Introduction

Dear Families,

Hello and welcome to the Middle Years classes. We are excited to be working collaboratively as a Middle Years team this year and look forward to the exciting teaching and learning opportunities we have in store for your child/children.

Melanie Sims- Room 7

Hello, my name is Melanie Sims and this is my second year teaching at Kidman Park Primary School. I have been a Middle Years teacher for the past six years, working with students from Years 4 to 7. I really enjoy teaching Middle Years students, watching them learn and grow, and supporting them as they transition into high school. I am really passionate about creating a positive, supportive and nurturing classroom environment where students feel comfortable, safe and are encouraged to take risks in their learning and accept challenges.

I started my teaching career in the South East, working at Rendelsham PS and Penola PS. Teaching in the country was such a fantastic experience, however it has been lovely to return to Adelaide and to work at Kidman Park. My Nanna taught at Kidman Park for many years and my mum attended school here when it first opened, so this school holds a very special place in my heart. In my spare time I love to read, walk my dogs, spend time with my family and friends and travel. It would be lovely to meet you if I haven’t already, so please feel free to pop into Room 7 and say hello.

Rhiannon Evans- Room 8

Hi, my name is Rhiannon Evans and 2017 will be my first year teaching full time at Kidman Park Primary School. I was lucky enough to work with the Year Sevens for two terms last year and have also completed many relief teaching days at KPPS over the past 18 months so, you may have seen my face around the school.

I started my teaching career in Victoria where I worked in a range of year levels at both government and catholic school settings in South Eastern Melbourne. I returned to Adelaide in 2014 in order to be closer to family as I have a 2-year-old son, Jackson.

This year I am looking forward to building positive relationships with the Middle Years students and watching them develop and grow into the leaders of our school. I am excited about the future changes with our learning environment and looking forward to the opportunities it will present our students.

Michael Gibbins- Room 9

Hi, my name is Michael Gibbins and I am excited to return to KPPS for 2017! The opportunity we have for our learners this year is fantastic and I feel that we have a great mix of teachers, new learning environment and teaching methodology which will help MY students to succeed as valued learners. My priority is to establish positive working relationships with my students and inform parents / care givers about learning development. I look forward to supporting and assisting in the challenges and achievements that Room 9 & other MY students will experience this year.

Sean Bock- Room 10

Hello, my name is Sean Yates-Bock and this will be my second year at KPPS but first full year teaching my own class. I am very excited to be returning and am looking forward to a positive and rewarding year teaching. I have been teaching for just over a year so I bring fresh and new ideas and perspectives to the classroom which will impact positively on my students. Like the
other teachers in the MY teaching team I will work to form positive working relationships with students, prioritising their development socially, emotionally and academically. This year will be challenging but it will also be very rewarding for all learners and teachers. I look forward to starting the year off in Room 10.

To contact a teacher to discuss learning development/issues, please contact via email which are listed at the bottom of the document.

**General Routines**

**WALKER LEARNING**
In the Middle Years, students will be taught through the Walker Learning Approach. This includes working in a flexible learning environment, student directed learning opportunities, class meetings, the use of a student-parent-teacher communication board, focus students, Education Research Projects and tuning in sessions each morning. These elements have been elaborated on throughout the newsletter, but please come and speak to us if you have any questions.

**MORNING ROUTINE**
When the second bell rings at 8.40 the classroom will be opened for the students. The students will need to line up at their spot outside of the building for the teachers to collect. ‘Checking In’ routines include checking the communication board, placing diaries and notes in the inbox, completing the emotional thermometer and beginning Independent Learning Time. At 9.00am ‘Tuning In’ will begin, which consists of an overview of the day, discussing general issues, clarifying learning intentions and Focus Student sharing.

**FOCUS STUDENTS**
Each Middle Years student will be the Focus Student once a fortnight. This is an opportunity for the students to discuss their learning and thoughts with the class, through guided questions by the teacher. There is a term roster displayed on communication boards.

**VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR**
We expect the best behaviour from every student at all times. In the Middle Years classes we will continue to focus on the school values of respect, achieve, care and responsibility. The Joy project will continue to be used to create positive relationships by teaching the students the skills to be a collaborative and positive member of the school. We begin the Joy Project in our classrooms by revisiting Gratitude and holding it in the front of our minds as we begin this school year.

**HEALTHY SNACKS AND WATER**
Students are encouraged to bring along fruits and vegetables which can be consumed during learning time responsibly. Students can have their water bottles with them during class but they must be used responsibly and filled up at break times only. It is vital for students to drink lots of water, especially during Term 1 when it is hot. Please keep other drinks such as juice and cordial for treats at home.

