Sunshine Heights Primary School
No. 4744

2014 PARENT BOOKLET

1-19 Mailey Street
West Sunshine  3020

Telephone: 8311 7100
Fax: 9311 8343
Email: sunshine.heights.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au
Web: sunshineheightsps.vic.edu.au
Twitter: #@4744SHPS
Principal’s Message

Welcome to Sunshine Heights Primary School, an effective, high performing school in the Victorian Government Education System.

I’d like to first begin by thanking you for taking the time to learn more about our school.

At Sunshine Heights Primary School, we are a proud and dynamic learning community that is focused on fostering the personal, social, intellectual, physical and creative development of each child. We want children to become successful learners and leaders in the community.

While our primary focus is on Literacy and Numeracy skills, we just as importantly work hard to develop student connectedness and well-being.

Although we are working together to ensure we provide students with excellent facilities, buildings, grounds and exemplary curriculum programs, all this is of little value if children do not feel secure, safe, have a high sense of self worth and a good work ethic.

Schools need to be engaging and fun, but at the same time they must challenge and extend children. Nothing comes without personal effort and hard work.

Children are individuals with a wide variety of talents. At Sunshine Heights Primary School we aim to give them the opportunity to reach their full potential in all areas, be it academic, sport or the arts.

Above all, we want our students to believe in themselves and their abilities - have personal high expectations and take responsibility for their learning and subsequent success.

Look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the Sunshine Heights Primary School community.

Kind regards,

Alex Artavilla
Principal
About Us

Sunshine Heights Primary is a well-respected government state school within the western suburbs of Victoria.

Established in 1956, we pride ourselves on the harmony we have achieved between students from a number of multicultural backgrounds. The school’s population is drawn from diverse socio-economic and multi-cultural backgrounds with a predominance of first generation Vietnamese.

We cater for a variety of learning styles within our curriculum programs and value the partnerships between school, home and the wider community. Our teachers are also committed to the welfare of their students in their care and are constantly updating their knowledge and skills.

Guiding Principles

The school’s policies and programs provide an opportunity for all students to achieve their full academic and personal potential and to develop skills and knowledge to prepare them for a changing society.

Sunshine Heights aims to:

- foster an appreciation of the strong multicultural heritage within the school community
- provide an understanding, caring and supportive environment for children, staff and parents
- encourage a co-operative and independent approach to learning, recognising individual differences and needs
- develop tolerance and respect for others
- encourage a comprehensive and meaningful partnership between school and the community
Our Mission

Our mission is to graduate students who are environmentally responsible and internationally-minded citizens connected to the local and global community.

They will be creative and inquisitive learners with 21st century skills and high levels of achievement.

By the end of Year Six, our students will have the emotional intelligence to successfully participate in a multicultural and diverse society.
Our School Values

The Sunshine Heights Primary School Community works collaboratively to provide and maintain a safe, warm and friendly environment. As a school community we draw upon the knowledge, experience and expertise of our community members to enhance and enrich our school.

Students learn to become responsible and resilient citizens by responding to challenges within a supportive climate in a technology rich world.

The Values that underpin all our decisions and behaviours to ensure we will develop students that become citizens that lead and contribute to a productive and rewarding life in an educated, just and open society include:

**Care and Compassion**
- Care for self and others
- Consider the feelings and needs of others in all situations
- Act in a kind, helpful and generous manner towards others
- Respect our environment and creatures in it

**Doing Your Best**
- Always try your hardest
- When you play and work aim to do your best
- It’s okay to make mistakes so that we learn from them!

**Honesty and Trustworthiness**
- Be honest, sincere and seek the truth

**Respect**
- Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person’s point of view. Have respect for yourself and pride in who you are

**Responsibility**
- Be accountable for one’s own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- Be organised with your time and belongings
- Demonstrate self-control in your thoughts, feelings and actions

**Understanding and Inclusion**
- Accept others and their cultures
- Work and play co-operatively with others
- Help to make our environment safe and happy
- Help others to join in activities and games

**Resilience**
- Keep trying especially when things get hard
- Be positive in everything you do
- When things happen that you don’t like express your feelings in an appropriate way
- Learn to let things go and move on
Curriculum – Learning Programs

At Sunshine Heights Primary School we offer a balanced curriculum in line with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), with a strong emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) outlines what is essential for all Victorian students to learn during their time at school from Prep to Year 10. They provide a set of common state-wide standards which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents.

We have a whole school approach to curriculum development and planning in which teaching and learning practices are regularly reviewed and updated. Improved results in data show individual needs are being catered for.

Teachers at Sunshine Heights Primary School work collaboratively to plan lessons and monitor every student’s individual learning developments. To ensure we continue to enhance the delivery of our reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics programs we have employed full time:

- School Based Literacy and Numeracy Coaches

The School Based Literacy and Numeracy Coaches, work with teachers in the classroom and during planning sessions to further improve their practice, and enhance learning outcomes. They also provide Parent Information sessions that focus on how parents can support their child at home.

