

Welcome to First Grade



We, the Grade One teachers of 2024 at Collegiate Junior, would like to wish our new Grade One girls and parents a warm welcome to this very special grade.

Meet Our Team

Our Grade One team consists of the following ladies:



Mrs Tess Mortensen
(Grade Head)



Mrs Susan Pote



Mrs Kim Hudson-Lamb

We are a strong collaborative team with now an impressive 63 years of experience between the three of us! We work together, constantly sharing ideas and utilising our various talents, to ensure that your daughters are in very good hands.

Our three class teachers, Mrs Hudson-Lamb, Mrs Mortensen and Mrs Pote are all experienced teachers and passionate about Grade One, this very special milestone year. We also happen to be mothers, so we are walking this road "hand-in-hand" with you as parents too.

The three class teachers meet twice weekly to fine tune our planning for each week and term. We strive to challenge each other as to how to deliver our very best

teaching whilst staying current and in line with the CAPS curriculum requirements. With this in mind, our aim is also to keep our Collegiate girls stimulated, to extend them and support them, as needed. We all believe in lifelong learning in our vocation.

Making Transitions

We are looking forward to meeting our new bunch of little girls later this month and they will be bringing home a "starter pack" for you to work through during the holidays. Please receive them with great excitement, follow the instructions inside and store them safely away for next year. Do ensure that your daughter has everything she requires regarding uniform and stationery. A prepared child is a calm and contented child.

It has been said that the biggest adjustment that your child will ever make is when they are born and the second biggest is their Grade One year. The girls are now entering formal education where they are expected to listen carefully and follow the teacher's instructions promptly. There are major differences between the Pre-Primary experience and Grade One. The biggest difference is that in Pre-Primary, they can play a lot of the time and do a little bit of work. Now they will be doing the exact opposite – they are going to play a little bit and work a lot of the time. In fact, you are going to be amazed by what your daughter is going to be able to do in a very short space of time! In Pre-Primary, the classroom is seen as an extension of the play area, but in Grade One it is a quiet area where work is separated from chatter and play. Also, now the girls will be responsible for their own belongings - stationery, in particular. Therefore, we would like to stress the importance of marking every individual item of stationery. You will receive the instructions in your daughter's starter pack on how to unpack, label and reorganise all her stationery items for next year so that she is confident and ready to start on her very first day.

 *the*



you wish to see in the



Mahatma Gandhi

Please note that it is difficult to mark the shorts, jerseys and caps (anything that is navy) and it is recommended that you order fabric name tags and sew your daughter's name into her jersey, shorts, winter socks, winter dress, etc. As you will know, these items are expensive and every year heaps of unmarked clothing is donated to charity.

Please note that we do not allow watches to be worn in Grade One.

What should your daughter be able to do?

I've always loved the first day of school better than the last day of school. Firsts are best because they are beginnings.

Jenny Han



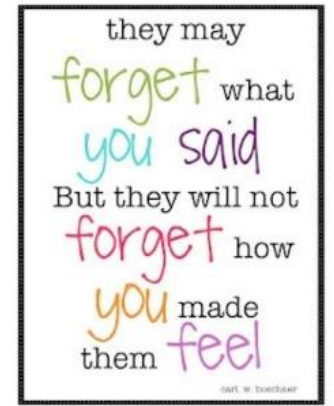
By now, your daughter should be able to do the following:

- Be able to sit still and listen to a story.
- Be able to wait their turn.
- Be able to complete tasks in time.
- Be able to tie her own shoelaces
- Be able to respond to an instruction the first time around.
- Be able to persist in the face of minor setbacks.
- Know their address and a parent's telephone number.

Tips for Grade 1 parents

- When saying goodbye in the mornings, make sure your daughter knows exactly what her hometime plans are for the day.
- Please don't be late fetching her or dropping her for school. Both create unnecessary anxiety for her. Be at school at least 10 minutes before the day begins so that she can settle and connect with her classmates.
- Keep a calendar on the fridge and write in important dates. Try and allocate a drawer at home in which to keep all notices and school related communication so that it is an easy "go-to" when you need to look up information that you have been given.

- Make sure that everything your daughter needs for the day is packed the night before. Help her to do this by reminding her, but don't do it for her. Remember that she needs to be independent and do these things for herself in the classroom.
- Set up a comfortable homework space for your daughter and establish a routine that is the same every day. Have a spare set of stationery at home so that she can start peacefully whilst having the right tools for the job. Remember to supervise homework daily, praise her for what she can do and sign the homework folder each day.
- Teach her to be resourceful and to enjoy her own company by sending her to build puzzles or to play dolls without constantly having to be entertained.
- Initially the Grade One day feels very long for the children, and you may find that your daughter is a little irrational, moody and emotional. Remember that this is normal for the first couple of weeks and that she will need patience, a hug and some words of encouragement from you. An early bedtime of 7pm is essential for this age.



Lunches

A very big part of a Grade One child's day at school is their lunchbox. A long-awaited breaktime after a couple of hours of hard work and concentration is rewarded with fuel for their bodies and for their brains. It is also a way for them to connect to the comfort and familiarity of home for a short while.

At Collegiate we encourage a healthy lunch and a separate fruit snack packed for 9 o'clock.