**ABSENTEES**
If a student is absent, please write a quick note in their diary, phone the school or pop in to explain why. Long absences, such as family holidays, need to be arranged through the Principal. If a student is late to school or needs to be collected early, please sign them in/out at the front office. School attendance is closely linked with academic achievement, therefore it is critical that students are at school and given the best opportunity possible to succeed.

**LABELLING AND COVERING PERSONAL ITEMS**
Please make sure all personal items such as jumpers, hats and stationery are labelled as soon
as possible to avoid any confusion. All books and diaries need to be covered. Plastic book protectors are available in class or you may wish to cover the books in contact.

LIBRARY
Library visits days will be scheduled shortly for all Middle Years classes. Students are able to borrow and return library books during this time or during their Independent Learning Time throughout the week.

FITNESS
Students will require appropriate clothing and footwear for fitness and sport. Fitness is a part of the curriculum and every student will participate daily.

EDMODO/BLOG
Edmodo will be used as an ongoing student discussion and sharing forum for the Middle Years classes. It can be accessed from home or school. Reminders, homework tasks and assignments will be uploaded to Edmodo.
Our Middle Years blog will be used as a communication tool for parents. The blog will be used to share learning, newsletters and other information. We are currently in the process of setting the blog up and will pass on the URL details shortly.

LAPTOPS
This year, each student in the Middle Years will be allocated a laptop which is theirs to use and be responsible for. Last year, a number of laptops were damaged and required replacing, so this strategy has been implemented to ensure students are responsibly using and caring for the laptops.

CIRCLE TIME
Each Middle Years class will continue to run Circle Time each week. Circle Time links with the Joy Project and is an opportunity for students to communicate how they are feeling, practise empathy and self-regulation skills and gives them the opportunity to discuss issues in a safe environment.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
All Middle Years classes have been set up as flexible learning environments. You might notice there are stand up tables, rugs, cushions and couches and very natural colours. We are aiming to create learning environments where students feel calm and comfortable and can have a choice in where they learn. The flexible learning area will also be available for students to access. Due to the students not having a ‘set spot’ it is encouraged that each student has a small pencil case with essential items for each lesson, for ease of moving around.

Curriculum Areas
This year, Middle Years students will be offered learning experiences in the following areas: Mathematics, English, Health and Physical Education, Technology, Science, The Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Japanese and Positive Education and will be working across all Middle Years classrooms. All learning experiences will be taught using our new Connected Curriculum model focusing on the big question: ‘Can all living things flourish?’

THE FIRST FEW WEEKS
During the first few weeks of school, the students will be involved in a variety of learning experiences to encourage and develop a positive classroom environment. They will be involved in team building activities, Joy activities, getting to know other class members and setting up routines.
ENGLISH

WORD STUDY
In Word Study, Middle Years students will be focussing on topic specific vocabulary linking to our Connected Curriculum topic and spelling rules. Each week the students will complete activities from a contract.

WRITING
In Writing this term the students will be setting up their Writer’s Notebooks. In the notebooks students will be recording their thoughts and ideas. They will work on developing and extending their thinking, building writing stamina and developing an enjoyment of writing. Once students’ notebooks are set up they will move into learning about narratives within the framework of the notebook. They will explore a range of texts, play with writing techniques and learn how to use scaffolds to guide their writing.

READING
Reading will continue to be a big focus in the Middle Years classes with an initial focus on comprehension strategies. We will complete a novel study on the book ‘Wonder’ by R.J. Palacio and the students will also select their own reading material for Independent Learning Time and homework. The aim in Term 1 is to foster and develop an enjoyment and appreciation of reading.

MATHEMATICS
In Mathematics, the students will cover topics in Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry and Statistic and Probability. We will begin the term with a focus on Data and multiplicative number strategies. Middle Years students will be involved in a range of problem solving lessons and investigations which will require critical thinking and reasoning skills. Lessons will include warm ups, games, hands on activities and purposeful, real-life problems. The aim in Term 1 is to develop a positive disposition to Mathematics in a collaborative environment.

CONNECTED CURRICULUM/EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECTS
This term’s Connected Curriculum focus is: ‘Can all living things flourish?’. Students will each complete an Education Research Project based on this topic. The Education Research Project provides students with an opportunity to learn about a topic of interest to them, whilst still linking to the Australian Curriculum and specific learning intentions.

Specialist Areas

JAPANESE

Okaerinasai – Welcome back! It's exciting to see all the students back at school and ready for a great year of learning. Here is what will be happening in the Nihongo Room in term 1.

We will start the year learning about Oshōgatsu – Japanese New Year – the traditions, customs, symbols, holidays and Zodiac. This is alongside focussing on the skills of being a successful language learner, initiating some aspects of the Joy Project and looking at our four school values and classroom expectations.

