Middle School
Grades Three and Four
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS
This is an outline of the expectations for students in Grades 3 and 4. It explains how the program is organised and what the students are expected to do in broad terms. If you have any further questions about any of the Middle School curriculum, programs or approaches for which are not detailed below, then you are more than welcome to contact your child’s classroom teacher.

ENGLISH
English covers the areas of Reading, Writing, Spelling and Listening and Speaking. All are closely related and are dependent on each other.

- Reading
In Grade 3 and 4, students are considered independent readers capable of independently choosing material of interest that suits their reading ability. As independent readers students may select texts from a range of sources including magazines, newspapers, short stories, novels, picture story books, recipes or non-fiction books.

Each class operates Reading Groups which target different performance levels via a range of learning tasks and approaches. Some students receive special assistance via the Literacy Intervention Program and the skills learnt during these lessons are continued in the student’s class. Also an ‘English as Another Language Program’ exists for relevant students.

Silent Reading develops the students’ ability to read for longer periods of time. Reading Logs and Journals allow the students to keep lists of what they have read and to make a basic response to them. It is of great benefit to the students to have parents participating in this program and to monitor out of school reading habits. It is an expectation that students read for a minimum of 100 minutes per week.
**Literature.**
The ‘Literacy Program’ aims to foster a life long love of books and literature. Parents can assist by helping their child choose suitable books from the school and local libraries, sharing the reading with their child and reading to them. It can also help if parents are seen to be keen and active readers in their own right. All students are expected to take part in the Premier’s Reading Challenge which is supported by the classroom teacher and Library Program.

**Writing**
All students are taught Victorian Cursive Script with the aim of developing a fluent and consistent style. It is understood that writing standards may vary depending on the task and purpose; drafting is a work in progress. Whilst not all written work is published, it is expected that each text created is thoroughly edited, punctuated and checked for spelling and grammar. During the course of the year Grade 4 students are given permission to use pens for class work once they can write consistently to a satisfactory standard of neatness with correct letter formation, size and slope.

**THINKING SKILLS**
Students are encouraged to extend their range of thinking skills through a structured ‘Thinking Skills Program’ that will cover a range of philosophical issues and utilise the ‘De Bono Thinking Skills’, or other creative thinking activities such as the Thinkers Keys, Multiple Intelligences and Habits of Mind.

**MATHS**
All students work to consolidate and extend themselves in the areas of Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability.

Students in Grade 3 should know the 2,3,4,5, and 10 times tables. Students in Grade 4 revise these tables. They also learn the 6, 7, 8 and 9 times tables. It is beneficial if students are able to revise the times tables at home, have the opportunity to explore and discuss approaches to mental math tasks such as those that will appear in the homework throughout the year, and to experience real life math tasks related to shopping, timetabling and organising. At all times we encourage students to build on previous learning, to take risks in their work and use mistakes as a springboard to learning.
ICT
As often as possible students are provided the opportunity to explore and improve their ‘Information and Communication Technology’ skills. Students utilise desktop computers, tablets, laptops, cameras and a variety of programs in all areas of the curriculum.

At all times students are expected to abide by the rules as set out in the Computer Contract.

INQUIRY UNITS
Students need to be able to express their understandings in their own words rather than just copy out slabs of information. Parents can help students to find suitable resources, to organise their research and their time. This year the topics covered will be: Learning to LEARN, Australia’s Early Settlement, Mystery and Adventure, Sport and Being Healthy and Victoria.

CAMPS
The Grade 4 Camp will be at Oasis in Term 1. (March 17th – 19th)
The Grade 3 Camp will be at Camp Rumbug in Term 4. (Oct 14th – 16th)

HOMEWORK
Students will be given regular homework. The purpose of the ‘Homework Program’ is to help consolidate class knowledge and skills, as well as developing positive study habits and time management for the future.

Parents can help by negotiating with their child a reasonable timetable for homework and extra-curricular activities, and discuss a suitable and quiet area in the home to complete home tasks. Homework usually consists of daily reading, as mentioned earlier, spelling and a weekly worksheet.
Spelling uses both formal and informal approaches in each class and is closely linked with the English Work Program. Words presented may be in a variety of groups such as commonly used words, interest and topic words or words with common sounds.
The homework worksheet can include a list of tasks to complete, or a specific project assignment. At times, incomplete class work may be sent home for completion. The tasks should take only a few minutes to finish and will be checked by the students’ class teachers.
One project or investigation is usually planned each term. Interest from parents in these projects is much appreciated. Parents can help by:

- guiding their child to break tasks into manageable units,
- assisting their child to plan and organise their time,
- helping them select suitable resources,
- encouraging a ‘read and re-tell’ of the information gathered,
- proof reading the writing after the child’s initial try and
- accepting the child’s finished product in relation to the child’s abilities and previous experiences at the task.

