

PRIMARY SCHOOL

PREPARING FOR FORMAL LEARNING

The transition from the informal learning environment of home and Kinder to the formal learning environment of school is a big step for any child to make. Quite naturally parents wish to make this transition as smooth as possible for their child. We therefore provide some hints which could assist your child to make a positive start:

- ❖ Read to him/her from the earliest age. This helps to create the child's desire to read.
- ❖ Give your child printed books to read on a variety of topics rather than picture books or extensively illustrated books.
- ❖ Encourage children to write and draw regularly. Eg. Write letters, stories, diaries and factual accounts.
- ❖ Try to cultivate a sense of number, size, length, width, volume, area, weight and time in everyday life. Join with your child in estimating, counting and calculating.
- ❖ Give the child's handiwork, paintings or worksheets etc., a '*pride of place*' in the home (*at least for a short time!*).
- ❖ Help your child to feel good about him/herself as a learner by acknowledging the effort made and not just the final product.

THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

At Donvale Christian College our curriculum reflects the diversity, complexity and richness of God's world. A Biblical perspective is developed in all areas and our approach to education encouraging a diversity of learning responses such as wonder, discovery, insight and action.

Our curriculum caters for a wide range of learning opportunities, enabling the student to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, while maintaining a high standard.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

During the Primary Years an emphasis is placed upon '*hands on learning*' activities which make use of 'concrete' materials and real life experiences. The rigorous teaching of the essential and basic skills of spelling, reading, writing, mathematics and computer literacy is our priority. However, the importance of involving the student in active, inquiring learning and reflective reasoning, rather than the passive absorption of facts, is essential.

Our curriculum is designed to develop and enhance the ability of the student to reason, use critical awareness, think creatively, make decisions and be an effective contributor to our community.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Students are given many opportunities to interact in a variety of social settings as part of a whole class, a large or small group, or as individuals. We aim to help students adjust comfortably to a larger group of children, to relate to adults associated with the College and to develop a sense of co-operation, tolerance and respect for one another.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

God has created us as a spiritual being. The character, attitudes and values of an individual are formed during the early years of life. Therefore, the roles played firstly by the parent/s and later by the teacher, should never be underestimated.

At Donvale Christian College, we seek to support the role of the parents who have ultimate responsibility for the raising of their child/ren. We also work towards encouraging the student to nurture and develop their own love for God, His Word and His purpose in this world.

We do this by creating an environment that has a Christian framework and a Christian world-view that underpins all learning. We also try to set an example for our students of how to treat one another and live godly lives.

Each day starts with devotion and concludes with a prayer of thanksgiving, and three times a term we hold a Worship and Celebration Assembly which has a strong worship focus.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We aim to make all learning experiences as successful and pleasurable as possible. The positive self-esteem of the student as a learner is essential, and the acknowledgement of the results, critical.

The environment at Donvale Christian College provides a foundation of love, caring and 'feeling safe' that enables the student to develop a positive self-esteem as a learner. The development of trust between the teacher and the student is critical so that the student can feel confident about taking risks with their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical activity plays an important role in the normal growth and development of the student. A balanced life is where one is fit in body as well as in mind. Through regular involvement in a planned sequence of varying physical activities, the natural physical skills and abilities of the student will be developed.

SUMMARY OF STUDIES

ART

Aesthetics is an integral part of life. God is often glorified through artistic expression. Art is taught by a specialist teacher. It creates an opportunity for our students to make a creative response to their learning. The student will experience a variety of activities using different materials and media, including drawing, painting, modelling, construction and threads and textiles.

Most of these activities take place in the Art Room. The Art program forms part of the creative extension of the regular classroom program. It also provides many skills and experiences that are uniquely a part of the Visual Arts. It gives the student an opportunity to express a response to the learning with a sense of discovery and wonder.

BIBLE

The Biblical Studies program introduces students to the way God has revealed Himself through the Scriptures and to the guidelines He has given us for life. This subject is taught by the classroom teacher and is aimed at developing the faith experience and relationship with God for the student, as well as developing and re-enforcing Biblical Literacy skills.

At Donvale Christian College there is a systematic teaching of both Old and New Testaments. Through activities, discussions and small research projects, we seek to develop a growing intellectual and personal response to God. The Bible program follows the major themes of Creation and Providence, Covenant with God, Salvation and Service, God's Kingdom, God's Love, Judgement and Hope and The Church

ENGLISH

English skills enable students to relate to and communicate with others. Therefore they are able to serve God and enrich the life of others. We want our students to be fluent speakers, active listeners, enthusiastic writers, competent readers and spellers and lovers of literature and drama. Language skills are taught explicitly and applied in students' own work.

The English program consists of the following components:

Writing:

- *The formal structures* for different communication purposes are taught so that imaginative, descriptive and factual texts are able to be written independently in effective ways.
- Functional *grammar, sentence structures and vocabulary development* are taught and then applied within student's own writing.

