School News

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome back to school for Term 3. I hope you all had a terrific holiday and have recharged for the next ten weeks. Term three is always a busy term with Education Week, Book Week and the athletics carnivals. This term we also have five gala days to make up for those we could not hold last term due to the closing of Onslow Oval. Next week is also the first of our big camps for the year as Year 6 head off to Canberra and the snow.

Canteen

Last term we were unable to announce the successful tender for the school canteen, until it was approved by the Finance Branch of the Department. As you would know from yesterday’s welcome letter and menu, “Made Fresh” can now be announced as the successful applicants and have begun their service in the canteen this week. Danielle and Karen will soon become familiar faces. I am sure they would be happy for you to visit the canteen and ask any questions. “Made Fresh” also often look to the school community to find additional paid staff to work in the canteen. If you are interested in being considered for a paid position in the canteen, please leave your name and contact details at the school office and they will be passed on to Karen.

Education Week Open Day

In Week 3, we look forward to past and present families coming to our Education Week Open Day, where we will also celebrate our 40th birthday and open the bicentennial time capsule. With the contents of the time capsule on show, as well as a collection of old photos and memorabilia from our archives, we are keeping the school open until 5:00pm, to enable workers to visit, view and catch up with other old faces. Feel free to come for all or part of the day. A program is printed later in this newsletter.

Playground Improvements

Over the holidays much work has happened to improve the playground for students. Mr Eagles was able to lead a number of helpers to complete the ‘digging area’, a special bordered space set aside for making roads, hills, tunnels and bridges for toy cars and trucks. It is bound to become a popular space, as well as saving the rest of the playground from excavation!
The enchanted garden is also well underway, with the ‘fairy stage’, toadstools and paths. This is still not quite complete, but has certainly already added to our playground. Many thanks to Kellee Cordina who was able to make the great backdrop for the fairy stage and arrange the donation of materials from Mitre 10. Our sand volleyball court is well underway as well, but not quite ready for playing yet.

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Over the past two days, we have held our Parent Teacher interviews. The response was, once again, very pleasing. If you were unable to make these times but would like to meet with your child’s teacher at an alternate time, please make an appointment through the office or directly with your child’s teacher.

Next week I will be in Canberra with Year 6. Any concerns in my absence can be directed to one our very capable Assistant Principals. Looking forward to seeing you in week 3 for our Education Week Open Day.

Mr Paul Mallia
Principal

Student News

Premier’s Debating Challenging
On Wednesday, 16th July, 2014 the two Mawarra debating teams competed in the 4th round. The Magpies competed against Mt. Annan while the Bluetongues against Cobbitty.
Both teams did their best and spoke very well. The Bluetongues won their debate and now will progress to the next level. Congratulations Bluetongues for your achievement.

Public Speaking
The teachers at Mawarra have been given topics for our annual public speaking competition. Soon you will receive information from your child’s teacher. This competition involves all children from K-6.

Mawarra Short Story Competition
Just a reminder that all entries for the Mawarra Short Story Competition are due to classroom teachers by Friday 1st August 2014. Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 all have different topics for entry. All entries must be word processed using Arial font size 12. Remember entries should not exceed 300-500 words. Mrs Evans and I look forward to reading the many entries for each category. If you haven’t started yet competition topics and details are on the school website or a copy of the note can be obtained from the school office.

Mrs Sharon Kynaston & Mrs Judith Evans
Enrichment Coordinators

Year 4 Camp
Just a reminder to Year 4 parents our camp to Teen Ranch is in December. Payments of any amount can be made regularly at the school office to help ease your financial situation at the end of the year.

