Dear Parents and Caregivers,

In the last few weeks, so many successes have been bestowed on our school. Something very special is that Zeraphina Freeman has won one of 20 medals awarded in the State for a Prime Minister's medal. Zeraphina wrote the poem below for the NAIDOC Week competition and the feelings expressed by one so young really tug at our hearts.

**Reconciliation**

Weeping children
Crying Mothers
Broken hearts
Families torn apart
Scare
Mournful
Treated like trash
No contact with relatives
No reason left to live
Let’s unite to make things right!

Zeraphina will be awarded her medal at our school assembly on 20th August at 12.20pm in our school hall. She has also won a DVD player. We will proudly display this poem in our school. Congratulations Zeraphina.

**WORKING “B”**

On Sunday, 19th August we will be holding a working "B" at our school. The Hunter Christian Church will be helping us out again with several volunteers. It would be wonderful to see lots of our parents come along too as 'many hands make light work.'

The jobs we have listed include:-

- Cleaning up the area behind the infants building, whipper snipping & gathering sticks & timber, piling it up.
- Transplanting some of the thickened grasses in the garden leading to Symes Ave to the bare patches along the driveway.
- Weeding the gardens
- Trimming shrubs
- Distributing the mulch piled up at Symes Ave entrance

***THE CANTEEN WILL BE CLOSED ON MONDAY & TUESDAY ALL TERM***
• Re-laying brick pavers along the fence fronting Frith St
• Removing a section of broken concrete on the driveway to Frith St near the fence
• Blasting the cement in front & down the sides of the hall with a kartcher
• Cleaning the ceilings on the verandah of mould

We'd need gloves, rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, shears and general gardening tools.

Morning tea and a sausage sizzle lunch will be provided.
Please let the school know if you can help out for catering purposes. Thanks so much!

CAKE STALL
How lucky are we to have such a generous, supportive community such as ours. You should have seen the cakes that came in and I dearly wish I had taken photos so I could share them with you.
I know Renee and her parents are extremely grateful for such overwhelming support and we raised $437.15 which will certainly help towards her expenses to fly to Darwin.

Thank you to all the cooks & to those who gave their children money to buy cakes. What you have all done is sincerely appreciated.

KINDERGARTEN 2013
Currently, I am interviewing the intending kindergarten children for 2013. There are 49 on our books, though some of these may choose to go elsewhere as is their right. Talking to these little people is one of the best jobs in the world. They are very cute, very excited and just delightful.

BABY NEWS
Mrs Brooke Vitnell (nee Davies) had a little girl on 7th August, the exact due date. Imogen Sarah is 7lb 5ozs (babies are still weighed that way) and was 51 cms long. Mum and baby are doing very well. Imogen has a mop of thick black hair & is absolutely gorgeous.
Congratulations to the proud parents.

ENVIRONMENT
Big thanks to Mrs Melanie Egan who has offered to help with our vegetable garden and yesterday she very kindly weeded it all. Mrs Nicole Brady & I will gather together some interested students so together we can plant vegies, nurture them and then cook or sell or use them in the canteen. This is another opportunity for students and Mrs Brady & I wanted to keep up the good work that others had done before.
We'll be working hard to involve any keen students. Thanks Mrs Egan. Very much appreciated!

HUNTER CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL PRIMARY DRAMA WORKSHOPS 2012
Best of luck to our eight Stage Three students who will be attending the Regional Primary Drama Workshops from Tuesday to Thursday this week. Brynn Hulls, Amy Neal, Lily Wilson, Jack McRory, Paul Battaglia, Jasmine Atchison, Isobel Carr and Hannah Gregory will all be attending. They will participate in many wonderful drama-related activities, culminating in a performance for family and friends on Thursday evening.
We look forward to hearing all about it.
Mrs Bruce

MUSICAL UPDATE
We will be having a full costume photo day on Tuesday in week 9. Please ensure your child's full costume is organised well before this date. See your child's teacher if you need more information about the required costumes.
Any 'damsels' in 5B, 6L or the primary cast still requiring help with sewing will need to organise measurements, purchase fabric (as per the note sent home last term) and get this to me by the end of week 4 please.
A huge thank you to all parents who have helped with costumes and props so far, for both the primary and infants musicals. Your help is invaluable and greatly appreciated.
Mrs Bruce
SCHOOL MUSICAL
Tickets will go on sale for our School Musical at the beginning of September. A note and order form will be sent home giving details of pricing, concert times etc, at the end of this month.

GREAT AUSSIE BUSH CAMP 2012
Year 5 attended The Great Aussie Bush Camp last week and I am pleased to report that we had a wonderfully positive, challenging and enjoyable experience despite the rain and enormous amounts of mud. Apologies to all parents for the state of the students’ clothes and shoes by Thursday evening! Students (and teachers) got to participate in activities like canoeing, rock wall climbing, archery, fencing, dual flying fox, giant swing, lost island (affectionately known to us as ‘mud challenge’), high ropes, bushcraft and teamwork problem solving tasks.
We also enjoyed a movie night, games / disco night and talent quest night. Many students have since reported that it ‘was the best experience of their life’ and that they are enormously proud of themselves for facing their fears and overcoming them. Such rewarding stuff! Miss Connolly and I are very proud of the students who demonstrated maturity, teamwork skills and a willingness to work through problems and fears in a sensible manner. Miss Connolly does, however, have photo evidence of the messiest boys’ room in the history of school camps!
Thanks for a great camp everyone!
Mrs Bruce

KIDS’ CORNER
No matter where we look around our school, children are thriving. So many of them are really excited about their learning or about other personal achievements and every tiny achievement is a stepping stone to the future.

