Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Last week's meeting re establishing our vision/values/beliefs was, for us, an uplifting experience. The children were very involved & read out the group reports. They took part in the decision making and one student was “over the moon” because after many votes reducing options, his belief statement won.

Our new vision statement is “Positive relations for Positive Learning” and though we will always try to be the best we can be, this new one got the ticket.

Surprisingly, with all the parents at our school, only 4 turned up to be involved in this workshop. We can only offer, and we understand how busy parents can be.

We also voted on 3 main values which we’d like everyone to know & be familiarised with the depth of meaning behind each one.

RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY and EXCELLENCE were our top markers and we discussed the behaviours which would underpin each one. These will be on display in the foyer.

Several belief statements shone through while we discussed our vision and these will be finalised early next term.

Children had definite points of view and in debriefs later, they thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity & the experience.

APOLOGY
Re the last school disco, there were parents who worked particularly hard & because I wasn't there, I was unaware of their awesome contribution. I do sincerely apologise for this omission. Sarah Smithson, Chloe’s Mum, was our DJ Sarzy. She organized all the music after she’d surveyed the kids to find out what they wanted. She worked non-stop all night and must have suffered total exhaustion the next day. Thanks a million.

Judy Andrews, Nick & Tyler’s Mum, organized & staffed the canteen for the night. She did a mighty job working constantly.

Thanks so much to everyone who helped. The funds raised benefit your children and they get to be the winners.
OUR TREE HOPPERS
Thanks so much to Mr Matt Fitzgerald and his friend Peter, who lopped all the dead trees which were quite dangerous, at the Frith St entrance to the school. They even mulched them too and the mulch has been spread between the big fig trees. Thanks for all your help in making our school grounds safe.

SCHOOL BAND
Mrs Nicholas sent an expression of interest note home recently to all primary students. The band and music tuition will be happening on Thursdays and we’ve asked the Music Teacher to ensure that the music chosen is vibrant for the children. If you’ve lost the note, ring the office & we will send home another. Children from Yr3 to Yr6 are invited to join.

There has been a large number of keyboard players responding and we are looking for students who would be willing to try other instruments eg. Clarinet or flute.

Let’s make this the most successful band year ever!! Please encourage your child to join. They can play at assemblies as a band or perform individually if they wish. We just want to encourage the kids to have a go!

TRAINING and DEVELOPMENT
Mr Paul Searant and Miss Jennifer Connolly were at a course yesterday on Moodles and the Connected Classroom. They will share this knowledge with the rest of the staff early next term.

Mr Paul Agnew is attending a workshop this Thursday, set up by Ausgrid to determine how we can conserve electricity at school. He’ll be able to give us useful feedback so we can do an electrical audit. Thanks to all of these people.

STAFFING CHANGE
Mrs Mattila is now on maternity leave and this means Mrs Brooke Vitnell will take 1D for 5 days per week instead of 4.

TERM 3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
In Term 3, we would like to change our staff development day from Monday 16th July to the Friday of the next week, the 27th July.

Staff will be attending a whole day workshop presented by Dr John Hattie who is an expert on quality teaching, taking a very practical approach. Hailing from Melbourne, he is quite an expert in his field and is keen on individuals learning according to their need & at their level.

It would mean that those children who catch the Government bus to & from school, would need alternative transport on 16th July. We will cancel the school buses on 27th July.

If you have a problem with these arrangements, could you please notify the office in writing by next Monday, 2nd April. If we don’t hear, we’ll assume that you will be supporting our request for the change of date.

REPORT from P&C MEETING
Last Tuesday’s P&C meeting prompted 2 robust discussions on having rewards & behavioural level systems introduced to our school and the other revolved around only Yr6 students being chosen to represent in PSSA sport.

The P&C forum provides the opportunity for parents to express their views & we appreciate the stimulating conversations.

In the first instance, our philosophy is based on intrinsic behaviour, meaning that a person behaves or acts to satisfy their internal needs, not because there’s a reward at the end. We try to train children into being the type of person they want to be when nobody else is looking and to inspire them to want to succeed for the personal satisfaction of doing/or being the best they can.

With stimulus/response, once the reward is taken away, the child or person may think: “Not going to try.
What's in it for me?,” or alternatively, the reward starts small, such as $1, and in the end you need to up the ante & provide a Lambourghini Countage. The personal striving for success intrinsically is much more powerful in the long term.

Regarding the second issue with selection to represent PSSA in zone teams, the most talented students in that particular sport are chosen, regardless of the year they are in, because the top athletes are vying for selection in the Hunter Region Teams, then in this team, they vye for State Selection to compete in National Championships.

In some instances, children in Yr 4 have been chosen in State teams.

With the PSSA KO teams, again schools are vying to ultimately win the State Championships & be the best team in a particular sport in the state. Therefore, you need to include the strongest athletes in each sport.

To clarify this a little further, when there are Art exhibitions, Mrs Fidler sends away the best work samples. If this was confined to Year 6 alone, where would the likes of Emily Winpenny, an outstanding artist in Year 4, be?

I do thank the parents for raising these issues. Open and honest dialogue is crucial in communication.

**CANTER & TOILETS**

A huge thankyou to Mrs Madelon Scully who sent an email to Andrew Cornwell after last week's P&C meeting, complaining about the placement of our canteen & toilet entry points, both on the blind side of the buildings. She also stated the need for an upgrade (both built in 1965) to both.