Student Welfare

Mawarra Movers
Congratulations again to all the students who attended the Club Zero Celebration, with the Circus Troupe from Campbelltown Performing Arts High School, at the end of last term. Many children are still talking about the fabulous experience. All children have started this term on Level 0 and we hope they will work hard this term to remain on Level 0.
For the next fortnight our Mawarra Mover focus will be “using the correct behavior when visiting the canteen”. Please discuss and reinforce this with your children at home. Also this term we are rewarding positive playground behavior with tokens. When children are given a token they will put their name and class on the back and put it in a container in their classroom. Tokens will be collected each Friday and on Monday mornings there will be two draws – one for Infants and one for Primary. Winners will receive a $2.00 voucher for the canteen.

Mrs D Cronshaw
Student Welfare Committee

Live Life Well @ School
Environmentally friendly snack foods
Choose an apple, mandarin, orange, pear, banana, plum, mangoes, pieces of melons, nectarines, peaches or other fresh seasonal fruit for a quick, easy, environmentally-friendly snack. No packaging, full of nutrients and antioxidants, plus it tastes delicious!

Treats for special occasions
Food is an important part of special occasions for everyone and should be enjoyed. Your child may be invited to a party with lots of foods high in fat and sugar or to a meal at a fast food restaurant. These meals will do no harm as long as they are only eaten occasionally. But remember, children’s parties don’t need to be filled with junk food to be fun. Try to include some healthy foods as well. Here are some suggestions:

- Pretzels, slices of watermelon, mini pizzas, frozen orange wedges
- Fruit platters, hummus & pita bread, cheese cubes & crackers
- Finger sandwiches, low fat muffins, vegetable sticks & rice crackers
- Homemade popcorn, toasted lebanese bread in place of corn chips & crisps

Live Life Well Coordinators
Sharon Kynaston & Narelle Scott

Sydney South West Orienteering Championships
On Wednesday 25th June 2014, a 56 strong team of children from Mawarra attended the Sydney South West Orienteering Championships at Camden Equestrian Centre. After an initial group training session with key skills of orienting our map correctly, finding north, interpreting checkpoint locations and reading map legends the children participated in individual age events.

At the conclusion of age events children grouped into teams of 3, to participate in a school relay event. Throughout the day all the students were exceptionally well behaved and navigated the windy conditions well. All participants completed the course and made it back to base, having a much Warmer idea of orienteering and the skills involved. The level of care and consideration for team mates on the course was heartwarming. All children encouraged each other and helped along the way. All the children performed well, with a number placing in the top 10 in their age event. Exact results are still being forwarded from the Regional convenor and will be communicated in a coming newsletter. All students who particularly enjoyed the day are invited to attend the State Orienteering Championships on 16th August at Lake Macquarie.

Worthy of particular mention was the overwhelming level of parental support. Many parents transported their own and other children to and from the carnival. In fact there were so many offers of help that not everyone’s assistance was needed. In addition many parents participated in the training session and ably assisted the volunteer trainers to help the children learn these new skills.

Without the continued and much appreciated support from the parents in the Mawarra community opportunities to attend events such as this would not be available to our children. Parents your help, enthusiasm and support is much valued and acknowledged. Together we make it possible for our children to engage in experiences beyond the classroom. Thank you!

Orienteering Coordinators
Mrs Kynaston & Mrs Ruscoe

Library News

Premier’s Reading Challenge
Years 3 – 6 If your child has read and entered the required 20 books please fill in the validation slip at the end of this newsletter and send it to me. I will then go online and validate their records so they will receive their certificate at the end of the year. All records must be entered by 22nd August, 2014.

Book Club
The latest Book Club issue went home this week. All orders and money must be in to the office by 1st August, 2014.

Book Week
This year Book Week is in week 6 (18 – 22 August). We are celebrating Book Week with a Book Fair on Wednesday 20th August, 2014 and Performances on Thursday 21st August, 2014. See the separate note with full details.

Gymnastics Years 3-6
Just a reminder that Gymnastics starts on Monday for students in Years 3-6. Students are to wear their sports uniforms on Mondays.

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P&C News

P&C Mowing Roster
Thank you to the following parents, who worked the mowing roster on Saturday 28th June, 2014. Bronwyn Smith, Daniel Check, Craig Moir & Dennis Eagles (Coordinator). A wonderful job done by all.

