Dear Parents,

Learning Communities in Flexible Learning Spaces at Glen Iris Primary School

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At Glen Iris, we are continually seeking to enhance the learning of all our students. Learning is a dynamic, interactive process that is influenced by the environment in which it takes place. Building a community of learners within a flexible learning space supports student achievement and wellbeing.

What is a Learning Community?

A Learning Community refers to the unified atmosphere teachers set out to create with students in their classes each year. These groups bond through the respectful relationships that are forged between teacher and students. There is a strong sense of “team spirit” amongst the class members where each individual is an important member of the team. Students are encouraged to collaborate, think, inquire and act more effectively. As a community, the class establish core rules, routines and high expectations regarding learning and behaviour with the teacher.

What is a flexible Learning Space?

A flexible learning space is an area for learning that can be used in a number of different ways to suit the purpose of the learning. Teachers determine the layout of the space taking into account the age of the students, the number of students, the focus of the learning, the nature of the activity. The same space can be used in a different configuration for different purposes at different times. For instance, spaces may be made smaller or larger, open or closed or inside or outside.

Do we have flexible learning spaces at GIPS?

Our school is fortunate to have numerous settings for student learning that enable teachers to create a physical, social, intellectual and emotional environment that actively supports learning and learners. Our new facilities have extended the range of flexible learning spaces available in our school. Our facilities offer many options to teachers through their flexible design. A significant part of the professional role of teachers is to provide the optimum environment for particular learning experiences utilising the opportunities offered by the learning space.

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At Glen Iris Primary School, our diverse learning environments include:

- Classrooms linked by operable walls: current Prep/Grade 1 rooms, new classrooms (Grade 2 2012), Library and Performing Arts space.
- Classrooms opening into an “in fill” area: current Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms.
- Classrooms of varying sizes that flow together: current Grade 5/6 classrooms upstairs.
- Classrooms with doors leading directly outside to decks and veranda areas: current Grade 5/6 classroom down stairs, new classrooms.
- Open plan ICT Lab and Library.
- Large, outdoor covered learning area.

Will we use our flexible learning spaces for open plan learning?

The premise for teaching and learning at Glen Iris stems from children working in regular sized classes, primarily with one teacher. Our new and existing classrooms offer the flexibility for classes to work together on some occasions for particular, purpose driven learning experiences. In 2012, all classes will commence learning as a single grade of children with their class teacher/s. During the course of the year, teachers may determine to use the facilities available at all grade levels to enhance student learning in a flexible way. Activities such as Mix Ups, Hot Spots and Rotations have been and will continue to form part of the learning at Glen Iris.

We are excited by the opportunities offered by our new facilities. This has led to the recognition that our existing teaching spaces also offer significant flexibility for stimulating learning.

We look forward to further enhancing student learning through optimising the sense of community in our classrooms and utilisation of our flexible learning spaces in 2012.

Yours Sincerely

Meredith Carracher