Hello, and welcome to Year 6RB 2012. For those of you I haven’t met yet, my name is Rachel Burden and I am very excited to be joining the upper primary team this year.

I hope you’ve all had a relaxing and enjoyable break over Christmas. I certainly had a wonderful time holidaying in Tasmania with my family but the time has now come (as it always does) to get back to reality and the beginning of a new year.

I, like many others, often make new year’s resolutions that are unrealistic or just a little bit silly. This year I thought I’d err on the cautious side and just make one or two that I’m fairly certain I can keep, so I decided to eat more healthily, to seek opportunities to be active, to have a balanced life, and to eat less chocolate.

I thought this was a pretty good list. Most of these goals are achievable, perhaps with the exception of the last one, and if I can stick to them I should be a healthier, happier person. In the first couple of weeks of school I will be encouraging the students to start thinking about what they hope to achieve this year at St Michael’s School. These goals will be typed up and kept to remind them of the direction they have chosen to go. They might be as simple as making a concerted effort in a particular subject area or as difficult as working towards behaviours that will be more conducive to a healthy social and learning environment. Whatever the goals, we will be working as a team to help your child to achieve to the best of their ability.

I would encourage you to talk with your child about the goals they will set and ‘check in’ with them occasionally to see how they feel they’re doing. Be open about some of your goals and let them see that not only are we all not perfect but that we all need help to make our way in the world. Just last week I attended the staff spiritual retreat and we spent a day and a half talking about the life and ministry of Jesus. Among other things, it reminded me just how reliant we are on Jesus to get us over the line, and that’s not just the line taking us through to eternity but that invisible line we draw for ourselves each day. Jesus gives us the strength to keep on trying when we feel that we have all but failed and it’s Jesus who is there to pick us up and dust us off when we need to go back to square one.

Anyway, as always, this term promises to be a busy and exciting one. Keep reading to discover just some of the concepts and areas we’ll be focusing on throughout the term and I look forward to meeting you all at our parent information session on Tuesday evening next week.

May God bless you all in this coming term.

Yours in Christ,

Rachel Burden
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UNIT OF INQUIRY
We are starting the year with a unit based on the central idea: The choices we make have an impact on our lives, which is part of the transdisciplinary theme: Who we are. This unit will focus on areas of our lives in which we make choices, the factors which influence our choices and the consequences of choices we make.

LITERACY AND SPELLING
There have been some changes to our spelling program this year and we will be introducing the use of a spelling journal. We are also going to be working on some narrative writing.

CURRICULUM CORNER

A friend is one who knows us, but loves us anyway.
Jerome Cummings

Matthew 7:23

MATHS AND MENTAL COMPUTATION
We will begin our maths this year with a look at sorting and classifying objects and information. We will move on to exploring patterning, and ways we can identify, make and describe patterns. We will also look at the use of algebra in describing and predicting patterns.

Last year saw the introduction of regular mental computation time across the school and that will continue into this year. I love ‘maths mentals’ and I like to make this a part of our daily routine. I usually program a series of similar tasks across the term and have students graph their results. It was interesting last year to see a similar pattern of achievement and improvement across the class as a whole and I look forward to analysing development as the term progresses.

You will see regular activities in the homework grid to help consolidate learning in both our maths unit as well as times tables and other mental computation skills.

OTHER INFORMATION
If students have a water bottle, I would strongly encourage them to bring this to school to have on hand in the classroom, particularly during this hot time of the year. I will also be encouraging students to bring along a healthy snack as “brain food” to help keep them going through some of our longer sessions.

Year 6 and 7 students from St Michael’s will be taking part again in the Alick Collins Cup, a lawn bowls competition held at the Hahndorf Bowling Club. In preparation for this the Year 6 students will be attending training sessions run by volunteers from the bowling club. Further details regarding training dates and times will follow shortly.

Though we have begun the week with chapel, we will also have our regular chapel service on Friday at 9.00am.

