From the Principal

IMPORTANT MEETING TUESDAY 20\textsuperscript{TH} MARCH – PARENT FOCUS GROUP

The school invites all parents (except school council members) to a focus meeting reflecting on our school so as we can set goals for continuous improvement. This process is part of the review our school is currently undertaking. This is your chance to reflect on what the school has done and to shape the future direction. Please make every effort to participate in the focus group.

Date: 20\textsuperscript{th} March
Time: 1:00pm
Where: School Meeting Room
Afternoon Tea Supplied

We have a challenge for all families and staff – this year we will be entering the

2012 PREMIER’S ACTIVE FAMILIES CHALLENGE.

This challenge runs for 6 weeks, beginning 19\textsuperscript{th} March through 30\textsuperscript{th} April 2012 and is a family focused program that encourages all people to do 30 minutes of physical activity a day for 30 days over the Challenge period. If our families and staff participate the school will have the opportunity to receive rewards and a chance to win prizes for our students. Please get involved as it not only benefits the school but yourself and your families health. More information has been sent home today with the registration form—please register early (ASAP) as this increases our chances to receive rewards for our students.

This weekend is a busy one for Dana Kingi as she is dancing in the annual Mardi Gras Parade with the Sunraysia Irish and Friends Association and also performing at Evolution (formerly O’Malley’s) on St Patrick’s Day at 7:30pm. If anyone is out and about at these events make sure you give her a cheer. Please let me know of any other special activities our students are involved in as we love to share their successes both in school and out.

At the start of each year we receive our data from the previous year which allows us to see our successes and where we need to improve. This data was uploaded for schools last week. When I first arrived here four years our student attendance was woeful – students were missing on average just under 15 days per year. It doesn’t look like much but think of it like this, it equates to 195 days of their school life – almost 1 full school year of learning missed! We have been actively campaigning to improve this and in 2009 and 2010 we got it to less than 10 days. Well done students and parents BUT last year it again was OVER 15 days on average per student (and Kalob Ruchel missed 0 days so some students missed many more than 15). This is NOT GOOD ENOUGH! Every year in the parent opinion survey there are comments about staff being out of the school too much at professional development so I put this back on you as parents that your children are out of the school too much. We cannot improve their outcomes if they are not here – what is even more disturbing is the lower primary school and VCE are where majority of absences are occurring, these are the formative (P-3) and pathway years (VCE) being the most important in the overall 13 years of schooling. Our 2011 VCE data was lower than like schools and our Prep reading was also lower than like schools - if you want your children to have the best possible education then you need to book holidays in our term breaks and have your children attend school as much as possible. We will continue to reward excellent attendance and encourage all students to be here each and every day and continue to develop staff so as our students are motivated and engaged in their learning.
In last week’s Pipeline I commented on recent spelling data and the need for us to work together to improve our student’s spelling. This week I would like to focus on writing. All P-10 students will have their own Writer’s Notebook this year. They will bring their notebooks home at various stages to discuss/share some of their writing. I understand that many parents are already helping their children with skills such as spelling and writing however I am often asked, “What can I do to help my child with ........?” Below are some things you may like to try at home:

How can I encourage my child to write?
• Read your child’s writing or have him or her read the writing to you and comment on the positive aspects, for example, “I really like the way you’ve described this.”
• Praise your child for having a go at writing words that are new and explain how to spell words which are causing difficulty.
• Talk to your child about why an author or film maker might create a book, play or film in a particular way. What points of view are presented? What is the author’s purpose?
• Read and talk about the writing that your child brings home from school.
• Praise your child for using neat and legible handwriting.
• In order to develop spelling and vocabulary, play word games such as I Spy, Scrabble, Boggle, Scattergories and crosswords.

How can I help with writing at home?
• Have your child label things that he or she designs or makes.
• Compile a photo album or scrapbook with your child and have him or her write captions for the photos and pictures, or encourage your child to keep a diary of special events, e.g. a holiday diary.
• Make the writing of notes, letters and stories a normal part of family life.
• Involve your child in helping to complete forms, such as insurance or Medicare claims, and in writing job applications or résumés.

How can I support my child with homework?
• Help your child to understand the purpose of the given task, asking him or her to talk about what has to be done.
• Encourage your child to use various types of paper for drawing and writing and to use a variety of instruments, such as pens, pencils, crayons and textas.
• If you have a typewriter or word processor at home, make it available for your child to use.
• Help your child to use reference materials such as dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, CD-ROMs and the Internet.
• Before your child attempts an assignment, help him or her to understand what reference materials are needed by talking about it and asking questions which will guide the child’s planning.
• Draw attention to the technical words in writing and look them up together.
• Help your child to understand and use the information presented in graphs, diagrams and pictures which may be needed for a written assignment.
• If your child is having difficulty with homework, talk to the teacher.
• Encourage your child to use neat and legible handwriting.

If you have any questions about your child’s writing or any other aspect of the English curriculum don’t hesitate to contact me at school.

Jamie Russell
Hello again folks. All the predictions are for some really good rain over the next few days so here’s hoping that the forecasts are accurate for a change. Queensland has had record rain and the newspaper reports that the Darling will rise to levels not seen since ’76 so let’s hope that we get our share down south.

As I parked in front of the school this morning I looked up and saw the school sign standing proudly in front of the building. The shield shape surrounding the big “W” wreath in stalks of wheat is a fitting symbol for our school.

