

C 105 (2019-20)

To,

Primary School Parents (Grade 4)

Dear Grade 4 Parents,

Ref: English Language priority as a Key Focus Area

At the outset, and as we discussed in the meeting, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to nurture your wonderful children as part of their school journey. Grade 4 soon to become 5th Graders, remain the senior most class for the Primary Years Program at SVM, and their transition into Grade 6 the following academic year will mark an important milestone as they become Middle Schoolers (6 to 8 Grades).

Our transparent discussion yesterday - from one parent to another was fruitful and engaging and enabled us to collectively come up with solutions for our precious children.

In Grade 4, we have children from different backgrounds in terms of their previous schooling - and as shared we have been determined to create individual learning pathways for each child. Staying away from comparison, the goal is to ensure that each child learns at his/her pace, takes onus and responsibility for his/her own academic target and sets a benchmark for herself/himself based on this. We have spoken to the subject teachers to remind them that our desire is that the feedback they share with families distinctly focus on strengths and weaknesses and what the school is strategizing and what can also be reinforced at home, in case the child is unable to meet class benchmarks.

You welcomed this suggestion for partnering the school when 'additional' work needs to be done at home in case a child is unable to understand a particular concept despite all doubts being clarified and requires some more practice, but are also going to be positive about the teachers in school introducing a concept, monitoring a child's progress and setting home-work assignments to help the child reach their potential independently. Teaching remains our responsibility, and only 'supervising' the home-work targets set for the children remains a parent's responsibility each day at home. This partnership will work well if the students are disciplined with their work and take responsibility.

One the key areas of focus for the remaining weeks in this academic year, and especially for 2020-21 will be to enhance their English language capabilities - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

A solid language foundation will enable children to 'score' well in Math, Science, Social Sciences apart from English which is critical to us at SVM.

We will be operationalising a number of strategies:

1. Dedicate time for conversational skills in smaller groups when students will be 'mentored' with basic vocab, grammar assistance in school to use appropriate words, tenses etc .

2. We will be sending one library book home every month - children will maintain their own dictionary for words they do not understand from the book (we will refresh their memory to use a dictionary in case they are not familiar as pointed out using the unused Term 1 books); children will use a graphic organiser and explain what they have read, will research about the author, and understand a bit more about him/her, different books authored by him/her, write a critical review about the book etc - as explained, reading different genres will not only help grammar in context, but also help them with tenses and new vocab. We will be grading these assignments to make sure the students take it seriously and also make it a house competition - these points will add to the House tally which will be proudly displayed. Those who achieve tasks, and take on additional books, will get bonus points. This reward system will go a long way to motivate students and enable us to achieve our reading goals as well.

3. Teachers will send audio links for students to listen to at home. These will be not more than 2 links sent home each month and students will be assessed on dictation, writing short sentences basis of the links they have listened to and this will over and above what they are learning in school as part of their English syllabus. Needless to add, we will select text that they will be using in their classes as well to enhance their vocab and to participate.

4. Mini elocution – Every week students will bring an object from home - fruit, item of clothing, a book or a house hold object and stand in front of the class and using short sentences describe it for their friends. We will record the students and then individually sit with them and share important observations such as body posture, expressions, voice modulation, grammar, etc. This will build on the speaking skills - oratory skills as we define it at SVM. This art of public speaking will encourage them and we can hone these important skills to speak in a larger group and with confidence.

5. We will be focused on individual children and their written work and help them plan their paragraphs using graphic organisers to first structure their thoughts and then assist them with frequently used words (a book will be given to every child with 500 most used words) and also sentence starters etc. We start off with every say used sentences and then gradually transition to language skills subject specific.

We will be creating a special period daily for a focus on this as this foundation with this structure, we are confident it will go a long way in enabling children to become more fluent and confident in English. Regular updates will be shared with you as part of the PTM meeting specific to your child.

We thank you once again for your support and faith in us, and as we discussed, together as the force behind the children we will get them To Be More!

Yours truly,

The Management

SVM