Features of our Reading program which focuses on developing students that can not only read text but understand what they are reading include:

- Every classroom having a functioning library, developed by the students, that displays books attractively, and includes books of various genres, various topic areas related to children’s interests and learning in other curriculum areas as well as books levelled, to assist children to make choices about “just right” books.
- Teachers who build a collection of books to teach students strategies for reading.
- Displays of favourite authors, and book recommendations.
- A daily one hour focused reading block that includes a Tuning In (whole group) where strategies for reading are explicitly taught, purposeful Independent Reading, and Reflection Time (whole group).
- The ‘Tuning In’ utilizes good quality literature for reading aloud to children (interactive read aloud) and for reading with students (Shared Reading).
- Ongoing support for children to make appropriate choices about “just right” books. Teachers monitor book choice to ensure readers are well matched to text.
- Increasing student’s reading stamina. For example in the first year of school we expect our young readers to be able to read for a minimum 15-20 minutes by the end of third term. We expect from early in the school year that our middle classes could expect to begin with 25 minutes of Independent Reading building to 30 minutes by the end of the first term. Our senior students would be expected to read independently for 30 – 45 minutes daily.
- Teachers’ conferencing with students. This includes all students having a Reading Journal, where teachers record goals and students reflect on and respond to their reading.

Features of our Writing program which focuses on teaching students to become writers include:

- A daily Writing Block that includes a Tuning In (whole group) where strategies for writing are explicitly taught purposeful Independent Writing, and Reflection Time (whole group).
- Students having access to a variety of writing tools (e.g., pens, variety of paper, staplers, notebooks, folders, etc) as well as a variety of appropriate dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Teachers building a collection of books which are used to teach author techniques and/or
Word walls so that high frequency words taught can be displayed alphabetically to support writers.

Increased writing stamina. For example in the first year of school we expect our young writers to be able to write for a minimum 15-20 minutes by the end of third term. We expect our senior students to write independently for 30 – 45 minutes daily from early in the school year, and our middle classes could expect to begin with 20 minutes of Independent Writing, building to 30 minutes by the end of the first term.

Teachers’ conferencing with students to monitor and enhance learning developments.

We also ensure that we provide broader opportunities for students to participate in learning experiences that enhance their ability to be creative and inquisitive. This includes students also attending a variety of specialist lessons such as:

- Information Communication Technology (Computers)
- Visual Arts
- Performing Arts
  - Footsteps Dance company
  - African Drumming in 2013 for Prep-2 students
  - Talent Quest
- Physical Education & Sport
  - Intensive Swimming Program
  - Lunchtime Tennis Clinics
  - Interschool sports
- Library
  - Book club
  - Book week

Other exemplary programs that we offer students include:

- Reading Recovery
- School Based Speech Pathologist
- Transition Programs
- Intervention Programs
- Student Leadership Program
- Camps & Excursions
- Enrichment Programs
- Commonwealth Bank School Banking Program
- End of year festive Concert
- SPARKS reading program

At Sunshine Heights Primary School we are committed to working together to align our teaching practices to ensure all students are provided with a consistent, challenging and highly effective learning program/experience.

It is important to note that the type of programs offered to the students may vary each year depending on the needs of the school and the students, and funding resources.
Student Safety and Wellbeing
Supporting Students Social and Emotional Development

The foundation of the positive school culture developed at Sunshine Heights Primary School is underlined by the active participation of all members of the school community in which they feel valued, safe and secure; are provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school; and have every opportunity to meet their personal and educational potential. A key component to a school’s approach to prevention is ongoing personal and social learning throughout the whole school.

At Sunshine Heights Primary School we have employed a School Based Primary Welfare Officer (Leading Teacher) to work with staff and parents to support the social and emotional developments of every student.

The Primary Welfare Officer monitors and supports students at risk. This coordinator provides a forum where parents and teachers can feel free to present student referrals and seek assistance. District support staff and external agencies can be accessed through contacting the Primary Welfare Officer.

A positive school culture at Sunshine Heights Primary School is also based on student engagement being the basis for learning.

Ways in which we support student Social and Emotional Development include:

- Promoting a high quality teaching and learning program
- Building School-wide Positive Behaviour Support
- Encouraging student attendance which is a key to engagement and maximises every student’s ability to learn and teacher’s ability to teach effectively.
- Providing an effective Transition program. This includes:
  - Kindergarten to Prep
  - Year 6 to 7
  - New students to the school

At Sunshine Heights Primary School we are also committed to providing a positive culture where bullying is not accepted, and in so doing, all will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn, and a right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. This is outlined in more detail in our Anti Bullying Policy.

At Sunshine Heights Primary School we believe that all people have the right to be safe, respected and cared for. Everyone has a responsibility to care for one another and the environment.
Facilities

The school has large outdoor areas, which include adventure playgrounds and playing fields set in well-maintained gardens. The two main buildings house classrooms, Library (including Info-Tech Resource Centre), and Administration Offices. We have also recently built a new Gym that includes a Music and Art room.

Sunshine Heights Primary School has also established a Professional Learning Centre that is used by teachers in the Sunshine - Deer Park Network and expert educational consultants that work together to provide exceptional learning opportunities for students. Having this resource located at the school ensures that staff at Sunshine Heights Primary School have immediate access to experts in teaching practices and social/emotional learning. This ensures that the learning and social/emotional programs offered at Sunshine Heights Primary School are continually up-to-date and based on current research.

