FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK - SHARON WALKER

Unfortunately I have to address student behavior again in this newsletter. We are beginning to see a trend that concerns us and it is around the issue of parents and teachers working together. This is a ‘community’ school and we expect that teachers feel supported by parents and that parents feel supported by teachers.

Most of our issues with student behavior are with children who show very poor sportsmanship during play times. Our children like to play as groups and tend to organize games like tiggy, football and cricket. These games have rules and if children participate in these activities they must obey the rules set down by the group. Unfortunately we have a few children who think it is okay to break the rules or tantrum when they are ‘out’ or do not get their own way all the time. This problem is across all age groups but mainly confined to the boys throughout the school who play in these organized group games. The majority of our boys do the right thing but those who don’t are making play times very unpleasant for themselves and others.

When children go home with a version of an event at school we expect that parents will speak to us about what actually happened. If parents take what is being said as ‘gospel’ and automatically support the child’s version, we end up in a situation where children know they can just do as they please at school. It is really disappointing to us that parents cannot see that a version of the truth may not be as it really happened. The result is poor for the child too as they learn that not telling the truth, or whole truth, allows them to continue very poor behavior. Other children do not want to play with them and they can end up socially isolated.

Children need to know that any matters will be investigated thoroughly with staff at school before parents just accept a version of an event. Children can be manipulative and they soon learn what works – both at home and at school. Please keep an open mind when listening to children account for their actions. Often it is easy to blame others to deflect scrutiny from oneself. Many children when questioned by us will start with ‘He did….She did….They did….rarely ‘I did.’ Children must learn to take responsibility for their own actions before they start to relay what happened next. When a child can focus on what part they played in an incident I know I will get to the truth. If it is all about what someone else did I know they may have possibly instigated the incident.

Home and school must be a ‘united front.’ ‘Divide and conquer’ will not work for anyone in the long term. Teachers teach because they are passionate about positively influencing the lives of young people. This school has been celebrated as being able to deal compassionately with children who have difficult behaviours. We can only maintain this outcome if parents work with us and trust that we have each and every child’s best interests at heart.
SCHOOL TERM DATES 2014
Term 3: July 14 – September 19
Term 4: October 6 – December 19

AMAZING RACE OPEN NIGHT
The school will be open from 6-7.30pm next Tuesday night, September 2. Each classroom will have an activity for children to complete. Some are science based, others literacy or numeracy and even a Mr Devisser magical mystery! Parents can look at their children’s work, investigate something on the computer and have a chat to other parents. We ask that parents move around to the rooms with their children. No children must be left unsupervised in the grounds or classrooms please. At the first stop children can pick up a ‘passport’ to have stamped in each room. At the end of the night the passports can be left in a room for a prize draw later in the week. We encourage you to ask any new families who will attend school in 2016 to come along.

SCHOOL WEBSITE
At last the new school website is nearly ready to go live. It will be a great site for parents as they can view policies, print forms, see the calendar of events, read the school achievement reports, catch up with PFA news, visit each classroom link to view photos, readily access the Information booklets and see work samples. It should be published next week so keep a look out!

DIXONS CREEK RESERVE MURAL PROJECT
"I'm Tired of Being Grey" Mural Project
Our mural project is quietly and steadily taking shape. The design is complete after many human hours of work by our students and artists. Many thanks to Chris from Chris Furneaux Painting for donating his time, resources and paint for the undercoat of the wall. If you need any painting done around the home, please support his local business. We are also very grateful to Regional Arts Victoria for their support. Now, we are asking for your help. If anyone is able to loan or donate paint rollers, roller trays, brushes, drop sheets, etc. for the duration of this project, we would be very appreciative. Please contact Amanda Hull or Elisabeth Bromley for more information. Come along to assembly tomorrow for a full account of the overall project and our progress to date.
Amanda Hull and Elisabeth Bromley

THEATRE 2014 PRODUCTION NEWS
Some of the Year 4-6 children have been writing a script for our show. This writing is nearing completion. Soon songs and parts will be decided and rehearsals can begin. Simple costumes are planned. We are looking for someone who has expertise in sound systems, lighting and filming for the December 5 show. Please see Laura Burke, Emma Moore, Jane Toop or Elisabeth Bromley if you know of someone to help.

SHOPPING TOUR THANK YOU
Thank you to all the mums, family and friends who went on last Saturday’s Shopping Tour. The day was a great success with many tired but happy bargain hunters by the end of the day. The tour raised around $1400 for the school. Thank you to Renae and Julie for all their planning. Please consider joining next year’s tour as the outlets were fabulous and lunch was exceptional value…. But one of the best parts of the day was the happy banter in the bus!