My eyes then moved to the motto, “Striving to Achieve”, and I began to think. What is it we are striving for and what is it we are trying to achieve?

The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary defines “strive” as;

“Try hard”

And “achieve” as;

“Reach or attain by effort”

So it seems fairly simple then, we are trying hard to reach something through effort. Sounds simple enough but I think there is a little more to it.

The year is a review year for the school. During this time the school staff, through consultation with colleagues, students and the broader community; revise the goals set in the last review year assess the relative successes in achieving them and set new goals for the coming years. This exhaustive process allows the school to celebrate its successes and identify areas requiring improvement.

I guess you could say that a similar process is undertaken when providing feedback to parents and students through the student reports issued throughout the year, but is that enough?

Research shows that student outcomes are mostly influenced by the characteristics brought by the student, the student’s home life and support of parent and then their teacher. So the support of parents is paramount to student success. And here I return to the school motto, “Striving to Achieve”.

What is it your child is trying to achieve? When was the last time you sat with them and talked about their schooling or their plans for the future? When did you last sit and engage with them about their school work? What is it that they are doing? Why are they doing it? What is it they are trying to achieve with it and is that rigorous enough? Is near enough good enough? Should they be aiming higher? Should they be striving harder?

We strive everyday and most of that time we are striving so that our children can have it better than we had, so that they have more opportunities and choices than we had. But what is it that they are striving for and are they striving hard enough?

Someone once said to me that to ignore a behaviour is to condone it. Is it ok for our children to be mediocre? Do we accept mediocrity or demand excellence? Kids aren’t made of china. If you push them they might fall but they won’t break. And after they get back up they might just learn to run a bit faster.

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 morri-son.kelly.j@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Helpful Hint:

Contact your child’s teacher to find out how you can support your child’s learning at home. They are happy to chat with you about how to bring about your child’s best outcomes.

Please contact the school if you would like any assistance or more information on this.

Be Well

Kelly Morisson
Wellbeing Coordinator
Last Wednesday twelve students represented the school at the MMM swimming sports in Mildura. Arriving early allowed the students to get in a couple of warm up laps before the competition got under way.

Stepping up to the Olympic sized pool had some of the children unsure as to whether they were going to be able to make it to the other end. Despite the lack of confidence in their own ability there were some outstanding performances.

Kieran Simmons might not have had the most efficient technique in the butterfly but it proved to be effective as he took out the race. Swimming 50 meters of butterfly is certainly thirsty work, but Max Buffon’s idea of drinking the water from the pool didn’t help his chances.

The always smooth Mark Thomson was going about his business without a fuss taking out the Under 16 boy’s breaststroke to continue on with his good form from the school swimming sports earlier in the term.

The girls were not to be outdone with Nikki Fox and Kimberley Rowe advancing to the next stage with slick times in the breaststroke and backstroke respectively.

All of the students should be proud of their efforts. At the end of the day we had two students take out age group champion awards. Kieran Simmons won the Under 14 boys, whilst Mark Thomson won the Under 16 boys.

As well as the wonderful achievement by those two boys we have had eleven students qualify for the NWSSSA swimming sports to be held in Mildura this Friday. Congratulations to all of those students.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank-you to the parents that transported students to and from the sports last week.

Paul Bamford

Sports Co-ordinator

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MILLEWA BALLET & DANCE GUILD

The Millewa Ballet and Dance Guild are holding their AGM on Wednesday 14th March at 4.30pm in the Werrimull Hall meeting Room

All interested people are welcome

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If you wish to receive a hard copy of the pipeline could you please tear off and return the portion below otherwise you can view it digitally on the school web site

Please could I receive a hard copy of the pipeline

Family Name ______________________________
## Dates to Remember

### February
- EMA Applications Due: 29th Feb

### March
- SSSA Swimming: 2nd March
- World Maths: 6th March
- Ballot closes – school council: 8th March
- Author Visit P-6: 13th March
- Work Experience Yr 10 & 11: 26th–30th
- Tasty Thursday: 29th March
- End of Term 1: 30th March
  - 2.00pm Finish

### April
- Term 2 starts: 16th April
- Alpine School Commences: 23rd April
- Anzac Day No school: 25th April
- Cross Country: 27th April
- Tasty Thursday: 26th April

### May
- SSSA Cross Country: 23rd May

### June
- Student Lead Conferences: 15th June
- 9-12 Exams: 18th June
- Students return from Alpine School: 23rd June
- Xmas in June: 29th June

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**Snow Trip Reminder**

Secondary students are reminded that expressions of interest and deposits are due back at the end of next week. That is Friday the 2nd of March. We must have these in so that early bookings/deals/savings can be made.

Thank You.

Mr Morrison
What’s Happening

We had a bit of excitement at the Pre-School last Thursday when we lost all contact with the outside world due to a fault with the phone line. As a result we packed our bags and walked over to spend the rest of the day at School. It was a very different day to one normally spent at Kinder but the children were fantastic and made the most of our visit.

This Tuesday is a Library day so please remember to send your child to school with their library bag and library books. If they do not return their books they will not be able to borrow again until our next Library visit.

This Thursday is our first Partnership visit from the children at Werrimull P-12 School and will give everyone involved the chance to meet each other.

In your child’s bag this week you will find a plastic envelope which will contain your child’s notes for the week. Please ensure that it stays in their bag and is used to return any notes or other communication.

Have a great week,

Miss Caroline Smith

Dates to Remember

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