Mr Cornwell rang me last week and recognising that I had applied for a $200,000 grant to rectify the problems, asked me to email my submission to him so he could endorse our application & send it to the relevant personnel. Thanks Madelon for helping us.

Mrs Judy Andrews worked hard on surveys at the beginning of last year but it was around election time and her efforts elicited a nil response from Mr Matthew Morris.

Let's hope we are more successful this time.

If we are, I have applied to self-manage to get the full benefit of the grant rather than pay dead money to the AMU.

If that happens, in the first instance, I will message our parents to see if there are any licensed builders, bricklayers, kitchen refurbishers etc amongst our own community who might like to tender for the job.

I'm also looking for a concreter to build a path along the back of the hall, linking the 2 exit stairs from the back stage. If anyone is interested, please let the office girls know.

**ANZAC DAY SERVICE**

Our ANZAC Day service will be held on Thursday, 26th April starting at 10am. All parents are welcome to come and join in the service. Every child is asked to bring a flower to place on our sand inscription, “Lest We Forget”.

**HUNTER LIFE EDUCATION VISIT**

On Wednesday 21st March half of our school visited Hunter Life Education. The second half of the school who were unable to visit on Monday will have the Life Ed van come to our school next Monday and Tuesday.

The children learnt about keeping their bodies safe and healthy. They enjoyed videos, interactive games and discussion about healthy food, medicines, drugs and an active lifestyle. Children from Year 1 and Year 5/6 wrote the following recounts.

Brooke Vitnell.
Our lovely kids have done it again. They are just magic!

- Well done to Riley Patterson in 4A. He showed how caring & concerned he was for his brother Oliver in 1H when Oliver was distressed and crying because of his recent fractured arm. Riley calmed him down and helped him enormously. It's wonderful to see brotherly love shine through. Great work Riley!
- Lachlan Blythe in 1H was thrilled to bits with the book he made in hats. There were many different hats and he read all the little sentences underneath the pictures. This was a huge step forward. Well done Lachlan!
- Ebony Arnol-Parkes in 1H made a lovely, colourful puppet cat. Lovely work Ebony, and she also got a whole page of maths right for the first time. How good is that?
- Luca Baldwin of 1H wrote a creative description of Easter Eggs. It sounded so “yummy” I could almost eat them!
- Oscar & Satine Carr are in a play with the Young People's Theatre some time later this year. It’s called “Bake, the Sheep Pig,” and we'll be told the dates soon. If anyone wants to go, you'll be in for a big surprise.

CHAPLAIN’S MESSAGE
As humans, we portray many different characters in various situations.

During his teenage years, my son saw me as a fairly strict parent, who lacked the ability to understand that the house needed to shake on its foundations, to truly appreciate heavy metal rock music.

My grand daughters see me as a soft, little lady, who is like “putty in their hands”, especially around shopping centres.

Hopefully, my friends see me as a happy person who loves to laugh.
But NONE of these people would recognise the passionate, vocal one-eyed, Jets supporter at the football stadium.

So, it is with children.
In my role, I am often privileged to see the very caring, nurturing & sensitive side of many children, which parents & classroom teachers may not always have the opportunity to witness.

This is because I am fortunate to interact with children individually, or in small groups.
It is during these times that I wish parents & carers could see their offspring, & realize what a great job they are doing, raising such thoughtful & caring children. Just fantastic!!

Helen Harvie
School Chaplain

**CREATIVE ARTS CAMP 2012**

Any students who were given information from Ms Connolly last week regarding the Creative Arts Camp need to submit their online application by tomorrow afternoon. Please notify the school by Wednesday, 3pm if you have completed the application, as the GATs committee need to also submit their nominations. Please note, parental applications do not guarantee placement as it must also be approved by the school GATs committee and the HCC Creative Arts Committee.

**CROSS COUNTRY**

This Friday, 30th March we will be having our Primary Cross Country at school starting at 2pm. If there are any parents that are able to assist with recording laps that would be wonderful. Parents are welcome to come and cheer the students on. Please note that students with asthma will need to bring their medication. Any students unable to participate will require a written note from their parents.

**NEWS FROM THE GARDEN**

The schools garden has many herbs and vegetables growing in it now. If parents, caregivers and family members who are visiting the school would like to use some of these herbs and vegetables, please feel free to take a handful. A gold coin donation would be greatly appreciated at the office.

Our School garden is now producing:
- Parsley,
- Basil,
- Thai Basil,
- Chilli’s
- Zucchinis,
- Pumpkins
- and the coriander is just about gone.

**SCHOOL UNIFORM TIES**

The new school uniforms that are available at Lowes, have a navy blue tie on them. Lowes have given us a bag of royal blue ties (which is the correct colour for our uniforms). These ties are at the office and are free if you would like one to go on to your new uniform, please see the ladies in the office.

**ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS**

Preorders for the Entertainment Books are now available.

**CHOOK CARERS**

We are fast approaching our Easter holidays. We are asking if there are any families who would be available to take care of our chooks for the coming holidays. We have a key to give out, the food will be in a bin in the chook pen. Please ring the school office if you are able to help us out. Thank you.

Sincerely

Pam Richardson
Principal
27th March, 2012
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