as one. The school engaged key stakeholders in creating a shared school vision as part of its four-year strategic planning cycle.

Every student and staff member took part in a series of workshops to provide their ideas. Parents, families and other community members were invited to attend either a student or after hours workshop to have their say. Students with special needs were interviewed using creative one-on-one techniques that gave them a ‘voice’. Stakeholder input was then collated and a vision drafted by a team comprising students, parents and staff. Students were allowed to lead the team to ensure the crafting of a simple, jargon-free, to-the-point guiding statement. The resulting draft was communicated to all stakeholders and agreed and formed the basis of the school strategic plan.