In recent years the school has been successful in achieving grants for synthetic grass, tanks and recently solar power.

Before and After School Care and Vacation Care Program

The Before/After School and Vacation Care program is provided on the school site by World4Kids. World4kids employs a team of dedicated staff who run quality programs.

Before and After School Operation Times:
Before Care - 6.45am to 8.45am
After Care - 3.15pm to 6.30pm
Parent Participation at Sunshine Heights Primary School

Involvement by Parents and Carers helps children achieve the best possible learning outcomes. The supportive school community at Sunshine Heights Primary School is able to participate in their child’s school life, both formally and informally, through such opportunities as:

A member of School Council:
If you are interested in becoming involved in the decision making processes at the school you may like to join our School Council or one of its sub-committees. Elections for School Council are conducted in Term One (1) each year. Meeting times are published in the Newsletter.

The School Council is responsible for providing policy direction for the school. It is responsible for developing a Strategic Plan that outlines the goals for the school over the next four (4) years. Copies of the School Strategic Plan are available from the office.

The School Council comprises 9 non-Department parent members, 5 Department of Education and Early Childhood employee members, 1 community co-opted member.

All parents are welcome at the monthly Council meetings. Parents are notified of forthcoming meetings through the school newsletter. The minutes of each meeting of the School Council are available on request and provide a further avenue through which parents are able to learn about the general school organisation.

As a legal agent of the Government, the School Council is accountable in two main senses:
- In the familiar sense of accounting for the expenditure of finance and
- In the other sense of being accountable to you, the parents, for its stewardship of the school.

A member of a School Council Sub-committee:
At the direction of the School Council, committees are formed for specific purposes. Membership is drawn from the Council and the school community. Sub-committees are formed throughout the year and parents are encouraged to volunteer their time to become members of these committees.

Regular meetings of sub-committees are held and parents are notified of forthcoming meetings and agendas through the school newsletter.

The following Committees have been established:

- **Buildings & Grounds**
  The Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee provides advice to School Council on development of the buildings and grounds.
  In addition, it oversees a maintenance and minor works program and organises working bees each term.

- **Finance**
  The role of the Finance Sub-Committee is to:
  - develop the school’s annual budget with the help of the principal
  - ensure that the annual budget supports the school strategic plan
  - present the recommended budget to council for approval and adoption
  - regularly monitor and report to council on progress against the budget
  - ensure there is an adequate internal control system to promote operational efficiency and to minimise financial risk
- ensure that the school has an appropriate investment policy and that this policy is approved by council annually
- monitor the status of investments (if any)
- assist in the completion of the *Summary of Financial Commitments* which is required by DEECD annually, and in determining the level of uncommitted reserves
- make recommendations to council on fund-raising activities and liaise with the school groups concerned with these activities
- where required, assist in the completion of school tenders e.g. cleaning contracts, waste removal contracts, school council building contracts
- review the annual audited financial statement and the auditor’s report and assist with follow-up where appropriate
- assist the principal in ensuring that the school operates to a balanced budget and that all liabilities and financial commitments are brought to account in the relevant year.

- **Fundraising**
  - The Fundraising Group work in cooperation with the school council and the Principal to raise funds for the benefit of the school. Information regarding Fundraising events and money raised will be placed in the newsletter.

Opportunities are also available for parents who wish to volunteer, helping in school activities like special school events, and assistance with reading and mathematics programs. This also includes:

- **Working Bees** - Held to maintain our attractive grounds.
- **Classroom Administration** - Typing, reading, learning activities, covering aids and books in the classroom and particularly the library.

The support of parents and carers is greatly appreciated and welcomed, by the whole school community at Sunshine Heights Primary School

**Working with Children Check**

As of the 30th December 2007 all adults who work with children are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWC). The WWC check is a Victorian Government initiative designed to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work. The WWC check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. It is a requirement that all parents who work within the school in a volunteer or paid capacity hold a current WWC check.

Please refer to the following link for further information:

School Uniform
As per School Council policy, the school has a very attractive and functional school uniform and students are required to wear the uniform at all times during school hours.

We have a Sunsmart Policy of “No Hat – No Play.” Sunshine Heights Primary School hats are compulsory during Term One and Four.

Reporting to Parents

Parent Teacher Interviews – February & July

Parents are invited to an interview to inform the teacher of everything they need to know about their child – you are encouraged to bring a list to help you remember everything you want to say.

Written Report Form

The first written report each year is sent home mid year and is followed by a parent teacher interview. A second report is sent home in December – Interviews at this time are by request only.

School policy acknowledges the value of informal reporting contacts. Parents or Teachers may request interviews as the necessity arises. Please contact the school to make an appointment if you require one.

Thank you for taking this opportunity to learn about Sunshine Heights Primary School. We look forward to a successful and productive relationship.

Please note that if you would like to learn more about our school please organise a tour by contacting the schools office or visit the school's website at www.sunshineheigthsps.vic.edu.au