

For potential that's virtually unlimited - think Bialik's New Primary School

BIALIK COLLEGE

At Bialik, there is a strong focus on providing a full, rich educational and social experience for Primary aged students. Daphne Gaddie, Head of the ELC, says, "In the early Primary school years at Bialik, the emphasis is on nurturing the whole person in all aspects of students' development – emotional, spiritual and as lifelong learners."

Throughout Primary School, Bialik students are given a solid Jewish education. For the Preps and Year 1s in the ELC, Kabbalat Shabbat and other joyous festival occasions are celebrated as a group, and often the students are joined by their families for these events. Students in Years 2-6 gather together weekly for a vibrant communal Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony, which includes music, singing and brachot.

Hebrew is part of the Bialik student's daily experience, with each Prep and Grade 1 class having a dedicated Hebrew-speaking assistant, and as the students progress through the Primary School, it is made accessible to all levels of ability.

Bialik has a pluralist ethos and all expressions of Judaism are welcomed and honoured, but there is the recognition that in order to make informed choices about their future affiliations, the students need solid foundations. They learn Birkat Hamazon, the Shema, Modeh Ani, brachot, traditional rituals and the parasha of the week.

Ensuring that students will be prepared for the future, the College uses seamless integration of technology, giving the Prep and Grade 1 students in the ELC the opportunity to produce their own blogs, podcasts and practice coding. The Year 1 'Explore Committee' gives young, inquisitive minds the chance to investigate, observe and report on interesting projects. As they progress through the years, students experience hands-



on technology as it continues to be integrated through many of their activities. They have access to a Makerspace – the place where they can pull things apart, put things together and improve and develop their ideas and designs. Some areas that are explored in the Makerspace include circuits, programming, 3D Printing and gaming. A Primary Robotics Club has also been added to the line-up of lunchtime activities during which students

will collaborate in an enriching and inspiring environment, using LEGO to personalise and program all sorts of robotic creations.

Wellbeing is recognised as a tremendously important part of the Bialik education. The much-loved Dogs for Life program has brought service dogs into the Primary environment to work closely with the students, giving them tools to navigate their emotions, relationships and build empathy.

There is a dedicated Primary wellbeing coach who runs programs that enhance students' conflict resolution skills and give them age-appropriate training that builds their emotional intelligence. Both the lower and upper Primary levels have dedicated sports and PE staff and creative and artistic endeavours are not separate from other learning, but run through all the different aspects of schooling.

Leadership, resilience and independence are fostered in a variety of ways. A series of thrilling camps for Years 3 and above are carefully planned to have a multitude of educational and personal-growth benefits. During the various camps over the Primary years, students will learn to cook for themselves under the stars, sleep in tents, participate in challenging physical activities and learn to work as a team. Students from the Secondary school mentor the Primary students in formal and informal class settings, as well as join them for camps. Mentoring, without a doubt, leads to character building and confidence for our young students. Furthermore, in Year 5, every single student becomes a leader in the Manhigut program. Students pick portfolios that they are best suited to and spend an entire year learning the responsibilities and character traits of great leaders.

Karen Friede, Head of Primary, says, "The beauty of a Bialik education is that everything is learned from a Humanist point of view, allowing for 'choice and voice'. We value every individual household's beliefs and aim to develop students who are resilient, thoughtful and well rounded."