

WELCOME TO GRADE 2

Welcome to Grade Two! It is an exciting and important year! We consolidate Grade 1 work and build on skills that have already been acquired. We also prepare the children for the final year in the Foundation Phase. We strive to develop independence, self-control, self-discipline, confidence, respect and concern for others. We hope that you will find this information helpful.

School Times

It is important that the children arrive punctually at school each day to avoid panic and stress. Please ensure that they are at school by **7:50** each day. The school day begins at **7.55** and finishes at **13:05**.

Useful hints for Grade Two parents

1. It is important that each child knows his or her name and surname, as well as their telephone number, address and date of birth.
2. Every item of clothing needs to be marked with the full name. This includes all stationery items.
3. You may be aware that it is possible, on a termly or daily basis, to order lunch from the tuckshop. You will receive a letter about this from Mrs Di Shaw, who runs our tuckshop. The Foundation Phase children will not be allowed to go to the tuckshop at break.
4. Remember to check the message book and suitcase daily for any notices. General notices are sent out on a Wednesday.
5. We encourage you to instill a set routine in your child's life as this provides them with a sense of security and responsibility.
6. Please monitor the amount of television that your child watches. We suggest that the children watch age appropriate programmes only.
7. Please ensure that your child starts each day with a nutritious breakfast and comes to school with a healthy lunch. (e.g. – A sandwich, fruit and juice). Treats will only be allowed on Fridays or on outings.
8. Money sent to school must please be in an envelope marked with the child's name, grade, teacher and purpose for which the money is intended.

Hats

All Grade 2 children are required to have an official Sweet Valley maroon, wide-brimmed sunhat with their name embroidered on it. These hats can be bought from the schools clothing shop. It is compulsory for this hat to be worn during break time, outdoor phys ed lessons and sport practices. A child who has lost, or is not wearing his/her hat will be required to remain in a specified shady area during these times. These hats will remain permanently at school on the child's hook outside his/her classroom. Please ensure you put sun block on your child before school each day as well.

Charity

Each grade throughout the school has chosen a charity for the year. We have chosen to support Shack to chic. We are aiming to raise awareness throughout the school to encourage learners to be actively involved in a charity. We do one charity drive per term but we will keep you updated with more information about these.

Birthday Civvies

Your child may wear civvies on the day of their birthday or on the Monday or Friday if their birthday falls over the weekend. They may choose their own "birthday civvies" day if they had their birthday in the holidays. Please do not wear civvies on the first or last day of any term.

Extra Murals

Please encourage your child to take part in at least one summer and one winter sport. The extra mural list will be handed out in term 1 & 2. Please note that there will be no sport on the first day of every term or in academic planning week at the end of every term, unless organized by the coach concerned.

Contact with teachers

Individual parent / teacher interviews will be held towards the end of the first term. We will give you advance notice of these meetings. You are welcome to make appointments via email or via your child's homework book if you would like to see the teacher. Please contact the educator if you have any queries or problems. Positive feedback is also welcome. We are appreciative of any help and encourage involvement from parents. The homework book can be used to convey messages between parents and teachers.

Towards the end of the second and third terms, parents are invited to visit the classrooms to view their child's work. However, in view of the fact that these are not individual interviews, specific problems cannot be discussed at this time. Please make separate appointments to see your child's teacher should you have any concerns.

A report of your child's progress will go out at the end of each term.

Homework

The homework book will be brought home everyday. Please sign this book daily **once the homework has been done**. Please check that your child has everything that he / she requires for the following day. Homework would typically consist of the following: Reading, 12 phonics words, sight words, a maths activity and any other reminders.

Maths

The development of number concept is very important. Please assist your child by doing counting exercises and word problems (story sums). There are lovely educational maths games available. Children may use fingers, toes and counters to help them! Each learner will receive a set of bonds (up to 9) and partners of ten. Please paste these onto cardboard and cut them out. Practise these at least twice a week for about 5 minutes. These are to be kept at home.

