Tuesday 8th February 2011

Dear Parents/Caregivers

Welcome to the new school year.
We are both looking forward to working with Year 4s this year. This letter is to provide you with information regarding the Homework and Spelling program which we will be using this year.

Spelling Program.

This year the Year 4 classes will be using a Spelling and Times Table program called Matrices. This program has been used successfully at St Francis of Assisi school and we think that it will be of great benefit to our students. Matrices promote self directed learning and it has been shown that students using the program retain their knowledge past the Friday morning spelling test.

Each student will be given a spelling list set out as a matrix that is appropriate to their current ability. There are four tasks set at different levels for each list word and these will each need to be ticked off. Parents/caregivers may tick the boxes at levels 1 to 3. Level 4 requires students to write out sentences. They may use more than one list word in a single sentence. The most important element in this last task is that students really understand the meaning of the words that they are using.

The tasks described may be completed within the week but experience has shown that it is better for many students to take longer as this will better enable them to incorporate the words into their daily written work. A new Spelling list may be given out during the week: not necessarily on the Monday.

2011 Homework Program.

The Year 4 homework program will be based on the Homework Grids concept this year. We have set out an explanation below for those of you who are not yet familiar with this concept.

Research shows that:

- Physical activity enhances children's learning. It is as important to engage in a variety of activities as well as to spend time doing homework.
- The place for the type of tasks that can be set for homework is at school, where children who struggle can receive support from the teacher.
- For many families, homework is a chore and many parents are actually doing the homework for their children.

The Homework Grid represents a practical and effective way to design relevant homework that will teach students the necessary skills to cope with academic pressures and time management and will also encourage the development of their social skills and attitudes.

The Homework Grid concept seeks to include the following qualities:

1. Variety
2. Enhancement of family life
3. Promotion of physical activity
Below is an example of a homework grid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn your spelling words</td>
<td>Practice a new sport e.g kicking a footy or dribbling a ball</td>
<td>Read for 15 minutes each night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help a parent with a household chore</td>
<td>Complete maths sheet</td>
<td>Talk about something positive that happened today at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help an adult to prepare a meal</td>
<td>Play a game with your family</td>
<td>Clean your room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
<td>Signed:_________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A grid is issued on a weekly basis. The items that are in bold are compulsory. The children are then to choose three other activities that they would like to complete. Once the children have completed an activity, the parent/caregiver is to sign in each box.

Roles of students, parents/caregivers and teachers using the Homework Grids:

**Parents/caregivers-**
- Use the particular activities to interact with their children
- Sign the box to verify that the work has been completed
- Set extension work if they feel that this appropriate

**Students-**
- Complete the grid each week
- Record the specific work completed

**Teachers-**
- Plan the grid each week
- Check the completed grid at the end of each week
- Check regularly on what has been completed to ensure good time management is being used

If you have any queries regarding any of the above please come to the *Meet the Teacher* evening on Monday the 21st of February.

Yours Sincerely

Gemma Colagiovanni
John Ferraro
Year 4 teachers.