Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Welcome back to school, to Year 1 and to Room 13.7!

My name is Kerry Briggs and I am really looking forward to working with your child. I hope that in due time I will be able to meet all of you. In the meantime I have listed a few things for your information.

**Green Bag**

Each child has a large green bag which needs to come to school every day. New bags may be purchased at the office at a small cost if yours has been lost or damaged.

The green bag is used for library books, homework, notes and for transporting any “important” items so that they don’t get lost or damaged in the depths of the school bag. You will find a communication book and a reading diary inside the green bag.

The communication book is an important tool to share information between families, teachers and the School. Children will stick all notes home into this book. Feel free to use the book to write any notes or information about your child that you think I need to know. Please check the communication book daily, as I will at school.

**Homework**

Children will start to bring home readers and other homework during the first few weeks of school. Regular home practice of reading and spelling supports your child’s progress. However if you need to miss homework on some nights that is not a problem. Please remember that readers and spelling lists will still need to come to school every day even if they have not been completed.

To reduce the number of books that families need to keep track of, the communication book and reading diary will serve a dual purpose. The back of the communication book will be used for Jolly Phonics sound/word practice. Some of you may be familiar with the word lists from last year, these are to be read aloud to the student who will then write them in the book. Students will progress at their own pace and those who have mastered these lists will receive new lists in the next few weeks.

The reading diary is a record of the title of each reader that your child brings home every day. Please write in the title and initial it when it is finished. It is entirely appropriate to spend more than one night on each book.

The back of the reading diary is for practising the weekly spelling lists that children need to learn to improve their reading and writing. It is optimum that your child writes out the list on at least three separate occasions over the week so that the new learning enters into their long term memory.

To sum up, homework consists of nightly reading and practice of words with known sounds, and a weekly spelling list. Occasionally students may be asked to support their learning in other ways eg. through small home investigations or interviewing family members.

**A note about Home Readers**

Home readers are used to provide ongoing practice of skills and strategies learnt in the classroom. They should not be ‘difficult’ for the child to read, but promote pride in progress and enjoyment of reading. It is fine for children to bring home a reader more than once as they can focus on different skills each time they read it.

Good readers not only know how to decode words, they have a good comprehension of what they read. They also read with fluency, that is, with expression and at a normal spoken pace.

Children’s reading will be tested regularly. However sometimes parents worry that their children are spending a long time on a particular level of reader. It is usually because the child needs more practice of one of these aspects of reading competency. If you have any concerns please contact me.

Remember that levelled school readers are just one aspect of reading development. Regularly sharing books of all kinds with your child will demonstrate to them how much you enjoy and value reading.
Morning Routine

The children will bring their bags into the classroom each morning and place them in the lockers at the back of the room. There will be separate trays to place green bags and the communication books. Lunch and recess can be placed in their trays, however if the lunchbox is too large it will stay in the bag until needed. Hats should also be placed in trays.

Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school and will be able to drink from it in the class whenever they want.

I ask for your support in teaching the children to get organised in the mornings. Please encourage your child to take responsibility for carrying out their jobs.

Brain Food

We will have a ‘brain food’ break at around 10am every morning. This must consist of fresh fruit and vegetables, not roll ups or processed foods. These can of course be eaten at recess and lunch if you wish. Children find it helpful to have their fruit cut up into pieces if that is possible.

Labels

Please make sure that all hats, clothing and lunchboxes etc. are labelled with your child’s name. This ensures there is a much greater chance of being reunited with misplaced items.

Talk Topics

As part of the oral language program students will deliver set talk topics to the class. This first week will consist of sharing holiday news which will also support our first pieces of writing. Next week our talk topic will be “My favourite part of living in Australia”

The talk day schedule and set topics for the term will be sent home in the next few days after negotiation with the class.

School Values

For the first few weeks of school we will focus largely on school values, protective behaviours and ownership of behaviour and learning.

As a group we will construct a list of class expectations that the children believe will help them become powerful learners.

Library

Our Library borrowing day is Tuesday.

Please feel free to come and see me about anything you would like explained or any concerns that you may have. While I am available most days after school please be aware that at times I have staff meetings or professional development to attend and have to leave the classroom promptly after school.

You may like to write a note in the communication book to organise a convenient meeting time. I am also happy to speak with you on the phone.

Labels

Please make sure that all hats, clothing and lunchboxes etc. are labelled with your child’s name. This ensures there is a much greater chance of being reunited with misplaced items.

Keep an eye on the communication book over the next few weeks for any new information as it comes to hand.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Acquaintance Night at the start of week 3. I will also send home an overview of the planned learning in each subject area for the term in week 2.

Kind Regards,
Kerry Briggs