



INFORMATION TO PARENTS - LITERACY AND NUMERACY INTERVENTION

Dear Parents

As you will be aware, children learn in different ways and at different rates. While some children find literacy and numeracy 'a breeze', for most children, learning our complex English language takes much time, practise and explicit teaching.

The English spelling system is one of the most difficult in the world to master. It really is no wonder that children (and many adults) often struggle when there are so many words that have the same pronunciation, but different letter combinations eg to and two; clean and gene; same and aim; day and grey; kite and light; stole and coal. Then there are those words that look alike but sound different with the combinations of 'ea', 'ee' and the letter 'o' causing most trouble eg eight and height, break and dreamt, and of course the letters 'ough' can also be pronounced in a number of different ways!

Here at St Emilie's we are on a sustained quest to assist and support children to become the best literacy and numeracy learners they can be. Each classroom teacher's role is to maintain accurate and comprehensive records of student progress and to build their teaching and learning programs around student needs. In any given class, there will be many different skill levels and for varying amounts of time throughout the year, a number of children will need specific, additional scaffolding to support their learning in literacy, numeracy or both.

To assist teachers to meet these individual needs, we have directed a significant amount of our school budget to providing extra teaching support staff – teachers and education assistants, who work as a close team to design learning opportunities that target student needs, based upon well researched literacy and numeracy screenings. Across the morning literacy and numeracy blocks, one on one, and small groups of children are participating in various interventions that have been proven to make a difference. Two such literacy interventions are called **Mini-Lit and Multi-Lit**, while the numeracy intervention starts with what is known as an '**MAI**' or '**Maths Assessment Interview**'.

If your teacher talks about one or more of these programs in relation to your child, you can feel confident that a need has been identified and a plan is in place for meeting this need, with regular re-testing to monitor progress.

Of course the best program in the world is only as good as the teacher who delivers it. Children at St Emilie's are fortunate to have well qualified, hardworking and dedicated staff who are committed to improving student outcomes. Students however, are not only supported academically, but even more importantly, they are supported emotionally. When they participate in any literacy or numeracy intervention, the conversations that precede the learning are always open, honest, supportive and positive and along the lines of - 'this is what you currently know and this where you are having some challenges – we have a plan to help you, so let's get to work and fill in the gaps – 'You can do it! Great progress! Well done on this effort! Look what you have achieved! Let's set a new target!'

Regards, Tania Thuijs
Principal.

Targeted Interventions



A brief overview of the above intervention programs has been set out below for your information:

Minilit – Early Literacy Intervention Program

A research initiative of Macquarie University

- Great importance on early identification and intervention of struggling readers.
- The Minilit model gives frequent, small group instruction to children who are having difficulty keeping up with their classmates in learning to read.
- It is a carefully sequenced and structured program for small groups.
- The key elements of Minilit include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and text comprehension.
- **Phonemic Awareness:** Learning the letter-sound relationship helps them read words and build up a bank of words they can read. Early Minilit lessons identify beginning, medial and final sounds in words, students practise orally blending and segmenting words.
- **Phonic Word Attack Skills:** Minilit uses a ‘synthetic’ approach to teaching reading skills. Students are taught to convert a letter/letters into sounds and then blend the sounds into words. The spelling component helps students break words up into their corresponding sounds.
- **Fluency:** students also need to improve their fluency (be able to read a large number of words without having to decode each word). This fluency leads to greater comprehension as the children use their cognitive capacity to understand the text rather than sounding out every word. Reading aloud, re-reading, receiving feedback all assist the teaching of fluency. Minilit teaches phonic word attack skills and high frequency sight words (or ‘tricky words’) then students utilise using these to actually read text.
- **Vocabulary:** Book reading by the teacher provides opportunity for students to learn about new words and their meaning.

- **Comprehension:** This is the ultimate goal of reading. When a student does not have to focus on decoding they read more fluently and effortlessly, therefore understanding what they are reading more effectively and efficiently.

Multilit Literacy Intervention

A research initiative of Macquarie University

Research shows low progress readers will benefit from intensive, systematic instruction in the areas of:

- **Phonics** (word attack skills). Helping students to 'decode' the text by associating sounds with letters/groups of letters. This part of the program follows a specific sequence of increasing difficulty. The students learn single letter sounds, then words containing those sounds. They initially master each set of sounds or words (accuracy – untimed) and then have to be able to read them in a timed manner to master the fluency aspect.
- **Sight word recognition** – enables readers to access and have success with a large amount of texts they encounter. 200 words in the program, which would enable readers to access approx. 55% of text likely to be encountered by young readers.
- **Supported book reading** in a one-to-one context. Transferring and generalising skills learnt in a meaningful context. Reading aloud, re-reading, receiving feedback also helps students to develop their fluency and in turn improves comprehension.
- Incorporating all three of the elements is the aim and structure of Multilit.



Maths Assessment Interview (MAI)

The MAI is used by teachers from PP to Year 6 to determine students' mathematical knowledge and skills. The interview allows students to demonstrate mathematical understanding and strategies for solving increasingly complex tasks. The 30-40 minute Interview consists of hands-on and mental computation assessment tasks where students demonstrate their mathematical understanding and preferred strategies for solving increasingly complex tasks.

Once student knowledge and understanding has been determined about particular numeracy concepts, learning tasks are then created to target specific areas of need. These lessons may or may not be conducted by the class teacher, however student progress is communicated back to the class teacher and forward-planning is carried out as a team ie class teacher + support staff.

Parents are encouraged to talk to class teachers if you have any questions in regard to the support your child is receiving.