SNACK: Many girls have their breakfast at home very early in the morning and often don't wake up with a hearty appetite straight away. By 9 o'clock they are often wilting away, their concentration is fading and they are feeling hungry. This is when we "down tools" for a few minutes and the girls have a fruit snack to keep them going until breaktime at 10 o'clock. Please make sure that their snack is easy and quick to eat without a mess. Dried fruit or chopped fresh fruit or fresh veggies are ideal. Please pack a fork or a toothpick for juicy fruit.

*Good food
Good mood*

LUNCHBOXES: Please do not send juice, fizzy water or milkshakes to school. Only water is allowed.

A sandwich with a healthy filling is first prize. Healthy crackers, rice cakes, wraps and pita breads are great ideas for energy-rich snacks. Avoid sugary snacks and unhealthy biscuits.

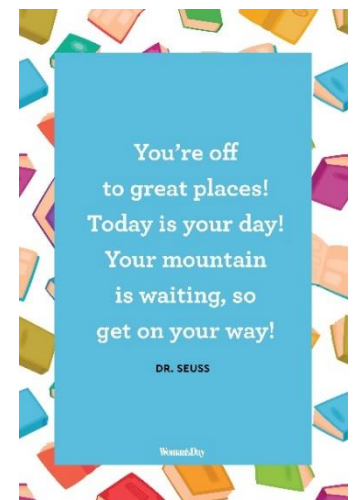
Ideas for protein-rich snacks could include cheese, biltong, droewors, nuts. Please do not send yoghurts.

Collegiate is a "junk-free" school, so please save treats for home time or weekends as the girls will not be allowed to have them at school. We will certainly try our best to police lunchboxes in the beginning and will try to ensure that the girls eat something each breaktime, but it may be a good idea "talk" them through how to ration out their food for the school day.

Logistics

The following tips will prepare you for and your daughter for the first two weeks of Grade One and, most importantly, for the first big day...

- You will arrive at school via Gate 2 (Main gate) between 7:00 – 7:30am with all your daughter's goodies that are all clearly marked and packed and meet the teacher in the classroom for a quick first day photo. Please be quick and confident in leaving promptly thereafter.
- From this point the teachers will take over ensuring that your daughter has a successful and happy first day of Grade One.
- The girls will finish school at 12:00 and will be escorted to the Main Gate (Gate 2) where they will meet you.
- Homework will start from Day One. Please watch the Homework Tutorial video carefully on how to complete the homework each day.
- Home time is 12:00 for the first week of school (that is from Wednesday, 15th-17th January 2025) Home time will be at 12:30 during the second week (that is from 20th – 24th January 2025). From week 3, home time will be at 13:30 going forward for the rest of the year.



Keep it simple...

There is so much literature and research being done nowadays about the importance of play for healthy child development. We all want our children to be happy, healthy and successful adults one day, but unfortunately, life is fast-paced and competitive these days and anxiety and stress in children is growing at an alarming rate!



The jump from Grade R to Grade 1 is very big and not an easy adjustment for the girls in the beginning. They will be exhausted and overwhelmed for a while. Please try not to over-schedule their afternoons with more structured activities. Children need downtime and unstructured play to relax and to develop creativity and healthy social and emotional skills. It is tempting to sign them up for all sorts of wonderful extra-murals which are on offer these days. Resist the urge because, as recent research is proving, too many choices overwhelm children and lead to chronic stress and pressure.

Dr Dave Purchase gave a talk a few years back for parents and teachers about Barriers to Learning and he shared his views strongly about too much structuring of children's time and activities and how this "robs them" of the gift of boredom. He shared that when a child says "I'm bored," they're about to discover, create and learn.

For those of you who enjoy reading, there is a wonderful book called *Simplicity Parenting* which is written by Kim John Payne which explores this topic of the burden of "too much." This may be a good holiday read for all of us raising families and the importance of keeping things simple and less is more. Often tantrums, meltdowns and difficult behaviour mean that they are crying out for downtime. Don't feel bad to say no to parties, playdates or events if you feel your child needs time to herself.

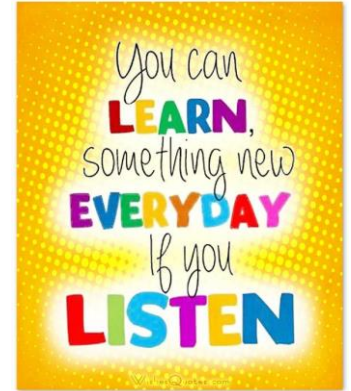
Engage with your child

Children do not respond well to the question "How was your day?" or "What did you do today?"

Their day is most likely a blur of activity. You will have more success with specific questions such as "Who did you play with at breaktime today?" or "Did you do Art or Phys-ed today?" or "Did anything make you laugh today?"

Plan a little lunch or tea date now and again to really spend some uninterrupted time with your little girl. Put your phone on silent and make the effort to really connect for a while. These moments are often just what our children crave from us. We hear about these special times when the girls share their news at school which is testimony to how much this means to them.

Even when life is manic and busy, which it very often is, squeeze in a bedtime story. It encourages a love for reading and inspires imagination and high-order thinking. It develops vocabulary and an appreciation for language. It creates a cozy, loving bond between parent and child. Perhaps most importantly of all, it's a wonderful opportunity for a snuggle. Let's not forget that these little people are just that... little. Let them be little. They won't be little for long.



We look forward to our 2025 adventure
with you and your daughter!

Yours in teaching
The Grade One Team

