

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Back to School: The Italian Bilingual School opens its doors to the public!**

To learn from an early age two languages, two different ways of thinking and of living, to belong to two different cultures and to feel proud and comfortable in both—these are essentially the benefits of sending your child to a bilingual school. The Italian Bilingual School is a unique example: no other school teaches equally in both English and in Italian, with 50% of the activities in one language and 50% in the other.

“It is not just about teaching activities in the traditional sense,” says Robert Ruggeri, principal of the school, who has Sicilian parents and 18 years of experience in teaching and working as a principal in Catholic schools. “Our students, from preps up to year 6 learn to interact in Italian, play in Italian and do things in Italian—and not only to speak, read and write it,” Robert proudly adds. “And by starting at such a young age, the results are excellent and the children grow up with a high level of skills in both languages and cultures.”

The school program is a perfect combination of the Australian and Italian curricula, and is taught using state-of-the-art educational technology such as computers, iPods, and interactive SmartBoards. “The Italian Bilingual School not only follows the curriculum, but as a modern school is also aware of the parents’ needs,” says Robert. “For example we have a very enriching after school program, where our girls and boys can stay back until six, reinforcing what they learnt during the day.”

On Friday 13 August, the Italian Bilingual School will open its doors to the public for its yearly Open Day for parents, grandparents, potential students and anyone who is just curious to see how the school functions. “And because this year we want to give people a concrete idea of what happens here on a daily basis,” adds Robert, “we have decided to have a special day in which participants can not only observe, but also take part in some activities and virtual lessons. Essentially, we want to demonstrate the benefits of a bilingual education by actively involving our visitors that day.”

This year’s Italian Bilingual School’s Open Day will not just be a tour to admire the school’s facilities (among the renovations, there are two new classrooms), but it will also be an opportunity to “go back to school”, to appreciate or rediscover the importance of a bilingual and bicultural education.

The Open Day will run from 9.30am to 1.00pm on 13 August at the Italian Bilingual School, 67 Norton Street, Leichhardt.

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