Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the Turner Preschool. Our preschool group is known as the Gulambanys; an Indigenous word from the Ngunnawal people meaning community. Two other groups operate at various times throughout the week; the Munnagays (meaning coming together) and the Gudgauars (meaning children). Together, this contains the essence of what we are striving to create at Turner Preschool; children, coming together in our community; a vibrant, inclusive and inquiring community that works together to achieve great things.

**Gulambany Staff**

**Sandra Shepley** – I am the preschool teacher for the Gulambany group. I am very excited to be working with you and your children this year. I began my career as a scientist and it remains a great passion of mine. I love investigating the natural world and uncovering the marvels that are found within our own backyards. When my children were young they had wonderful preschool and kindergarten teachers and those passionate and dedicated people inspired me to become an Early Childhood teacher myself. This is my third year at Turner School and I love working in the preschool. I am looking forward to getting to know your child and yourselves and working together to make this a wonderful and memorable year for everyone. I can’t wait to share your child’s excitement and help them to develop a lifelong love for learning!

**Trina Meredith** - I am one of the preschool assistants working with Sandra in the Gulambanys. I have four children of my own; two girls and two boys. I was a hairdresser for eight years before leaving work and becoming a stay-at-home mum for 15 years. I decided to try something different and have worked at Turner for the past eight years, seven of which have been in the preschool. In 2010 I went back to school and finished a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education. I’m looking forward to working with your gorgeous children and I hope they have an enjoyable year.

**Early Years Learning Framework**

At Turner Preschool we provide a play based program where children have the opportunity to engage in sustained and meaningful learning experiences in open ended, rich environments. The program is designed using the *Being, Belonging and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)* which focuses on developing children’s learning under five broad outcomes;

**Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity

**Outcome 2:** Children are connected and contribute to their world

**Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners

**Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators

Copies of the EYLF are available at the preschool or online at https://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework. You will see reference to this document reflected in the preschool program, the preschool reflections and the children’s learning portfolios.
Inquiry

Turner School uses an inquiry approach to learning where units of inquiry are developed around ‘big ideas’ in order to develop deep understandings of key concepts. These units of inquiry begin in the preschool and are a way for intentional teaching to be embedded in the program. The preschool unit of planned inquiry this term is Our Place. Through group discussions, shared agreements, individual and whole group artwork, drama, puppetry, games and stories, we will be learning what it means to belong to a community, what responsibilities we have for ourselves, each other and our environment and ways we can make our preschool a special place to be. This learning also involves setting up many of the routines involved with being at preschool.

Within the inquiry based preschool learning environment children also engage in learning opportunities that are based on individual children’s interests and learning needs. These may arise as we discover interesting facts when we are reading, exploring the indoor and outdoor spaces and when the children engage in activities outside of preschool, which they share with their peers. In the past we have explored dinosaurs, the types of birds visiting the outdoor garden and how plants grow, to name a few.

This year we will also be exploring the dispositions which we will be supporting the children to develop throughout their schooling to assist them to become more successful learners. In term 1 we will be focusing on Self Management. Good self managers have the dispositions of resilience, responsibility and being reflective learners. In preschool the children will be encouraged to be responsible for their own belongings, as well as the shared toys, and learn how to set up and pack up for themselves. They will reflect upon their learning both in an informal context as they self assess their learning and also in more formal situations such as sharing their learning with their peers in a group situation. They will also be given opportunities to think and explore how their actions affect others.

Literacy

Within the play based preschool learning environment children are able to engage in learning opportunities that are based on individual children’s interests and learning needs. When planning for learning we use observation and knowledge of children’s interests and learning needs to plan authentic, meaningful and inclusive learning opportunities that support children’s real world experiences.

During term 1 we will focus on children recognising and writing their own name and developing their representations of ideas through pictures, paintings and writing symbols. We will be encouraging the children to recognise and write their name on their work and in the coming weeks, introduce a roll which they will use to ‘sign on’ in the morning. We will use authentic purposes for writing, for example ‘writing’ cards. We will be reading quality literature and using props and puppets to retell and sequence stories. The children will also be developing their oral language by playing simple games during group time, singing songs and learning chants.

We teach reading skills in context, developing the children’s phonological awareness (or the sounds of spoken language) by listening and re-enacting environmental sounds, learning and then adapting and innovating on our favourite stories and developing the concept of rhythm, rhyme and repetition. Early in the term we will use these skills to develop our own class book. We will also begin to explore conventions of text, for example, that print contains a message, that text is written and read from left to write, that the print on a book’s cover gives the title and other details such as the name of the author and illustrator, that the cover picture generally suggests what the book is about and that illustrations convey meaning and relate to the text on the page.
Numeracy
This term we will focus on colour, shape, sorting and sequencing. Children will build their knowledge of the basic colours and then have opportunities to mix and create their own. Through board games, puzzles, artwork, box construction, manipulatives and group activities, children will begin to identity simple and some complex shapes and recognise their attributes such as how many sides and corners they have. They will learn to sort objects using different attributes and sequence objects to develop simple and complex patterns.

Collaborative partnerships in learning between the school, the child, families and the broader community provide the foundation for early childhood educators to ‘unpack’ the interests and experiences of children in order to facilitate real world, inclusive, inquiry based teaching and learning opportunities that maximise the individual potential of every child. For those of you who are new to the school, we are keen to work in partnership with you to become a part of the Turner School community, starting in preschool. We value opportunities for all families to become involved and there will be many occasions throughout the year for you to make a contribution. You may consider being part of the school P&C, coming along to the Coffee Chats to meet Jo our Principal, joining us for a session, becoming part of the working bee to improve our outdoor space, supporting us on excursions and participating in our learning journeys, concerts and casual get-togethers. We are very excited about the year ahead and look forward to working with you to support your children. Please contact us at any time throughout the year to discuss any issues of concern or simply to ‘touch base’.

 Regards,

Sandra Shepley and Trina Meredith
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6 February 2016

Special Preschool term 1 dates for your calendar

Please note: These dates are correct as of time of printing this letter. Please regularly check the website, as well as the fortnightly newsletters for any changes and additions, as well as whole school events.

Week 2
Wed 10/2  Preschool parent information session and picnic – 5:30pm in the multipurpose room followed by a picnic in the preschool outdoor space

Week 6
Tues 8/3  Preschool Bus Wash Excursion (Gulambany and Munnagayi groups)
Thurs 10/3  Preschool Bus Wash Excursion (Gudgauar group)

Week 8
Mon 21/3  School photos (Gulambany and Munnagayi groups)
Thurs 24/3  School photos (Gudgauar group)