Community News
Blanket our community with your warmth and love this winter.... We need your help!
Spare a thought for those women and their families in our communities who will struggle this winter. Please donate any extra baby blankets, cot sheets, single, double or queen blankets & sheets, towels or new pillows (still in plastic). Donated items can be dropped off until Thursday 31st July, 2014 at Cakebiz, 267 Camden Valley Way, Narellan or King Street Natural Health Centre, 20 King St, Campbelltown. Brand New Day Females Services Inc. is partnering with CakeBiz Narellan and King Street Natural Health Centre, Campbelltown and Curves Campbelltown together with local Macarthur Community Service Organisations who meet fires had those women and their families in our communities who will find this winter difficult. Please join our campaign.

Upcoming Events

Friday 18/7/14
* Yrs 3-6 Gala Day

Monday 21/7/14
* P&C Meeting @ 7.30pm

Tuesday 22/7/14 – Friday 25/7/14
* Yr 6 Canberra Excursion
(Bus leaves @ 6.30am & returns 6.00pm approx)

Tuesday 29/7/14
* Education Week, Open Day

Premiers Reading Challenge Validation Slip
I certify that my child_________________________of class_________.
Has completed the Premiers’s Reading Challenge 2014 and has abided by the set rules and conditions.

Signed_________________________ Date____________
Parent/Guardian

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Education Week
Open Day &
Birthday Celebrations
Tuesday 29th July, 2014

Mawarra has turned 40!
Past and present families & staff are invited
to our special
Education Week Open Day.

11:30 Opening of 1988 Bicentennial Time Capsule
What did they put in the capsule in 1988?
Education Week Speeches
(Under the COLA)

12:15 BBQ and picnic lunch in the playground.
Buy a sausage from the BBQ
View the memorabilia and contents of the time capsule
in the library,
Look at the Anniversary wall,
“Mawarra Past, Present and Future.”
Buy a plaque and add your name to the history of Mawarra
for evermore.

1:15 Concert
School Band, Mawarra Dance Group, MMMs
Mawarra Drummers
Happy Birthday and birthday cakes.

2:15 Open Classrooms

3:00 Afternoon Tea -
Stay and chat with old families and staff.
Browse the memorabilia and contents of the time capsule.

5:00 School Closes
ARE YOU KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE?

When it comes to the safety of vulnerable road users like school children, drivers found breaking the law will be met with zero tolerance.

If you’ve heard the expression “It’s only a matter of time until someone gets hurt” then you understand why it is important for everyone to obey the road rules.

When an offence is detected - YOU WILL BE FINED

Please obey the rules and protect the safety of your children.
40km School Zones are provided to increase the safety of all pedestrians, but especially children, who are walking in the vicinity of schools. Obey the limit and be aware of the time a day.

**What does it mean?**
You cannot stop or park in a bus zone unless you are driving a bus.

**Why is it there?**
To provide a safe place for buses to set down and pick up passengers.

**What does it mean?**
You cannot stop in this area for any reason.

**Why is it there?**
To keep the sight distance clear for drivers, children and other pedestrians to avoid crashes.

**What does it mean?**
You can stop in this area to drop off or pick up passengers for a maximum of 2 minutes. You must not leave your vehicle unattended.

**Why is it there?**
To provide safe places for children to be picked up - usually associated with Kiss & Ride zones.

40km School Zones are provided to increase the safety of all pedestrians, but especially children, who are walking in the vicinity of schools. Obey the limit and be aware of the time a day.

**PARKING ACROSS DRIVEWAYS**
Parking across or stopping on a driveway in a school zone is an offence. You could be fined $135 and lose 2 demerit points.
Helping kids who struggle at school

The way we praise our children, even from a very early age, can have a lasting impact. When done effectively, it can really promote resilience.

