Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It is wonderful to be back on deck. I did have a very exciting and fabulous holiday but to be back at work is so fulfilling.

I would sincerely like to thank Mrs Maggie McNair again for running the school so capably in my absence. She was genuinely supported by the executive team of Mr Ian Davies, Ms Jen Connolly & Mr Paul Searant. It is also important to mention the important role played by Heather and Loretta in the office and to our whole team of staff members who more than pull their weight at every opportunity. From my perspective, I hope you all, as parents, realize & appreciate the quality of the staff we have at our school. They are truly unbelievable!
Nothing is too much trouble, their concern is for the growth of the individual child and for the learning opportunities they provide. Our teachers ASK to go for courses to upgrade, they are not TOLD, nor are they SENT!
Such is the calibre of our people who really role model respect, responsibility and excellence in their quest to be lifelong learners.

**LATEST GRANT**
With school improvements these days, one needs to apply for grants, mostly from the Federal Government. Recently, I submitted an application for updates to our canteen and toilets. This was supported by a community member of our P&C who wrote to our local Charlestown MP. With his support, we managed to receive a grant to update our toilets, but nothing for the canteen.

If there's any money left after the toilets are fixed up, we will certainly use the residue to do what we can for the canteen.

In the meantime, if we have any fathers out there who are builders & would like to express an interest in helping us change basically the entry to the toilets to face the courtyard rather than the back fences, please contact me so I can supply you with information. Mr Col Curry & I will be drawing up plans with the aid of a professional, but I am self managing this project to eliminate the huge costs you pay to the “Middle Man.” This was obvious in the huge expenses paid for overseeing during the recent BER program where realistically the costing was almost double what we could have attained privately.

So, let me know and with a list of interested people, when we have the plans, you will be given 1st opportunity of quoting. Other than that, I will have to go to the Yellow pages.
**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

We really need to have a person or group of people interested in helping us with our vegetable garden. Mr Paul Agnew was keenly interested and was helped by my husband who updated the vegetable gardens and who met with some interested students at lunchtimes. Neither of these people are with us now. It's not a huge commitment—possibly once a fortnight, but we can't let slip such an important aspect of student opportunity and experience.

Please ring me, or leave a message at the office, if you, or a group of friends could do it together. We'll supply the coffee and a room to have a chat after it! What a great way to meet!

**NAIDOC SUPPER**

This Tuesday, from 5.30pm onwards, there's a special meeting in the Whitebridge High School Library to celebrate this important occasion. We all need to learn and understand how we all need to live together in equity in our society. Everyone is special. Why not go along and give a helping hand? Appreciate and value that, on this earth, we are all brothers and sisters.

**PEACEFUL PARENTING**

This Thursday evening, from 6.30pm until 8.30pm we will begin our 6 week course on Peaceful Parenting. I love it!

It's not just a course for parents with children who are difficult to manage in a school setting. This course helps us all understand how to create an harmonious home, no matter the age of the child or children, and it helps us prevent problems happening at any stage, rather then trying to solve them after the "fan".

I wish I knew this when bringing up my children. It would have saved me heaps of grief. I now use this on my grandchildren with great effect and of course, always at school.

It's more than that even! We do an evaluation at the end, none of which have ever been negative as most crave for more sessions but one lady told us that her husband noticed she was a changed woman; she didn't yell anymore, and it was like a breath of fresh air to their relationship.

We have so much fun when we run the course and we tailor it to the needs and requests of people who come.

There aren't many places left as we also offer this to our local feeder pre-schools up to Whitebridge High parents.

If you are interested, it's $60 for 6 weeks which includes continuous tea & coffee & a light supper & it helps pay for photocopying, heating and lighting. With 3 people presenting, Mrs Maggie McNair, Mr Brian Collins and myself, it's not a lot to pay and none of us charge for our services. Any residue goes into our school funds.

If you want happiness and harmony and peace in your home, you only have to front. What you do is up to you.

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY**

Just another reminder that this Friday, 27th July is our staff development day where all of our staff will be in a workshop all day (with 200 people from other local schools) to listen to and work with Dr John Hattie re Visual Learning.

He is an expert in this area and to have every member of our staff involved can only lead to enhanced student outcomes. We always have follow up discussions, share how we implement new ideas in our classrooms, plan together, and work in teams.

From my experience which now spans quite a few years, it's always best to send as many people as you can to quality workshops. As Daniel Goleman says: "Too much money is wasted in big business where only 1 person, maybe 2, are sent, as they cannot, or do not, necessarily have the capacity to share the new knowledge with staff. So nothing happens; nothing changes."

He maintains that, in America, billions of dollars have been wasted by vast corporations. At our school being much smaller that is not the case. We always send 2 and frequently 3 people to quality workshops and we then delve deeply into their information & work out together how we can implement these new ideas. This keeps us fresh & up to the minute with current thought.

To have the whole staff involved is just magic.

* Please remember that the school will be closed to all students, this Friday, 27th July.
EDUCATION WEEK

Next week is Education Week where we celebrate public education in NSW schools. We are very proud of our school and of the achievements, great or small, of all of our students. We endeavour to foster their development in diverse experiences and the theme this year is “Creating the Future”.