ABSENCES
If students are absent for any period, the DEECD requires a note detailing the absence as soon as possible after the student returns to school. Alternatively, this can be logged using the link on the MAPS website. Where possible, advance notice of an intended absence is always appreciated.

MEDICAL / DENTAL APPOINTMENTS
If school hour appointments are necessary, it is less disruptive to students if these appointments are made for the afternoon instead of the morning. We remind you that all caregivers must utilise the ‘Sign in / Sign out’ system which operates from the office. Students are not allowed to sign themselves in or out.

PUNCTUALITY, PROPERTY AND COMMUNICATION
Our Code of Behaviour/L.E.A.R.N book, classroom management processes and diaries are designed to develop a sense of responsibility and greater independence.

Punctuality and looking after equipment and personal property is part of this process. Students who arrive late for school miss out on learning situations and are also at risk of developing long term bad habits. It is an expectation that students wait outside the school building until the 8.50am bell. When this sounds, students are to go to class and prepare for the day ahead by unpacking their bag and organising their belongings.

Diaries are used to list homework, weekly reading, or future events. They can also be used to inform parents of events and for parents to communicate with the classroom teacher. It is expected that diaries are signed by parents each week.
COMMUNICATION
Teachers aim to develop a positive communication between school and home to assist students in becoming motivated, disciplined and organised. Teachers are available to discuss any issues or concerns parents have about their child, but we do require a mutually convenient time to be arranged. It is best not to arrive in the classroom unannounced to discuss detailed issues at times where teachers are likely to be busy, such as 8:50 in the morning. Teachers also have regular commitments to meetings before and after school. For detailed issues, we request you arrange an appointment in advance. It is often helpful if email addresses are exchanged at the beginning of the year.

BEHAVIOUR
The school expects all students to behave with consideration for others at all times. We encourage students to think about the feelings and rights of others throughout the day. Rules and procedures are explained to them so they know what kinds of behaviour are expected.

We experience very few behavioural issues and generally see a high standard of interaction and respect. Each classroom will discuss and negotiate their standards and expectations at the beginning of the year. Whilst the vast majority readily abides by these standards, a few may require further guidance such as a ‘Step Program’. If this situation arises then teachers will communicate their concerns and intention with the parents concerned.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES
Staff at Mont Albert Primary utilise restorative conversations to help understand and mend issues that exist between students. These conversations are designed to help develop empathy as well as empower students to take responsibility of their actions. Please feel free to ask the classroom teacher for more information about Restorative Practices.

In some situations the school will notify the parents of the behaviour at issue and parents may be asked to come to the school to help work out a solution to the problem.

Sometimes students can have problems at school that staff are not aware of. Not every child will come forward if they are being bullied. If you know something is upsetting your child please make an appointment to see your child’s teacher so the issue can be addressed, or outline the problem in writing for the teacher to follow up.
PARENT CO-ORDINATORS
Each class needs to have a volunteer to be the Parent Co-ordinator. Responsibilities include liaising with other parents; organising social events, organising and distributing a class contact list, and helping to find parents for excursions if necessary. If you wish to volunteer, then please see your class teacher.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
Some families choose to allow their child to participate in the instrumental music program available at school. Instruction for a range of instruments is available. Forms can be obtained from the school office.

Where a student needs to be withdrawn from class for their lesson, instrumental teachers negotiate suitable times with the class teacher. Sometimes it is not appropriate to remove a student from a critical learning session in Literacy or Maths.

Instrumental teachers are not permitted to take a student out of a specialist program at any time.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES
To assist with the smooth running of the classroom, teachers request that each family supply a box of tissues that can be used throughout the year. Please send in a box of tissues with your child to school at your earliest convenience.

Additionally you may wish to purchase a USB for student use at school and home. Students will be taught how to scan USBs safely at the beginning of the year to ensure both school and home networks remain virus free. It is advised that if students do use USBs, then they only store school related files on them and keep them free of games, music and video files.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
House Sports will be held on Wednesday afternoons. During each sport rotation, House Teams will compete against another House. The students will participate in a range of activities that provide them the opportunity to experience a range of skills, movements and competitive requirements. Good Sports Points are awarded to players that demonstrate great teamwork, enthusiasm, encouragement and sportsmanship.