Verse to Remember:
I can do everything through him who gives me strength.
Philippians 4:13
HOMEWORK

At the end of last year parents were invited to respond to a survey about our homework grid. It was interesting and encouraging to find that the vast majority of those who responded were very supportive of the structure of our current homework format. They also showed appreciation for the scope of the grid and the range of activities for which it allowed. So, while the above cartoon is amusing, it is also quite apt, and at St Michael’s we allow for the development of the whole student.....including their social life! That certainly didn’t happen when I was at school.

The first homework grid for the year will come home at the beginning of Week 3 and will continue to be a fortnightly task. In the meantime, students may have a few activities to bring home which they will generally have a few days to complete.

I would ask that you take the opportunity to be active in your child’s homework life. This is an important year in setting up good study habits so in signing off your child’s homework sheet take the time to have a look at what they’ve done. Be interested. Be supportive. Be constructive.

HOMEWORK!! – WHAT ABOUT MY SOCIAL LIFE?

As always, don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or queries in this regard.

FROM THE SPECIALIST TEACHERS

SPORT

Mr Phillips

Welcome back kids to another school year at St Michael’s. I hope you are all well rested because the sporting calendar is looking to be extremely busy in Term 1.

In Week 1 we will get straight into softball with the unit running till the end of Week 3.

The central idea for this unit is: Hand-eye coordination, technical ability and a good game sense are essential elements in becoming an efficient softball player.

Weeks 4-8 will see the students practising for sports day in the different events they will be participating in on the day.

The central idea for this unit is: The ability to manipulate the body through balance and locomotion provide us with the motor skills required to participate in athletic activities.

In Weeks 9 and 10 students will be given the opportunity to participate in attack and defend games that promote team play, strategic understanding and athletic ability.

So buckle up and enjoy the ride because Term 1 is going to be a ripper!!

CREATIVE ARTS

Miss Sugars

During Creative Arts this term we will begin the year with drama activities designed to encourage the students to share their holiday experiences and to build classroom friendships.

This is a great way to break the ice and create a supportive and fun classroom environment where students become confident risk takers.

Through a series of role plays and improvisation activities the students will re-familiarise themselves with IB Learner Profile and attitudes.

At the end of Term 2 the Upper Primary’s will be staging our school concert. A very exciting and rewarding time that requires a high level of commitment from all students involved. During Term 1 we will begin our rehearsals and refine the necessary dramatic skills needed to stage a concert. A very exciting term ahead!

CHINESE

Leanne Liang (Leanne Laoshi)

Stay posted. Chinese information will be included in the next edition of your 6RB Class Newsletter!
STATIONERY ORDERS

There were a number of items not available at the time of book collection. If you had any items missing from your child’s stationery order please write your child’s name, class and items missing on a piece of paper and drop it in to Robyn in the front office.

CLASS CARERS

Ours is one of the few classes which does not have any class carers yet. For more information or if you think this might be something that would interest you, please see Tegan Howard.

PARENT INFORMATION NIGHT

The Year 6 Parent Information night will be held on Tuesday 7th February from 7.30 to 8.30pm. Last year we had a great deal of assistance from parents in the classroom and on excursions. If you are available at all to help us out this year in any capacity I would love to hear from you. Please contact me at school or drop a note in your child’s diary.

Don’t forget that if you are interested in helping you MUST HAVE:

A) a current police check, AND
B) have done the mandatory notification training session

If you think there might be a remote possibility that you would like to be involved at school I would strongly encourage you to attend one of the following mandatory notification training sessions:

- Tuesday 7th February at 6.45pm
- Wednesday 15th February at 9.00am
- Wednesday 15th February at 2.30pm

Below: Port Arthur Convict Settlement, Tasmania

One of my favourite places in Tasmania, the Penitentiary at Port Arthur, holds some disturbing yet morbidly fascinating secrets from Australia’s convict history. I also reread Marcus Clarke’s “For the Term of His Natural Life”. A great read and terrific historical fiction that gives a good insight into life at Port Arthur.