From the Principal

It is that time of the year where our student, staff and parent surveys are all completed and we as a staff group receive the outcomes. These surveys allow us to see where each cohort of our school community thinks we are excelling and also our areas of improvement. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the families that took the time to fill the survey in (I know how repetitive the survey questions are) and to address some of comments.

The school does NOT control or have ANY say in if a student receives funding or not. Therefore if a parent ‘requests’ an aide for their child the school can only go through the process, I understand parents wanting the best for their child BUT we need to act in the best interests for ALL students and unfortunately the school is not in a position to provide one-one tutoring to each and every child. But in saying this all students are catered for individually and NO child is left behind at Werrimull P-12 School.

Comments about teaching staff taking personal and or professional leave are unacceptable. I will address the personal leave comment first. Under the Victorian Teachers Agreement all staff are entitled to 15 days per year of personal leave, if it is not used it is accrued. I make no apologies for any staff member using their entitlements as I DO NOT and would NEVER question you as parents about you taking time away from your employment. There are times where empathy needs to be shown towards others and this type of comment shows a real lack of understanding and empathy. Secondly the professional development that staff undertake is essential for our students. If we do not keep up-to-date with new technologies, new ways of teaching and new curriculum initiatives then our students suffer and this was evident in our last review (2007). Again I will not apologise for giving staff the opportunity to continue to learn and again I would never make comment about our local farmers attending field days and other events that keep them up-to-date with what is going on their world of employment, therefore I find it offensive that some parents feel they have the right to do so about teaching staff.

Again I invite you to make an appointment to discuss any issues face-to-face you have with the school or staff so everyone is informed about decisions that are made.

CONGRATULATIONS to JOSH HARRIS on applying for and being successful in gaining employment for a trial period at Target. We wish you all the best over the next few months.

This week is the final week of VCAA set exams but as a school we are just starting to gear up for our 9 – 11 exams. Next week the Year 10 & 11 students are on work experience, the week starting the 26th is study week for our students and the 3rd of December year 9-11’s will start their school set exams.

Next Tuesday we start our official transition program for our 2013 Prep students, we are very lucky as our transition begins at the start of each year as we have the partnership running between the Kinder and school. But on the 21st of November all 2013 Prep parents are invited to attend an information session outlining what our vision and aim is as a school, to meet the Primary staff of 2013 and to ask any questions around schooling at Werrimull P-12 School. Please contact the school if you require any further information around the transition program we have running.
New School Website
You may have noticed our new school website. The new site went ‘live’ two weeks ago and to this point we have encountered a few teething problems. Miss Smith has worked in partnership with our host company Sponsor Ed to iron out these technical glitches and we now have a new and functional website. Between now and the end of the school year the site will be updated to reflect our current operations and curriculum. If you have any ideas for the new website don’t hesitate to contact me at school.

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Website
The DEECD website has also been updated. For those of you who log on to http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx you may have noticed a new look. This site has been updated and currently contains new information regarding each key stage of your child’s education. Information regarding key initiatives such as the changes to Vocational Training also feature on the new look site.


Student Testing
We are all aware of the current VCE exams taking place around the country. Prep – 10 students at Werrimull P-12 School are also completing important assessment tasks. For example, in English students are sitting standardised reading and spelling tests to help teachers monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Feeling anxious about assessment tasks/tests is natural. It often helps if you speak to your child about the assessment tasks they have completed and show an interest in the results they have received.

If you have any questions about the school’s assessment schedule or your child’s results don’t hesitate to make an appointment with the appropriate teacher.

Reading Focus - Working out difficult words
Throughout the year students have been learning how to ‘decode’ when they encounter difficult or unknown words. When reading at home, it is important to give your child time and strategies to decode any long or unfamiliar words.

Before telling your child the word when he or she is reading, try these prompts:
- Look for clues for the word’s meaning in the sentence.
- Look at the word closely. Does it look like another word you know?
- Can you break the word down into smaller parts?
- Do the words before and after this word help?

Jamie Russell
Hello again folks. Another burst of warm weather on the weekend signals the start of two very important things; harvest and cricket season, well the season for the Australian team anyway. And I am wishing well for both things. Although my best wishes didn’t seem to help on the weekend with some insipid bowling, a day rained out and then a top order batting collapse. Let’s hope that harvest is beginning in a more promising fashion for all.

The warmer weather also indicates that the end of the year is neigh. It is a time of exams and frenetic workplaces as well as Christmas and most importantly parties! And yes here goes good old Mr Morrison again with the fun police and doom and gloom. But a reminder about safe partying is important, particularly for those finishing their VCE exams and with “Schoolies” around the corner.

As I read the Sunraysia Daily today I see another story on the rise in drug use in the district and in particular the rise in the use of methamphetamine or “Ice”. This extremely addictive drug is often supplied for free to unsuspecting young people who then form a habit and on it goes from there. And with as many as 1 in 2 users becoming addicted it is definitely something to be avoided.

The message about Safe Partying must also be taken in a general context. Binge drinking, drunk drivers, drink spiking, alcohol related violence and unsafe sex are all issues for concern at any time but particularly at this time of year and the same advice needs to be repeated.

Never go out alone, always use a designated driver/parent/cab, drink water in between some alcoholic drinks, don’t leave drinks unattended and most importantly keep an eye on your mates. You will know if they are acting strange or out of character and it only takes an instant for someone to take advantage of a drunk or drugged person and it takes a true friend to intervene when they think something is wrong. Just remember that date rape and street violence are very real, even in country towns.

Just remember to have fun and wake up the next day healthy and without regrets.

Students are also reminded that the anonymous “Wellbeing Box” is set up in the library and that students can contact me through that should they require it. I can also be contacted on my email at morrison.kelly.j@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Helpful Hint:

More information on Safe Partying can be found at:


http://www.safepartying.com/


http://www.gettingout.info/SafePartying.htm

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you would like any assistance or more information on this.

Be Well

Kelly Morrison

Wellbeing Coordinator
Dates to Remember

November

Unit 4 Exams 1st - 16th November
P4 Sleep over 29th November

December

Primary ballet excursion 6th December
Flying start week 10th-14th December
School Council 12th December
Activity Day 17th December
Awards & Concert 18th December
Reports go home 18th December
School starts 2013 Thursday 31st January

Happy Birthday

Tom Skinner 14 November
Cameron Symes 16 November

School Lunch orders are available this Wednesday & Thursday at the Hotel

Remembrance Day Poppies

Poppies for Remembrance Day will be available for purchase at the School this year from this week. Thankfully my brother made it home safely from his overseas deployment but there have been many Australians over the years who have not. If you would like to purchase a poppy and support the RSL’s Remembrance Day Appeal, please come and see me.

Thank-you,
Caroline Smith

Just a Reminder

As it’s a departmental requirement for students that are absent, a parent or guardian needs to fill in an absentee note (green note) as soon as the student returns to school. These need to be brought up to the office for Mrs Wright to enter on Cases21