Our children are our future, and it’s our combined job to give them the skills they will need to face an ever changing world.

On Tuesday, 31st July we will have our open day. We will start with an assembly in the hall at 12.00 noon, followed by classroom visits which can extend through lunch time.

We will also have a sausage sizzle lunch for parents and students, $2 each and drinks will be $1.

Come along, support your child, see what we do and have fun!

STRANGER DANGER

Recently there have been a few reports of this across the Hunter Region. Without wishing to alarm anybody, it would be wise for you to explain to your child or children what to do if they were faced with and untoward situation.

It’s my belief that there was a situation on the Fernley Track and I want to be sure that you are all aware of these recent events.

KIDS’ CORNER

I really missed all the kids when I was away. To come back & receive so many spontaneous cuddles from our ‘treasures’ from K-6 gave me such a warm feeling. If only I could share with you, as parents, my eyes as I see our kids, you would be amazed. I’ve travelled, I’ve recently been in places over the world where kids are on excursions, I’ve listened to teachers “bark” at kids all over the place and I come back to the Paradise known as Kahibah!

For that, I thank the staff for the approach they take with our kids and for the great majority of children who value the opportunity to discuss openly their problems to work peacefully to find their own solutions.

- While kids were off playing these school holidays, Lucy Smithson on 2D was busy training and competing in various Gymnastic Competitions.

On 1st July Lucy was awarded 1st Overall Level 1 Junior Champion in the 2nd State Trial in Maitland.

Then for the BIG competition, the NSW Gymnastics Country Championships in Orange.

Over 100 girls competed in Lucy’s Level 1 from 27 Clubs from across NSW.

Lucy got GOLD Medals for Bars & Beam, and BRONZE medals in Vault and Floor.

Lucy also won GOLD as the Overall Level 1 Country Champion!!!

Lucy’s Team from Blacket Gymnastics Academy took home BRONZE in Overall Level 1 Club Championships

BGA also were OVERALL CLUB CHAMPIONS of the entire competition.

- Bella Van Vegchel, Oliver Morrison, Baxter Nicod and Josh Hookway from 1V were extremely proud to show me the board game they were constructing based on the Olympic Games. I had to go back 4 spaces for forgetting my uniform!

- Cody Neat (3D) brought in a quality example of his handwriting, where he demonstrated mastery of “exit flicks”. Jack Douglas (also 3D) wanted to show me how he is now using “joins” and told me that he likes using a darker pencil because of the improved appearance of his work. Lachlan Sazdanoff (3D) produced an informative and accurate recount of “Sadako and the 1000 Paper Cranes”, which he was looking forward to publishing on the computer. You are to be congratulated on your terrific self-assessment, boys!

- Also on the weekend (23rd and 24th June) we had Hunter Championships and Ellie Richards, Bronte...
Baldwin, Lily Wilson and Hannah Gregory competed and all came away with medals. It was Ellie and Bronte’s first competition in rhythmic gymnastics and, like Lily and Hannah, they all did very well. Ellie came first in ball and third in rope in her age group. Bronte came 1st in Rope and second in ball in her age group. The girls should have some great news to tell this week. I am one very proud coach. (Joy Millard)

- Coran Cameron (1H) was delighted that he had completed a worksheet about a night walk, and he did it all by himself in reading groups. (He told me that if he went on a night walk he would be sure to take some lollies!)
- Eloise Monk (3/4) produced a lovely portrait of a lad, (in “the nuddy”, but very tastefully so) holding a beautiful flower. Another talented artist in our midst!
- SOFTBALL REPRESENTATIVES

Recently, three of our talented softballers, Matt Crane, Michael Richardson and Sam Winpenny represented our school at trials for a regional softball teams. All three played well and with great sportsmanship.

Sam was chosen in the regional team and will represent the Hunter Region at the NSW PSSA State Softball Carnival to held late this year in Sydney. Congratulations Sam!!

- Both the girls’ and boys’ hockey teams played last week and Mrs Nguyen, Rod Fernandes and I were very proud of their efforts.

The girls faced stiff opposition because many others in the opposing team play hockey at weekends. Our girls didn’t give up and played with a big heart right to the end.

The boys were very competitive and at one stage were up 2-1. Though we lost 4-2, we have no hockey players in our team and our boys gave the others a great challenge.

This match was very exciting to watch. Congratulations everyone.

- Congratulations to Jackson Ormonde who, on the day of the hockey match was extremely helpful in dressing our goalie in all the required gear. Jackson just voluntarily lent a hand and stayed with the task until the mission was complete. I was so grateful.

- Orange juice had been spilt in the boys’ toilet. Zen Sandford, Isaac Hawke, Jackson Ormonde, Joel Curtis and Nick Andrews spent ages voluntarily cleaning it up. It’s wonderful to see these lovely young men demonstrating community spirit. Thanks so much boys. I really appreciated your efforts.

