

## **Bonjour les parents!**

As most of you know, my name is Mme Genée-Brown and I will be your child's French teacher this year. It was a great pleasure to be able to meet or re-connect with you at the Open House. I am very excited to be your child's French teacher at St. James and would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little about the French programs this year.

**If you have a child in a primary or junior grade**, the French program 'Histoires en action!' will be used. This program has proven to be a revolutionary new approach to second language instruction. It is based upon the use of stories and music for the teaching of French. Specifically designed stories that are written in the form of plays become the focus for a range of motivating language activities that help students develop confidence and competence in the language as they progress through each story unit.

This approach allows language development to be supported and nurtured within the familiar, predictable context of a story that is the focus for the unit's work. Music is integrated with the story, and in each unit of this program, students will learn to perform a play. The vocabulary that is taught in this method has been carefully selected as essential vocabulary for students during the initial stages of their language learning. Another component of this program is the Gesture Approach, a technique that uses hand signs to help students learn and remember this important vocabulary found in the plays, songs and other activities. There is an equal, strong emphasis on the development of all four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) through a program that meets the needs of all language learners and their learning styles. Activities are varied, so that students have the opportunity to work individually, in partners, in small groups, and as a whole class. Thematic units will also be used.

### **In order to do well in French this year, your child(ren) should:**

- participate actively in class, in French only;
- memorize the play;
- work cooperatively within a small group while practising the play;
- work cooperatively with others in the class while answering questions, both orally and in written form;
- learn the gestures covered in class;
- learn the gesture associations;
- participate in songs, activities, and games with enthusiasm;
- complete class work and hand it in on time;
- keep corrections up-to-date;
- seek help when needed.

**NOTE: Depending on the age of your child(ren), s/he should accomplish some/most/all of the above.**

## **Homework**

In order to support the work covered in class, and to ensure student success and independence, much of the homework will consist of practicing the gestures and memorizing the play. Students should spend about 15 minutes, three times a week at home working on this.

### **Assessment**

Students will be assessed on their ability to:

- identify the words associated with gestures covered;
- pronounce words correctly;
- answer questions both orally and in writing;
- re-tell the play, both orally and in writing;
- memorize the play;
- perform the play.

### **Materials**

- One double-sided pocket folder - to be used for homework
- One duotang - to be used for copies of word lists, plays, and songs

**If you have a child in Gr.7 or Gr. 8**, thematic units will be used this year. The units develop communication skills in French within the context of themes that are relevant and interesting to students. Each unit is designed to enable students to communicate in real-life situations and they respect the natural development of language from listening and speaking to reading and writing. The students in both of these classes will also be participating in a penpal exchange. They have been matched to similar age and number of pupils with students attending St. Joseph's and St. Aloysius Catholic Schools in Stratford. Not only will the students be provided the opportunity to write in a second language, but new friendships may also develop. The interaction between the students will be with traditional paper letters and photos (optional), supervised by both French teachers.

I am looking forward to working with your child(ren). The best way that you, as a parent, can support your child with French is by having a positive attitude towards the learning of a second language. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Sincerely,

Mme Genée-Brown