- Clarity and effectiveness of writing is encouraged through *fluent handwriting and punctuation*. Foundation print is used in Year 1-2 and Victorian Cursive from Year 3.
- Correct *spelling* to aid clear communication is both taught and encouraged from Prep. Intensive Phonics is taught and utilizes all the letter combinations that make the 42 sounds of English. This is then applied to word attack skills for both writing and reading.

Reading:

- *Comprehension and understanding of text* is specifically taught. Skills range from basic literal understanding to being able to draw conclusions, make inferences, analyse, summarize and interpret information.
- Reading material is broad, starting with simple ‘soundable’ texts to texts of unfamiliar themes and content. *Reading is encouraged to extend knowledge and pleasure*. School resources include Guided reading books, ‘take home’ books and a well stocked Resource Centre.
- *The sounds and matching letters* and letter combinations of the English language are taught from Prep. This knowledge is then applied for reading simple texts and is further used as a tool to analytically decode unknown words.
- To enrich comprehension use of skimming, self correction, scanning, reviewing part of the text, or note taking is taught. Our goal is *fluent, expressive reading* with understanding.

Listening and Speaking:

- Present and listen to opinions, viewpoints and reflections in varied situations in an appropriate manner.

GENERAL STUDIES

In General Studies a student explores the physical, biological and spatial aspects of God’s creation and how society and cultures have developed in response to God’s mandate for people to develop His world. General Studies is based upon the key learning areas of Society and the Environment, Science and Technology. We are able to do this by developing integrated units of work. These units of work are established to a set theme that assists the student to acquire the appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

Much emphasis is placed upon the individual student learning from real life experiences and being able to relate concepts to his or her own environment and relationships. Learning to research various topics and being able to participate in discussions and investigations with others are essential parts of the General Studies program. In this area of the curriculum the students grow in their understanding of themselves and how to relate to others and the world in which they live.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (L.O.T.E.)

From 2003 L.O.T.E. was no longer a part of the Primary Curriculum. However, it was recognised that some students enjoy and are good at learning another language; it was decided to offer an After School German Class. This class is open to students from Years 1 to 6 and is conducted by one of the Secondary School's German teachers. The After School Class commences at 3:30 pm and finishes at approximately 5:00 pm.

In a fun and supportive environment which involves activities such as games, cooking and singing, students are taught how to speak, read and write German.

LIBRARY

The sharing of quality literature and the ability to locate specific information are important skills that need to be developed in the Primary Years.

Our Library Program, which is taken by the classroom teacher, aims to develop relevant research skills and encourage reading through literature enrichment. Students are encouraged to borrow library books regularly and younger students are required to use their library bag when taking a book from the Primary Resource Centre.

The Primary Resource Centre is also open four lunchtimes a week to enable students to opportunity to borrow books, read or play games such as chess, draughts and computer-based strategy games.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematical skills and understanding assists the students to investigate the numerical and spatial aspects of God's creation. The principle aim of our Mathematics program is to ensure that our students have strong Numeracy skills and the ability to apply them practically. This will enable them to use their mathematical skills in everyday affairs, in interpreting information and in making decisions. Students are provided with sequenced experiences in all mathematical strands.

Number:

Numeration includes strategies involving number concepts, number sense, place value, counting and the writing and reading of numbers in word and number form. Numeration also includes basic fractional and decimal concepts and percentages. Subtraction, multiplication, addition and division equations are solved

Number sense is established and applied practically through manipulative learning aids in the junior years, and progresses to calculations being solved mentally, with specific algorithms or at times with support of tools, like a calculator.

Space:

Development of spatial awareness is through practical and creative experiences in solving problems by observing and exploring shapes, arrangements, patterns, location and maps.

Two and three dimensional shapes, transformations, symmetry and location are explored. Spatial awareness is developed informally in the early years and becomes more formal in the later years.

Mathematical Application and Mental Computation:

A prime focus is for students to be able to solve and pose practical mathematical problems. They develop abilities over the primary years to select appropriate strategies in varied and everyday situations, apply mental strategies involving rounding, applying number facts or fact families and use estimation and number manipulation.

Measurement, Chance and Data:

Informal, formal and then standard units are used to develop consistent and accurate use of measurement. Calculating length, mass, capacity, area and volume involves choosing and applying which strategies or tools to use. Collecting data to display information and reading data is through simple to complex graphs.

MUSIC

Music is a joyful experience and a valuable part of the curriculum as it gives rise to another opportunity for students to respond to learning and discovery in a creative way.

Music supplies a means for self expression, a mode for communication and develops both individual and group cooperation skills.

Music is a language best taught aurally to younger students and it allows them to express themselves vocally and/or using large body movements.

Extensive ear training and physical activities help develop co-ordination and lead to the playing of percussion instruments. This enables the students to develop a 'music tool box' that they can use for the future.

The Year 3 / 4 Music Program incorporates all students learning the recorder.

However music is also to be enjoyed, appreciated and performed. Therefore our music program is far wider than just learning the 'mechanics' of music. Many opportunities are created that allow the students to participate and experience music in the context of the Performing Arts. To this effect a component of the Year 5 / 6 program has a Drama focus.