- Paige Robertson and Lily Nicholas won a bronze medal each in the local netball competition. Paige scoring 2 goals and Lily scoring 9. they were very proud young ladies. Great effort!
- Lara Gowie was the winter in a competition called “Keep Your Backyard Clean” run by Lake Macquarie City Council. The painting she drew was judged the best. Tops, Lara! Well done!
- Students in 2M put on a play at our last assembly entitled the “Little Red Hen”. The audience was very appreciative & they did a mighty job. The play was based on their reader & much of it was devised by the students. That makes it even more special. Lovely try!
- Two Year 6 boys, whom I won’t name for fear of embarrassing them, came up to me to let me know that one of their peers, who is not necessarily their best friend, was being bullied by relentless name calling. They both said they just couldn’t stand by & hear this happening. They didn’t like it one bit. The strength of these fellows in standing up for someone else is to be commended. They know who they are. Thanks so much boys!
Showing empathy & caring for other is what life’s all about. You’ve done well!

**STUDENT COUNCILLORS**
The following students have been chosen to represent their class at School Student Council meetings. They take these positions seriously and are heavily involved in suggestions for decision making to make our school a better place.

- KN - Noah Harris, Emerson Powell
- KS - Mia Wallace, Hayden Burrows
- 1H - Georgie Richards, Pavel Marshall
- 1N - Isaac Wylie, Roeni Coates
- 2D - Jagger Done, Arabella Crane
- 2M - Bryce Nicholas, Jessica Leask
- 3D - Taj Clark-Elkin, Kurt Murphy
- 3/4N - Katie Barton, Adrian Ray
- 4B - Riley Gardner, Kira Finnie
- 5B - Ellie Richards, Liam Litherland
- 5/6C - Kahri Anderson, Paul Battaglia
- 6L - Connor Reid, Thomas Sharman

**CHAPLAIN’S MESSAGE**
Recently, one of Australia’s golfers, Adam Scott, looked to be a certainty to win the British Open golf tournament. However, perhaps nerves seemed to prevent him from his usual accuracy, & he was narrowly beaten by another golfer, Ernie Els.

Although total devastated by his performance, Adam Scott had to front some journalists for an interview and be gracious in defeat. However, part of what he said, indicates what a fine sportsman he is.

“I didn’t finish the tournament well today, but next time, and I’m sure there **WILL** be a next time, I will do a better job of it.”

Our Olympians are also competing to test themselves at their chosen sports, and they can’t **ALL** achieve a Gold Medal.

Many of them will experience a similar pain from trying so hard, yet having to cope with a loss, just as we all do, in other aspects of life.

The way we handle this, says a lot about our character.

"Life is not about how fast you run, or how high you climb, but how well you bounce." Vivian Komori.

Perhaps this is something we could try to teach our children.

Helen Harvie
School Chaplain

Sincerely

Pam Richardson
Principal
8th August, 2012
www.swinfieldtennisacademy.com
Whitebridge Tennis Club, Lonus Ave.

Enjoy lessons with *Tennis Australia* qualified coaches

MLC Tennis Hot Shots for 4-10yr olds

Beginners to advanced private & group tuition

for adults & students

For bookings & more details phone Sue

0403 194 751
It's not okay to be away ... nor to be late to school

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem.

One of the most important things you can do to ensure your child has a bright future is to make sure he or she goes to school every day—and gets there on time.

It sounds simple, but it’s true.

The correlation between school attendance and children’s achievement levels is well-established. The more time kids spend at school, the more likely they are to experience school success.

Conversely, according to a report from the Victorian Auditor General, students who are regularly absent from school are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school early, and of experiencing long-term unemployment.

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem. Also, many teachers tell me, it’s often the kids who can least afford to take time off school who are most likely to be serial absentees.

Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools—and much of it is parent-condoned.

It’s hard to get an accurate picture across the country but it would appear that Australian students miss an average of between 12 and 15 days per school year, with parent-condoned absenteeism highest among young primary-aged children.

That adds up to a year’s lost schooling over the school-life of a child.

In today’s highly competitive world, this rate of absenteeism is alarming, putting our kids at a distinct disadvantage.

That’s not a reason to be away!

It’s now commonplace for children to stay away from school for reasons that would have been unheard of just twenty years ago. These include staying away to celebrate their own or a sibling’s birthday; being absent because they stayed up too late watching television; going shopping for clothes; an extended long weekend; and kids not wanting to take part in a sports day or special school event.

This type of absenteeism sends a strong message to kids that parents don’t really value learning or their children’s school experiences.

Australian kids only spend 15% of their total time at school. They spend more time asleep than they do at school. So we need to maximise every day to get full value. That means turning up to school every day, on time.

The Australian only spend 15% of their total time at school.

Being late is not okay either

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late.

Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day, with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do, valuable learning time is lost.

It takes strong parenting...

As a parent myself I know how persuasive children of all ages can be when it comes to taking a day off school. It takes a strong will to resist the persistent pressure that kids can bring to bear; particularly if they play the guilt card with comments such as “It’s not fair that I have to go school today because Aunty is coming to visit!”

Nice try. But the answer should be “No”.

As parents we need to make a commitment that our kids make the most of their precious time at school. That means that we send them to school every day, on time and ready to make the most of the school day.

Of course, there will be times, such as illness or genuinely extenuating family circumstances, when kids should be away. But these need to be a rarity rather than the norm.

It’s reassuring to know that you increase their chances of future success just by making sure they turn up to school every day. And of course regular school attendance also helps kids prepare for the workforce, where it will be expected that they turn up each day work-ready. The real world is unforgiving of those who stay away with NO EXCUSE.