Good Evening Everyone

There’s been ‘a changing of the guard’ for both the School Council and the P&C:

SPECIAL THANK YOU’S to:
- Karen Pascoe for her contribution over several years to both the School’s Council and the P&C
- To all the outgoing P&C Executive but particularly to Fiona Brennan (Past President), Kim Burton (Secretary) and Kelly Burton (Treasurer) for their guidance and leadership over past years. All will remain active members of the P&C.

WELCOME to:
- new cleaner Jenny Love who assists Debbie Doust in keeping our School clean.
- New P&C executive members in Kasey Hill (President), Tash Viner (Vice President), Therese Ebbett (Secretary/Treasurer) and Committee Members Adele Brown and Marie Pickett.

Mrs Edmonds is on Long Service Leave; we wish her a happy break and look forward to her return perhaps later in the year.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL IN THE MORNINGS
Whilst we hope students are keen and eager to get to School it is important that students should not arrive at School prior to 8.30am. This is a time when teachers and other staff are undertaking a myriad of tasks in preparation for the day and can not provide supervision of students at play.

If for some urgent unforeseen reason you need to send your child to School prior to 8.30 it is necessary for you to contact your child’s teacher and negotiate necessary supervision; ie your child will be expected to undertake some quiet work in their classroom or the office that doesn’t distract staff.

SCHOOL COUNCIL
At the recent meeting Council amended the Dress Code to enable students to wear their sports uniform (royal blue and white shirt) on a daily basis; this is because there is not currently, a specific Physical Education day. Council also agreed that the sky blue shirts would be phased out by the end of 2013. This will allow students ‘to wear out’ shirts that parents have recently purchased. The white School shirt will remain as the uniform to be worn on excursions, special days (eg photographs)

There is currently a vacancy on the Council for at least one parent or community representative. Interested persons who wish to nominate for the position(s) should lodge the enclosed nomination with me prior to 3.30pm on Friday 16th March. You don’t need a seconder if you wish to nominate yourself; the only qualification is an interest in and a willingness to contribute to the wellbeing of the School and its community.

Current Council parent members are:
- Glen Burton 98401332 Chairperson
- Kim Burton 98401332
- Deanne Blake 98408836
- Julie Ewing 98401441
- Dave Edmonds 98401105
- Matt Wrigley 98401852
- Antony Egerton-Warburton 98401636
- Lee Cummiskey 98401019

The staff is currently represented by:
- Richard Walker Principal
- Lorelle Flett Teacher
- Carolyn Brodie Teacher
- Sherrill Williams Teacher
SCHOOL HALL
The School Hall is currently empty! If you have any suggestions as to its best use to benefit student learning please contact me or one of the School Council members.

YEAR 7’S GOING TO SECONDARY SCHOOL
Whilst the Government has reached a decision on Year 7 students going to Secondary School in 2015, it is not too late to let your local member Terry Redman know your attitude to the decision or to support a Council led initiative to try and retain our Year 7 students until 2018 by which time it appears all Year 7’s will be at high school. There will be a flow on effect to this decision in all small country communities (probably including some school closures) with a high possibility that many will lose other community facilities as a result of the transfer of these students and associated staff.
If you have strong feelings about this decision (for and against) please make contact with your School Council members NOW.

Bell times are:
8.45am Warning Bell
8.50am School commences
10.40am Morning Recess
10.55am Warning Bell
11.00am Second session commences
12.25pm Lunch
01.00pm Warning Bell
01.05pm Afternoon teaching begins
03.00pm School concludes

INSIGHTS (Michael Grose)
Attached is a copy of a complimentary parent information sheet courtesy of Michael Grose, a well-respected Australian parenting educator. Key messages are presented on ‘attendance and lateness to school’ and ‘keeping kids safe in a cyber world’.

ACTIVE AFTER SCHOOL SPORT
Parents please note that ALL students attending After School activities (including Karate) MUST gather on the lawn to the Kindergarten side of the front office pathway from where they will be escorted across the road. This is a necessary duty of care safety issue to avoid possible accidents.
During the last 2-3 weeks of this term students will be offered the chance to be part of a yachting programme that will continue on into Term 2. Numbers will be limited to approximately 16 students and first preference will be given to Yr 7, then Yr 6 students and so on until the required number is achieved. More information will be provided to students accepted into the programme which will be conducted with the support of the Walpole Yacht Club.
Students wishing to participate need to lodge the enclosed Expression of Interest with the office by Friday 9 March.

School Fees
The School Council set the following fees for 2012 at:

- Kindergarten $50.00 per child compulsory
- Years P-7 $25 per child voluntary

These fees enable the School to provide additional facilities to all students and parent support in making the contributions promptly will be appreciated.
Thank you to those parents who have already made this payment.
Last year we received in excess of 90% of payments allowing us to purchase a range of resources that would otherwise not have been possible.