Our theme for the term, “Being Japanese,” links beautifully with our school’s Cross Curriculum Big Question “Can all Living Things Flourish?” as we explore the lives, experiences, values and relationships of Japanese children living in Japan.
Year 5-7
Students will interact with others to describe aspects of their daily lives and compare their
routines with those of Japanese children of a similar age. They will develop skills in expressing
preferences and showing interest in and respect for others. They will be able to collaborate with
their peers to plan and conduct shared activities such as presenting a school performance.
Students will gather, classify and compare information from a range of sources related to
concepts from other learning areas (e.g. science) and create/present/perform texts for a variety
of purposes and audiences. We will also work on recognising some single and whole word
katakana whilst continuing to develop the ability to read/write hiragana and kanji.

PERFORMING ARTS

In Performing Arts, students will connect the traditions and practices of Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islanders and modern elements of the arts to relay dreamtime stories through movement
and song.
Storytelling in Indigenous Australia was a means to pass on culture and identify from generation
to generation. Students will be using Dreamtime stories as a stimulus to inspire dramatic and
contemporary dance works that uphold the integrity of the culture.

Year 5-7
In Music, students will be able to identify features of rhythm to compose and perform music
pieces
In Drama, students will use body movement and dramatic symbol to communicate dreamtime
stories
In Dance, students will explore body movement and choreographic devices to choreograph
dances that communicate meaning of a chosen dreamtime story. Students will critically
appraise a work from Bangarra Dance Theatre to explore how the elements of dance that create
meaning, especially that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

P.E.A.R.L.S.
Skills in the PEARL room this term
Gratitude: One of the easiest ways we can add joy to our lives is by practising gratitude. Gratitude
is when you feel thankful for some positive aspect in life, whether it is a person, an
object or an experience.
Kindness: When someone performs an act of kindness towards others, it has a powerful
ripple effect, because both the person who received the kindness and the person who performed
the act benefit from it. Learning to be givers shapes children’s values and provides greater
opportunities to develop kindness as a virtue, which improves their lives whilst also reducing
violence and bullying. This also ensures greater joyfulness in their lives
Love: Love is more than an emotion or an intangible connection; it is indeed a truly tangible
action. If everyone treated others with love, it would guarantee to make the world a nicer place.
Students will be involved in activities targeted to acts of kindness, consideration, respect and
compassion. This will bring greater joy into all their lives.
Forgiveness: Teaching students to forgive is an essential life skill that will make navigating
childhood into adolescence and even further into adulthood easier. Holding onto anger and
resentment is a sure recipe for anxiety and stress for both children and adults. The earlier that
forgiveness can be taught and reinforced, the earlier we can prevent our children from taking on
the victim role, and in turn helping to prevent anxiety. It is vital for kids to learn that they can be
forgiven and acknowledge that they can forgive others.
Compassion: Compassion radiates from the heart along with love, kindness, caring,
forgiveness and acceptance. The essence of compassion is connection and communication.
Students will be focusing on connections particularly where they are kind and empathetic.
Compassionate kids truly make a difference in this world.
Regards: Desy Pantelos.
## Homework

Homework in an important aspect of Middle Years schooling as it provides students with the opportunity to improve their time management and self-regulation skills. Most homework is flexible and can work around after school activities. Students are expected to complete up to 30 minutes (Year 5) and up to 45 minutes (Year 6/7) of homework each night from Monday to Thursday. This will be made up of reading, Word Study, Education Research Projects, Mathletics and work to finish. Students will record their homework in their diaries each day.

## Student leadership

Middle Years students are expected to act as role models for younger students in the school. Students need to start thinking about whether they would like to apply to be a Year 7 leader or a part of a student action team.

## Diaries

Diaries are used in the Middle Years as a communication tool. They are intended to be used daily and it is expected that students will hand them up every morning for class teachers to check. It would be great if you could check them every day too, as it is a place for us to communicate. Please sign diaries over the weekend for class teachers to check on Mondays. Any notes/slips/money can be placed in diaries and handed in once students arrive at school.

## Can you help?

If you are available to assist in anyway in the classroom e.g. have talents or resources to share, can listen to reading, work with individuals and small groups, provide transport, help supervise excursions or have ideas to share, please let us know. It would be appreciated if each student could bring one box of tissues for the class to share. Please feel free to come in and chat at any time about any concerns you have about your child. We are available before and after school most days to speak in person or over the phone. If you would prefer to contact us via email, that is fine too.

Kind regards,
Melanie Sims (Room 7), Rhiannon Evans (Room 8), Michael Gibbins (Room 9), Sean Bock (Room 10).

melanie.sims848@schools.sa.edu.au
rhiannon.evans953@schools.sa.edu.au
michael.gibbins596@schools.sa.edu.au
sean.yatesbock234@schools.sa.edu.au

## Important Dates