

Year 5 Opportunity Class (OC) - Term 1, 2023

Dear students, parents and carers,

Welcome to Balmain Public School! Congratulations on receiving and accepting an offer to join our OC unit, which we call the 'Treehouse' space.

We hope that you have had a restful break and are ready for an exciting Term 1! The United Nations has declared 2023 as the 'International Year of the Millet', therefore, our class names will be centred around this theme and we will begin the year with a discussion around the significance of this theme.

Your teachers are looking forward to getting to know you, as you commence your Stage 3 journey at our school. This is a new beginning for many students, but an exciting one, as we are proud to actively foster open-ended learning environments, as well as advocate for student voice and collaborative learning amongst like-minded peers. Whilst it is the beginning of the senior primary years and the Stage 3 curriculum, we understand that students may already possess varying degrees of content knowledge from within the Stage 3 syllabus.

Parents and carers, please ensure you are signed up to our school's 'SkoolBag' application for regular school updates. This app allows Balmain Public School to digitally contact the parent community regarding specific information. You will be notified when weekly newsletters are released, special events are announced and given specific reminders for certain occasions.

Classroom Teachers

Your OC Classroom Teachers for 2023 will be Mrs Amanda Pitman and Ms Rose Reedy.

Mrs Pitman is a classroom teacher at Balmain Public School, and previously taught the OC class in 2021. Prior to joining our school, Mrs Pitman has worked in a variety of schools across Sydney and overseas in the UK. She has also completed her Graduate Certificate of Education (Gifted Education) at UNSW.

Ms Reedy is a classroom teacher at Balmain Public School and an Assistant Principal for 2023. In 2023, she will be supervising the Stage 3 cohort. In addition to working with OC students in the 'Treehouse' space last year, she has completed the Mini Certificate of Gifted Education and advanced course with UNSW.

The Structure of the Learning

Our first priority is to settle Year 5 students into their new learning environment. At our school, we have two Opportunity Classes and three mainstream classes across Stage 3. Our two Opportunity Classes operate as a unit and share the same learning space, the 'Treehouse', above the hall. In addition to covering the core curriculum, which helps to fill in any identified learning gaps, students will receive a differentiated curriculum that looks to consolidate and extend their learning strengths and interests.

Year 5 is the year that students need to develop consistency and autonomy in their learning. Additionally, it is important for students to establish self-regulatory homework patterns and an understanding that future academic success lies within their attitude towards learning, as natural intelligence will not always get the desired result. Whilst the nurturing of students' cognitive wellbeing is pivotal to how we run our classrooms, we are also mindful to enhance and build on students' social, emotional and physical wellbeing. We do this by ensuring that students are firstly introduced to their new school, routines and surroundings and then by running programs that provide them with the opportunity to socialise and get to know each other. We also organise whole-stage integration opportunities, to facilitate positive friendships and to ensure that learning opportunities can take place across the stage and not just within the four walls of a single classroom.

Selective High School Placement Test

If you wish to sit the Selective High School Placement Test in 2024, for placement in 2025, parents will need to keep an eye out for the application processes and details that will become available on the NSW Department of Education's website. We will also distribute this information via our school's newsletter, once it becomes available.

Hard Copy Diary and Homework

We'd like to request that all students purchase a hard copy diary for 2023. An A5 size diary is ideal. This hard copy diary will be used by students to keep track of and plan their homework load, as well as note school-based events. Students will be asked to bring this to our morning session every day.

Students will usually have homework tasks due every week. This doesn't mean they will be issued with homework every day, as many homework tasks will need to be done over several days. Some of these tasks will be assessments, so it is important that all learning tasks are taken seriously. Homework will be due on different days and tasks may overlap, which is why a hard copy diary will be essential for time management and organisation. Due dates are regularly communicated to students via our reminders board in the classroom space, as well as our shared online 'Google Calendar' that can be accessed through the 'Student Portal.' Students will learn how to gain access to this platform at school, as it can be accessed from home too.

Reading

It is recommended that all students bring a novel to read on a daily basis, to keep at school, as it is important to engage in regular reading for enjoyment. This can enhance vocabulary development, creative writing, grammar, spelling and analytical skills. This book could come from your local library, the school's library or from home.