STUDENT PERSONAL INSURANCE COVER
Refer to the following website www.studentcover.com.au which is not endorsed by the School (or Education Dept) but does offer parents an option if they are considering taking out a student accident policy.
Please do not contact the School; all contact is to be made direct with insurer.

STUDENT BANKING
Bendigo Bank, with the support of the P&C, will be offering school banking for students commencing on Wednesday 29 February. Students who already have accounts (with Bendigo Bank) can collect a wallet from the office to begin banking next Wednesday. Parents of students wishing to begin banking will need to go to Bendigo Bank (Community resource Centre) to open an account prior to commencing school banking.

MONDAY LUNCHES
On Mondays students will be able to order an ‘oslo’ lunch comprising a salad platter and a vegemite or peanut paste white/wholemeal sandwich or roll, plus a piece of fruit and a fruit drink that all comply with the Department’s food recommendations. This service will be available weekly on Mondays and will run for Term 1.
Students/Staff will NOT be assisting with preparation of lunches. Cost will be four dollars ($4.00) and students need to bring the money in a sealed envelope marked with their name and choices marked on the outside of the envelope:

- vegemite or peanut paste
- white or wholemeal
- sandwich or roll

In the event that no choices are made the lunch will be made at the discretion of the ‘chef’.

INCURSIONS/EXCURSIONS POLICY
Incursions and excursions are NOT COMPULSORY parts of the School’s academic programme and in accordance with information included in the November 10, 2011 newsletter students are required to contribute $5.00 towards attending any activity. Students who do not pay the money are provided with other appropriate learning activities and required supervision during the activity.

INTERSCHOOL SWIMMING CARNIVAL
Our students will again be provided with the opportunity to participate in the Interschool Carnival with Frankland and Kendenup PS students at Mt Barker Pool on Thursday 15 March. Students who hold at least Level 5 Swimming Certification will be able to nominate for the carnival. We will then have a pre-carnival trial day to determine the School team; further information will be provided shortly.

THANK YOU
Thanks go to Sue Youngman for her contribution of fabrics to our sewing group. The students appreciate the wide range of materials and aprons are in the process of being made from them.

If you have any matters that you wish to discuss with me or any of the teachers, please telephone to make a mutually convenient appointment. I can’t guarantee the answers that everyone wants BUT I will listen and endeavour to negotiate an acceptable solution or to investigate your concerns and get back to you!

Have a great start to the new year.

Richard Walker

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This Fortnight’s thought
Though provoking article from today’s West Letters to the Editor:

Even blind Freddy would agree with David Zyngier (School systems must do better, 20/2) and your editorial (Time for hard decisions on schools reviews, 21/2). Money alone, although an issue, will not solve the schooling issue. We have migrant children, with limited English background but strong parental leadership, succeeding in this imperfect system. Could it be that our problems are deep rooted within our society - namely, not valuing education enough to make a difference? Sporting heroes, pop stars and to a lesser extend business people are glorified while our youth unemployment soars at a time when the demand for knowledge and the intellect has never been so great. Admittedly, parents cannot do it alone, they must work in partnership with teachers and become involved en masse. After all, they are the foundation, not the bottom, of the education system. They should not wait until Year 12 to learn that their child is reading at Year 5 level.

Students will have to learn that excellence is not an elitist concept but one which can be embraced by the masses. It means personal best. The things we do most we tend to do best. In other words, if we spent hours and hours practising with a football our motor skills would improve; the same applies to our cognitive skills if we spend time studying, with TV, telephone and the array of social media. The issue is not so much genes as the agenda. The school could be so new and teachers so skilled but if one is so ‘hung up’ on ‘good times’ the prospects for serious learning are limited. Too many of our youngsters are opting to be entertained rather than educated. Part of it could be attributed to our fascination with self-esteem. Self-esteem is only the meter that reads the motor. Therefore, when things go wrong we rush in to boost the meter instead of concentrating on the motor. If education is truly a community enterprise then we must all work together to educate our young. We need teachers, preachers, business and industry, unions, media and all enterprises working together to enhance our schools, thus boosting productivity and quality of life. And that means parents and students accepting their own responsibility in the whole process.

Michael Detiuk, Perth
WATER BOMBERS

Unexpectedly during school on Tuesday, two bush fire water bombers helicopters that had been attending the Northcliffe bush fires, landed on the Walpole town oval. All the classes were invited over to see and experience the bombers. It was great excitement when these giant helicopters landed, with the hard hit of air nearly knocking us off our feet.

Each of the classes were invited to see the inside of the bombers. The inside of the bombers were great and the hundreds of buttons in the front were fascinating. Some students even got to sit in the pilot seat. Locals saw the aircraft filling up their tanks with water from the inlet.

It pays to come to school every day because you never know what is going to happen.

