Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the Turner Preschool. Our preschool group is known as the Gudgauars; an indigenous word from the Ngunnawal people meaning children. Two other groups operate at the beginning of the week; the Munnagayis (meaning coming together) and the Gulambany; meaning community. 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.

**Gudgauar Staff**

My name is Sandy Home and I am the preschool teacher for the Gudgauar group on Wednesday afternoons, Thursday and Friday. It has been lovely to meet the new preschool families and reconnect with the families of previous preschoolers! I live locally as many of you already know as we have chatted at the local shops. I have four children with my youngest attending year twelve at Dickson college this year. They have all attended local educational establishments. My passion is travelling. Before children my husband and I travelled to many parts of the world and in the last couple of years we have taken the children to Africa on safari and trekking in Nepal. I am originally from New Zealand and so by the end of the year all the children in the preschool will know where New Zealand is on the map. (There will be a test!).

**Trina Meredith** - I am one of the preschool assistants working with Sandra in the Gulambany. 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. Across all learning areas we will begin to introduce the skills needed for effective learning. These skills-dispositions support 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.

At Turner School planned 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. 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. 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.

**Literacy**

Every day, children will have opportunity for speaking and listening, for writing or participating in pre-writing and fine motor activities, and for reading and being read to. Every day, we will enjoy stories – we will listen to them as a whole class, enjoy them individually during quiet reading time, revisit them on the Interactive Whiteboard as animations, hear them as audios, and bring them to life using props and dress-ups. A story worth telling is worth re-telling. When we revisit or reread stories, children become familiar with the language of the story, and can use it to retell the tale themselves. They become confident in predicting what might happen next – in this story and in future ones. 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.
The children will also be developing their oral language by playing simple games during group time, singing songs and learning chants.

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.

**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, cutting up fruit in the morning, becoming part of the working bees 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’.

Kind Regards,

Sandy Home and Trina Meredith
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8 February 2016

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**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 8/2** Preschool parent information session and picnic – 5:30pm-7:00pm in the multipurpose room (off the preschool playground) followed by a picnic in the preschool outdoor space

**Week 4**

**Wed 22/2** Kenny Koala Incursion (Gulambany and Munnagayi groups)

**Thurs 23/2** Kenny Koala Incursion (Gudgauar group)

**Week 6**

**Tues 7/3** School photos (Gulambany and Munnagayi groups)

**Fri 10/3** School photos (Gudgauar group)