Equipment List

Students will be allocated a tote tray, to store their belongings at school. Please ensure that ALL items are labelled with their name BEFORE bringing them to school.

- ☐ Hard copy diary
- ☐ 2x HB pencils
- ☐ 2x blue or black biros (ballpoints only – no gel pens)
- ☐ 2x red biros (ballpoints only – no gel pens)
- ☐ Rubber
- ☐ 30 cm ruler
- ☐ Pencil sharpener

- ☐ Coloured pencils and/or textas
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue stick
- ☐ Calculator
- ☐ Geometry kit (including protractor and compass)
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Whiteboard markers
- ☐ Artline 200 Fine line black pens for drawing/art lessons
- ☐ 1x A3 spiral bound display folder
- ☐ Headphones (that can be kept at school)

Optional - to donate to the class communal supply:

- Coloured pencils
- Coloured textas
- Black artline markers
- **Tissue box**
- **Wet wipes**
- Hand sanitiser

Please note that whiteout is not permitted.

Kind regards

Mrs Amanda Pitman (OC Classroom Teacher)

Ms Rose Reedy (OC Classroom Teacher & Assistant Principal)

Year 6 Opportunity Class (OC) - Term 1, 2023

Dear students, parents and carers,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you back to Balmain Public School, for another year in the Treehouse. We look forward to being a part of your final year of primary education and to all the exciting activities we have planned for the busy year ahead. As well as the upcoming Selective High School Placement Test, there is the rest of the primary school curriculum to complete, preparation for high school, different Stage 3 activities and all the leadership opportunities that being a Year 6 student presents.

Selective High School Placement Test

The Selective High School Placement Test will take place on Thursday 4 May 2023. We will prepare students for this event by completing sample papers and discussing examination techniques such as time management, how to consider multiple choice questions, writing strategies, mathematical problem solving and stress management. All sample papers will be done in class under the respective test conditions and then discussed with students, to help them identify any areas for improvement, as well as to further develop their strengths.

We'd like to remind students and parents that while in many instances, students can gain entry to OC classes on natural ability, selective high school placement is harder to achieve as it is much more competitive. We emphasise this because there seems to be an unusually intense pressure on some students, in OC classes, to receive a selective high school placement. As a result, this can reflect in different forms of anxiety. Please keep in mind that selective high schools are just one way for students to engage in a challenging learning environment - it is simply one of many options, as there are many other paths that can lead to success in life.

Hard Copy Diary and Homework

We'd like to request that all students purchase a hard copy diary for 2023. An A5 size diary is ideal. This hard copy diary will be used by students to keep track of and plan their homework load, as well as note school-based events. Students will be asked to bring this to our morning session every day.

The homework load will be quite light until the Selective High School Placement Test is over, as we know many students already have a heavy load from their coaching and/or the work you might do at home. Usually, however, students will have homework tasks to do every week. As always, these due dates are regularly communicated to students via our reminders board in the classroom space, as well as our shared online 'Google Calendar' that can be accessed through the 'Student Portal.'

Reading

Students will need a novel to read on a daily basis, to keep at school, as it is important to engage in regular reading for enjoyment. This can enhance vocabulary development, creative writing, grammar, spelling and analytical skills. This book could come from your local library, the school's library or from home.

Equipment List

Students will be allocated a tote tray, to store their belongings at school. Please ensure that ALL items are labelled with their name BEFORE bringing them to school.

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- ☐ 2x blue or black biros (ballpoints only – no gel pens)
- ☐ 2x red biros (ballpoints only – no gel pens)
- ☐ Rubber
- ☐ 30 cm ruler
- ☐ Pencil sharpener in cylinder
- ☐ Coloured pencils and/or textas
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue stick
- ☐ Calculator
- ☐ Geometry kit (including protractor and compass)
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ Whiteboard markers

- ☐ Artline 200 Fine line black pen for drawing
- ☐ 1x A3 spiral bound display folder
- ☐ Headphones (that can be kept at school)

Optional - to donate to the class communal supply:

- Coloured pencils
- Coloured textas
- Black artline markers
- **Tissue box**
- **Wet wipes**
- Hand sanitiser

Please note that whiteout is not permitted.

Kind regards

Mrs Amanda Pitman (OC Classroom Teacher)

Ms Rose Reedy (OC Classroom Teacher & Assistant Principal)