DISABLED CARPARK
Please do not park in the designated disabled parking space in the carpark as we have a parent who needs this space.

USED A4 PAPER
We still desperately need A4 paper that has been used on one side only. Please bring to the office!! Thank you so much to those who have been able to help us in the past.

PREP 2015 TRANSITION DATES
Please note the dates following are all Fridays from 9-11am except for the longer December 5 date. All dates are subject to change. Fridays have been chosen as there are no one hour specialist blocks on this day and children can experience some of the assemblies. The remaining proposed dates for the 2015 Prep Transition Program are: August 22, September 12, October 17, November 7 and 21, December 5 – 9-1.30pm
PFA NEWS

- Return your toy catalogue order – stock up for Christmas
- We desperately need fair help forms back as soon as possible
- Prep and 3W are still leading the jar competition – come on others!
- Don’t forget the classroom hampers – send along donations as per each grade’s hamper type

LUNCH ORDERS

Dixons Creek Café will continue to provide affordable lunches for our school at minimal cost. With the coming cold weather a warm lunch is most appreciated! We thank Mark and Christina for their support. The following items are available each Thursday:

- Four N 20 175gm Beef Pie $2.50 ea
- Four N 20 180 gm Sausage Roll $2.50 ea
- Patties Party Pie $1.20 ea
- Patties Party Sausage Roll $1.20 ea

NEW LINE: GLUTEN, DAIRY AND FRUCTOSE FREE PIES AT $5.50 EACH

SCHOOL UNIFORM

This school has endorsed a compulsory school uniform. Children should not come in items of clothing other than the correct uniform. When a child cannot come in uniform a note must be sent to school. All jumpers and windcheaters etc must be school uniform. Black pants should not have stripes. Black school shoes must be worn. Runners are allowed on sports days or for tennis. Children may come in free dress on their birthday or designated free dress days only. Free dress does not include singlet tops or open toed shoes. Several parents have complained that it is hard to keep their children in uniform when they see others not complying.

SCHOOL PRODUCTION

In response to parent opinion we have decided to stage a school production this year – thank you Elisabeth Bromley and helpers. General consensus has been that a production will be performed on even numbered years. Because this year is a review year the staff decided that it would be too difficult to conduct it in Term 3. We will now hold the production on Friday December 5. This will take the place of the Family Carols night scheduled for the following week.

HOME READING

We are still aware of a number of children who only read sporadically at home. Reading is not something that is a ‘school subject’ only. There are two vital parts to the teaching of reading – Teachers must teach the reading skills and behaviours to children BUT they must then practice these skills. Children of all year levels must read every day for a prolonged period of time. The children who do this go further ahead and the children who do not fall backwards.

PARENT CHOICE / DRIVER EVENTS

Please note that the school offers many ‘parent choice/driver’ events through our sport teacher, Andrew Devisser. Throughout the year there are many, many sports offered on this basis. The school does not co-ordinate these events. Parents need to liaise with each other if they cannot drive their own child. We do not become involved in driver arrangements. The school’s responsibility is to check safety arrangements for the events and to give out the forms and collect monies. All parents who choose to participate are expected to drive their own child to the event. If this is not possible parents may make personal arrangements for others to drive.

WE WILL PLACE A LIST OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN ON THE OFFICE DOOR TO ASSIST PARENTS CONTACT OTHERS IF THEY NEED TO.

Sometimes events are cancelled due to lack of numbers. ALWAYS check with Kerrie in the office for up to date information about the event’s current status – ALWAYS the night before. Sometimes events are cancelled the day before due to bad weather. It is a parent responsibility to check all details with the office.

TOYS

We are trying to set up a quiet play area in the new library room so that children who need to can go in and quietly play with toys for imaginative play such as: Lego, Duplo, Mega Blocks, ‘Polly Pocket’ dolls, ‘Little Pet Shop’ dolls, Matchbox cars, dolls house, Barbie dolls, figurines etc. We thank Kara Green and Emma Morris for their kind donations of Duplo. Please ask older friends and family if they have any of these items they may like to donate. We can then buy new items to add to the collections. We would also like a couple of chess sets.

SANDPIT TOYS

Do you have any toys suitable for the school sandpit? We were thinking of old pots, saucepans, bowls, sieves, ladles, measuring jugs etc. No glass items please. If you have any items please leave with Kerrie in the office. We also need a large washing basket for storage. NO DONATIONS AS YET!