By Indi Cooper, Year 7

SCHOOL COUNCIL NOMINATION

I …………………………………… wish to nominate for any vacancy that exists on the Walpole Primary School Council.

………………………………
Signature

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - YACHTING

I …………………………………… wish to express my interest to participate in the yachting program.

I give permission for my child __________________ to participate in the yachting program.

………………………………
Signature
Date

CONGRATULATIONS

Tully Lane, Shannon Wrigley and Toby Burton … Congratulations on being nominated to attend under 12’s “Shooting Stars.” Nominations were based on performance, hard work and enthusiasm displayed throughout 2011. Tully was identified and selected to continue in the newly formed Future Development Program. Congratulations and best wishes Tully, follow your dreams and continue to work hard.

Presented by the Riverton Willetton Kindergarten

Connecting with our Children

After providing 30 years of Early Childhood Services to the Community the Riverton Willetton Kindergarten proudly presents you the

“Connecting with our Children” Early Years Conference.

Saturday 17th March, 2012

Wesley College, South Perth

Connecting with our children will provide an opportunity to build together a community that shares our child rearing experiences. Together we can inspire and engage with an emphasis on, Wellbeing, Empathy, Engagement & Relationships

Go to

www.perthevents.com

for full details and to register online.

What the conference includes:

• Two keynote speakers
• Three workshop presentations of your choice
• Food and refreshments
• An opportunity to meet keynote speakers and workshop presenters
• Networking with families and connecting with community partners
• Questions and answer with workshop presenters and facilitators available at the end of the day.

Key note Speakers

Maggie Dent &
Piers Verstegen
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.

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.

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 Austin 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.

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, pulling our kids at a distinct disadvantage.
Keeping kids safe in a cyber world

Social media sites have taken cyber bullying and harassment to a new level. Here’s how to keep your kids safe when online.

Cyber bullying is one of the biggest, safety issues facing young people today. Bullying and harassment online is now commonplace. For instance, over a third of teenage girls have been sexually harassed via the Internet.

The emergence of social media sites has seen cyberbullying go to a new level. Messages and images can now spread like wildfire reaching a huge potential audience in the time it takes to upload an image or shoot off a text message.

Once the family home offered young people an escape from schoolyard bullies. Now the cyber world is so invasive that their bedrooms offer no guarantee of safety any more.

The cyber world is enticing. Young people have always wanted to escape from their parents’ world. In the past they hung out in shopping centres and pool halls. Parents tried their best to keep an eye on where their children were and what they were doing.

The online world is now the shopping mall of the 21st Century. Parents have the same responsibility to help kids stay safe in the online world as they do in the real world. ‘Stranger danger’ and accompanying safe behaviours are just as relevant in the online world as they are in the real world.

Parents should use the same offline preventative strategies to maximise their children’s online safety as they’ve always used. These strategies include: teaching children about the right way to behave online; don’t let them spend all night in the cyber world; and ask questions about what they are doing and where they go when they’re online.

Parents need to remind kids that things in the online world can spin out of control very quickly. A written message or an image can be circulated electronically so rapidly that the scope and scale of cyber bullying can be greater than any other form of bullying.

The following seven key messages form the basis of an online safety strategy for kids. They should be taught to kids so they become second nature, just as the messages about stranger danger were absorbed by an earlier generation.

1. Respect others. Make kids aware that what they send can offend. Discuss with kids the types of messages and images that can cause harm to others when sent. Teenagers often walk a fine line with what they do and say to each other offline, yet it’s relatively harmless. The same type of behaviour online however can be a different story.

2. Think before you send. Remind kids cyberspace is a very public and permanent forum. A text message or image sent to just one person can be passed to a potentially unlimited number. Once they are sent they’re almost impossible to erase and take back.

3. Treat online passwords like your house key. Teach kids to keep passwords guarded at all times. Young people can be incredibly trusting of each other, which is to be encouraged. However there are some things, such as online passwords that they don’t share, not even with their best friend.

4. Block bullies. Teach kids to block bullying messages. They can filter out messages and addresses online. Similarly, they can block text messages from bullies as well.

5. Don’t reply to harassment. Bullies can retain proof of your response, which can further be spread around. Besides responding to bullying behaviour often simply encourages the bully to continue.

6. Save the evidence. If kids are bullied they should keep the pictures and offending messages. These can be used as proof if the bullies are brought to justice.

7. Tell someone. The insidious part of bullying is that kids on the receiving end often don’t seek help, as they think there’s something wrong with them. Talk with kids about going to a trusted adult, when they feel their rights or safety have been violated. They should with your help report online bullying to the appropriate service provider.

Sticking the proverbial head in the sand regarding kids’ use of communications technology is no longer an option for parents. Savvy parents need to learn as much as they can about children’s and young people’s online lives so they can respond to situations appropriately.
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