More and more in my work, I hear about young children struggling with anxiety, serious behavioural concerns, mental health issues and aggression.

At the same time, I am staggered to see the ‘push down’ of formalised learning onto children under six in this country. This is contrary to best practice in early years education and despite a lack of evidence validating any positive influence of early formalised education on young children’s lives.

In Issue 9 of Parentingideas Magazine, I wrote about why play is critical for brain development and social, emotional and cognitive development in young children.

The removal of play in kindergarten and preschool in favour of sight words and worksheets, homework and black line markers can be damaging to our children’s ability to function as social beings – which is still our key biological driver.

Much of the push seems to be happening to improve schools’ data – misinformed principals seeking good NAPLAN results and top rankings on the MySchool website. However, lots of educators tell me that they also get pressure from parents who do not understand how critical non-formal learning is early on.

The rise in aggressive behaviour being exhibited by many younger children, mainly boys, is a sign they are unable to cope in environments with no opportunity to play, no fun, little movement and developmentally inappropriate tasks. We then penalise these children by suspending or expelling them.

The latest COAG Reform Council report on education, released in October 2013, shows that despite some improvements in overall outcomes, the gap for Indigenous children and disadvantaged children is growing ever wider.

When you think that around 30% of children struggle with school anyway, how can parents better support their kids if they are struggling?

Tips for struggling kids

The first thing to consider is whether there are any developmental delays.

Children mature at varied rates and in all sorts of ways depending on environment and unique genetic templates.

Any kid can have developmental delays around phonemic awareness, and these can be helped by being read to a lot, learning nursery rhymes and songs and engaging in lots of conversation.

From birth children need to be saturated in sound from humans as they are unable to learn sounds from television, DVDs or screen-based devices like iPads.

If the delays are in self-regulation – the ability to manage one’s energy, to be able to concentrate for up to 15 minutes, to sit quietly when asked – you need to identify and reduce the stressors in the affected child’s life.

Things that improve self-regulation include music, sport, real play, time spent in nature and being in safe environments. Things that hinder it are too much television or other screen time, being too passive, poor food, lack of sleep, too much pressure and weak human connectedness.

If a child is forced to attempt a task they’re unable to do developmentally, this can cause enormous distress. Take handwriting for four- to five-year-olds: it’s a complex task that many children are unable to do until closer to six. The brain integration required is deceptively complex.

When a child cannot do a task like handwriting, or can’t manage to remember sounds or colour within the lines, they often see themselves as dumb or stupid.

More and more on page 2
Have realistic expectations of your children and talk to their teachers or school leaders if you feel they are expecting too much. (There are lots of articles on my website you can use as evidence in these conversations.)

If it is identified that your child has some delay issues, early intervention is essential, particularly if they are identified as having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), auditory processing concerns or sight issues.

Not all kids are going to do well at school. According to Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory we have at least nine different ways of being smart. Google this to show your children and help them work out ‘which smarts are you?’

If your child is struggling academically it is important to help them at home to be really competent at something! Self-mastery builds confidence – even if it’s tree climbing, stargazing, frog hunting, growing vegies or helping to fix things in the shed. This helps them build a healthy sense of self, even if they struggle with maths or learning to read.

For older children, investing in tutors and maybe purchasing some technology-based support is well worth the cost.

Practice makes perfect and brain plasticity allows for kids to always improve with increased effort. Remember that it must be engaging learning and fun or it will simply make things worse.

Finally, if your child is displaying really significant anxiety and distress and you have done your best to work with the school to improve things, then the environment may need to change.

We can’t leave kids struggling and just say ‘toughen up’ – otherwise we are just wiring them for hypersensitivity for life, when childhood should be filled with joy and delight.

Maggie Dent is an author, educator and speaker dedicated to quietly changing lives through commonsense wisdom. She has four adult sons and is author of five books and numerous resources including a new video seminar on raising boys: Boys, Boys, Boys. Check out her blogs, newsletter and other resources at www.maggiedent.com.