Private music tuition is also available in flute, violin and other stringed instruments, guitar, drums, voice, keyboard, piano, woodwind and brass instruments.

PRIMARY INSTRUMENTAL PROGRAM (P.I.P.)

Many students desire to learn a musical instrument; however the choice is so wide. As part of the Primary music program, students in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn the violin or cello, trumpet, trombone, clarinet or saxophone for 20 weeks at a nominal charge. Lessons are held in groups of four students at a time and aim to provide an introduction to the instrument. At the conclusion of 20 weeks, if the student wishes to take up private lessons in the particular instrument, he or she is able to at the associated cost.

SCIENCE

The Science Program, taught by a specialist teacher is designed to progressively build an understanding of the basic scientific principles that are evident in the different fields of Science. Through a range of simple and more complex investigations, experiments and demonstrations, the students develop a deeper appreciation of God's amazing creation and how it interrelates. The students are encouraged to observe carefully, question and discuss ideas. They are also involved with reading, writing, drawing and recording observations, learning to use apparatus appropriately and evaluating information and methods of investigation. The units of work will help them to gain specific scientific knowledge and an appreciation of how the basic principles apply in different situations.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education arises from the belief that we are called to honour God with our bodies as well as our minds. The emphasis of P.E. is to develop basic physical fitness levels and to develop skills and techniques.

A wide range of physical activities is offered to cater for the varying interests and abilities of the student. Each student is given an opportunity to be involved in activities at their appropriate level and to experience success.

The Prep to Year 2 program centres on the development of coordination, ball handling skills, gymnastics and an introduction to team games. These skills are further developed in Years 3 to 6. These students are also introduced to team games like, Tee Ball, Softball, Cricket, Soccer, Bat Tennis, Newcombe and modified Volleyball.

All students are involved in an annual House Athletics and Cross Country Carnivals and Year 3 to 6 also participate in Inter Christian Schools Athletic meetings.

The Year 5 and 6 students are also involved in a local district Inter-school Sports competition.

Private tuition in Tennis is available after school for students from Year 2 and upwards.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

A qualified Special Education teacher, who is a member of the Student Support Services Team, works with students who require remedial assistance or extension opportunities. The progress of each student is carefully monitored in conjunction with the classroom teacher and parents.

An extension program exists for students in Years 3 to 6 who consistently perform at a higher academic level than their peers or demonstrate a specific area of intelligence. The Primary Program, affectionately known as B.I.R.P.S. (Brilliant Individual Research Projects!) is conducted on a weekly basis. The College also connects the highly able students to external extension programs such as GATEWAYS.

ADDITIONAL LITERACY SUPPORT

A number of additional support staff have been assigned to work within the Primary School, supporting the classroom teacher by working with a small group of students at a time. This occurs within the Literacy and Numeracy blocks each day.

A Learning Facilitator also works with those students who require extra assistance with their learning. This type of application where the teacher works with individual students for an intensive period of time is known as an early intervention program.

The Primary School also conducts an Enviro Program which is specifically focussed for Year 3 and 4 and another focus for Year 5 and 6 students. The Program recognises that some students need to be involved in a more active physical type of work as a means of addressing their Literacy needs.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

This program is also conducted by a specialist teacher and is provided for students who are recent arrivals to Australia and who do not speak English as their first language.

Again, it is an intervention program that endeavours to enable students with a non-English speaking background to function effectively in the regular classroom. Some Government financial assistance is possible in accordance with set criteria. For students outside the criteria, this service is on a 'user pay' basis.

COMPUTERS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

We believe that for children to function as successful and informed citizens in our society, they need to be made aware of technological changes and taught how to use the computer as a tool to enhance learning across all of their studies.

A network of computers exists in the Primary School which is used by the students during class time. A wide range of Educational Software supports our curriculum outcomes. All primary students use the same Network as the Secondary School.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE and HOLIDAY AND EXTENDED CARE

(KIDS ZONE @D.C.C.)

The College offers an After School Care Program to families who are unable to collect their child(ren) at the end of the school day.

This program runs daily from 3.30pm to 6.00pm at additional cost.

The program includes an afternoon tea, an activity and supervised homework time for the older students.

At the commencement of Terms Two, Three and Four, the first two days are student free days to allow staff to further develop the curriculum and/or be involved in Professional

Development activities. On these days Extended Care is offered. This program is based on the After School Care Program and is held from 8.30am to 6.00pm, again at an additional cost. The students need to bring their own lunch. However, morning and afternoon tea are provided. Should the activities include a planned day trip, then the cost of this will need to be met by the family, over and above the base charge.

In addition to this, in early January and for the two after the school year concludes, a holiday program is offered, following the same format as the Extended Care Program.

Enrolment forms are available from the front office or the After School Care Co-ordinator. Bookings for both programs can be on either a permanent or casual basis.

The cost associated with the program is reviewed each year, so it is important to check the costs at the beginning of each year.