- 3D have been writing wonderful poems about sport. There are too many to mention as the whole class needs congratulating. Well done!

SPECIAL EVENT

Renee Pountney has been selected in the State Girls PSSA team which will be travelling to Darwin at the end of this term.

This is a huge accomplishment for someone in Year 5. There are 2400 schools in NSW so Renee has done remarkably well.

However, it is very expensive because families have to find all the funds involved, including air fare and uniforms.

Our P&C have kindly donated $100 towards her expenses and East Lake Macquarie PSSA have matched this with another $100.

On Tuesday, 7th August, our school would like to run a cake day to offer our support.

Any offers of cakes and slices would be very kindly received and would be on sale at recess. Parents can come and buy some too.

Cakes, biscuits, slices, sweets etc can be delivered to school on the Tuesday morning.

SCHOOL MUSICAL

Our School Musical is getting closer!!

Just a reminder for ALL BOYS in 6L, 5B, 4B and 3D (as well as all knights from 5/6C in the cast) to please pay your $5 for your knight shirt by week 3.

Kelly Bruce
CANTEEN MESSAGE
Please be aware that, when it is open, our canteen is very well utilised. This means that many families depend on the canteen to provide nutritious recess snacks and/or lunches for their children. Sometimes there are 60 or more orders to be prepared between recess and lunchtime.

We are desperately seeking more volunteers to help. The more volunteers there are, the fewer times you actually need to be on the roster. We would welcome grandparents, aunts or uncles, friends, older siblings or neighbours. Please contact anyone whom you think might be interested and get them to give us a call.

It is also extremely important that, if you are unable to turn up on your rostered day, you find your own replacement so that the canteen can remain open. (Unfortunately, our supervisor has had to miss out on many days of paid work in order to stand in for people who have not sought someone else to take their place. This seems very unfair.) * Please ask the supervisor for the telephone numbers of other volunteers if you don’t have them.

Thank you so much to those willing helpers who are doing such a mighty job. Not only does the canteen provide food, but the funds raised there go directly back into the school to provide resources for your sons and daughters.

Here’s hoping we can get the canteen back to being open 5 days a week!

CHAPEL’S MESSAGE
Sometimes we tend to judge others by the way they dress, speak or behave. However, we never really know what is happening in another person’s life, and unless we are aware of every circumstance, we need to refrain from making those hasty judgements.

A thought-provoking saying which adds to this, is, “Never look down on anybody unless you are helping them up”.

Helen Harvie
School Chaplain

SCHOOL PHOTOS
Wednesday, 1st Aug is our school photo day. Envelopes have already been given out to all students, with their names and class printed on them.

Family photo envelopes are available at the office for any families wishing to have a family photo taken. Please send the envelopes with money to school with your child ON THE DAY OF THE PHOTOS, not before.

Also, please ensure all students are in their full school uniform on this day.

CHOCOLATE FUNDRAISER
Thank you to everyone for the wonderful response to our Chocolate fundraiser. We still have some chocolate money outstanding. Could you please send your chocolate money to the school office as soon as possible so that we can finalise our accounts.

Thank you
Michelle Hill
Fundraising Coordinator

Sincerely

Pam Richardson
Principal
24th July, 2012
Have your head about the findings of Gonski Review? Well, potentially it is very good news for our school and our students.

Headed by senior businessman David Gonski, the review was the most comprehensive national investigation of school funding in almost 40 years. It found not only was the current funding system broken but Australia is investing far too little in schools.

The lack of funding is having significant consequences for students widening gaps between what students achieve in disadvantaged areas compared to those in wealthy areas.

Gonski said a major funding increase for public schools and (some private schools) is urgently required to ensure a high quality education for all.

That increase translates to an average of $1,500 per student extra per year in public schools. If we were to receive that amount it would mean an additional in $432,000 in our budget.

For our school, additional money would be spent in the areas we know make a real difference for students such as smaller class sizes, more individual assistance for students with particular needs and additional staff.

The problem is that, despite the positive response from all education sectors to the report, there has been no commitment by either the Federal Government or the Opposition in Canberra to the new system or the additional funding.

The Australian Education Union, which represents teachers and principals, is running a national campaign to get a commitment to the funding and new laws passed based on the Gonski recommendations before the end of 2012.

If you would like to see additional resources flowing to our school, you can register your support at the Australian Education Union's campaign website www.igiveagonski.com.au.

Alternatively, if you would like to contact our federal MP Jill Hall directly you can do so at 49479711.

You can also find out more about the Gonski Review at the Federal Government’s website http://www.schoolfunding.gov.au.

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POLLING OFFICIALS REQUIRED FOR 2012 COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Australian Election Company is conducting your council’s local government elections on Saturday, 8th September, 2012.

However, the company needs Polling Officials to conduct these elections.

Accordingly the Election Company is actively seeking applications from persons interested in working as Polling Officials at the elections. Pay rates for Polling Officials are attractive and will be on parity with those offered by the Electoral Commission NSW.

Any persons interested should please freecall Australian Election Company on 1800 224 420 or email recruitment@austelect.com.