English

Monday to Thursday we do individualised reading, where the children select their own box books to take home. These books are graded according to their level of difficulty. Please trust the teacher to know when your child is ready for the next level. These box books **do not** have to be completed in one day. The children will also be bringing home a group reader twice a week. Please check which pages need to be read for the group reader and please ensure that it is signed. These pages have already been read in class so your child should be quite fluent when reading them.

When reading, we encourage the children to use picture clues, contextual clues from the story, and phonetic decoding (sounding out the words). They are also encouraged to take note of punctuation – to stop at full stops, pause at commas and to read with appropriate expression when reading aloud. It is very important to foster a positive attitude towards reading. Please encourage, support and be patient with your children when they read to you.

It is still very important to read to your children so that they have a good model to copy and can develop a love for reading. It is also important to belong to a public library so that your children may borrow books that interest them.

In the second term the children will be allowed to bring home one book per week from the school library. Correct and careful handling of these books is important. Please ensure that the children turn the page at the top right hand corner with the right hand.

Sight words

Each child will receive a list of words each term. They will be stuck at the back of the phonics book. They need to learn 5 words a week. These will be tested at the end of the week along with their phonics words.

Phonics

We revise the short vowel and basic consonant sounds and blends taught in Grade 1. The Grade 2 syllabus focuses on vowel digraphs for example “ai” in train and the “ay” in play. Using the words in a meaningful sentence is important for language and vocabulary development. Your children are taught to decode (sound out words in reading) and to encode (build up or write words when writing a story). The first page of the phonics book is a step by step guide on how to learn phonics. Phonics should be revised from Monday to Thursday as a phonics assessment is written every Friday. Most weeks the learners are required to revise sounds from previous weeks. The results of these phonics assessments are found at the back of the phonics book. Please check and sign these.

Written work

Neatness and pride in presentation of written work is encouraged. Capital letters are taught in Grade 2. The correct formation of these is taught in handwriting lessons and the correct use of these is taught when writing stories and sentences. We write on 8.5mm lines, not thin Irish lines. We also start preparation for cursive up writing in the 4th term.

Assessments

Continuous assessment in all learning areas is done throughout the year. On a Friday, the week’s phonics and mathematics is tested. Although these tests results are recorded for marks they are **not** the only marks considered when writing reports. These tests also help pinpoint problem areas so that we can give help and guidance where needed. Please do not take days off school unless your child is ill.

Afrikaans and Xhosa

These are taught orally, with stories, poems and games to introduce the sound of the language. It is beneficial for the children to hear these languages through stories, etc. Xhosa is taught by Mrs Nakana

for one half hour lesson a week. Grade 2's are also required to read Afrikaans. We will be doing shared reading as a class and later in the year the children will read simple readers.

Computers

We are fortunate to have an excellent computer laboratory at Sweet Valley. In Grade 2 the children visit the computer lab for one half hour lesson a week.

Singing and Recorder

Recorder and singing will work on a rotational basis for one half hour lesson each week. Recorders are not kept by the class teacher.

Enrichment

Each class will have an Enrichment lesson every second week for one half hour. These lessons are given by Mrs Walker.

Class Representative

Each class will have a "class rep" who will contact other parents on the teachers' behalf to schedule "reading moms" arrange work parties, outings, covering of books, etc. In anticipation we would like to say "Thank You" to the moms who will offer their time to fulfill this important role. We know that our parents will, as always, give us their full support and co-operation.

Outings

We usually go on one outing per term or have a guest come to the school and do an activity at school. You will be notified well in advance and help might be requested with supervision and lifting. Please read the school car lifting policy that you will receive on the day of an outing.

We look forward to teaching your children this year and are confident that it will be a memorable, happy one. Please make every effort to stay in close contact with the school and your child's teacher throughout the year.

Best wishes

Grade 2 Teachers