Achieving and Improving

Key Priorities
Our key priority this year are an unrelenting focus on improving reading, writing and numeracy in all students through a whole school approach which includes explicit instruction. We also have an unrelenting focus on attendance.

Welcome back!
We are looking forward to an exciting year. I hope you have had an enjoyable summer, that the dams and tanks are full, and that you are ready to send your children back to us well rested and ready for a new school year. We want all children to learn because we know that all of your children are capable. You, the families in the community we serve, enhance the high quality of our school. You have high expectations for the school and your children’s performance, and we applaud and welcome those expectations.

Key Priorities
Our key priorities this year will be an unrelenting focus on improving reading, writing and numeracy in all students through a whole school pedagogical approach which includes explicit instruction. We also have an unrelenting focus on attendance. As research shows that poor school attendance is associated with:

- lower academic achievement including literacy and numeracy
- early school leaving
- leaving school with fewer qualifications
- reduced opportunities for students to learn and access educational resources, further limiting achievement
- further absenteeism in higher year levels
- increased alcohol, tobacco, and substance use in adolescents

Last year our final attendance figure was 95.1%. Let’s see if this year we can beat that!

Responsible Behaviour Plan
With the start of the school year we will be reviewing with the students our Responsible Behaviour Plan. The school rules are aligned with the values, principles and expected standards outlined in the Department of Education’s Code of School Behaviour and were endorsed by all staff and our school P&C. Our school community identified the following school rules to teach and promote our high standards of responsible behaviour:

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe

Each week a student is acknowledged on parade for displaying responsible behaviour. More on how we reinforce our responsible behaviour plan in next week’s newsletter.
Attendance

- It is important that your children attend school every day. Taking a day off because the fish are biting, or you want to go shopping on your birthday, is not an acceptable reason to miss a day of school.
- If your child is sick you should contact the school as soon as possible with an estimation of how long your child will be away from school.
- If your family has to travel away for family or cultural reasons, and expect to be away for more than 10 days you will have to apply for an exemption from Compulsory Schooling. Exemptions should be applied for and approved by the Principal of your child’s school BEFORE you travel away.
- It is not acceptable to take your children out of school for holidays. Families should plan their holidays to coincide with school holidays.

You can find more information about exemptions:

Steam train excursion

On Friday January 30 students from P-6 will travel to Rockhampton via a hired coach to board a steam train to St Lawrence. The train leaves Rockhampton station at 8.15am and will arrive in St Lawrence at 11.30am. We will then make our way to the St Lawrence Reserve for lunch before boarding the bus to return to the school.

Transport:   Hired coach and steam train
Venue:    Rockhampton and St Lawrence railway stations
Food:   Bring morning tea and a water bottle; lunch will be provided
Depart school:  6.30am
Return to school:  2:30pm
Dress:   School uniform including a hat, small backpack to hold morning tea and water bottle

Queensland rail has provided the following information about the journey.

- Customers must keep heads and arms inside the carriage at all times.
- Children under 4 years of age, travelling free of charge, must relinquish a seat to fare-paying customers.
- Children must be supervised by an adult while walking through the train or standing on the veranda at the end of each carriage.
- Children must not be carried through the train or while on the veranda.
- Customers must obey direction from onboard staff at all times.
- A range of food items, confectionery, tea & coffee, soft drinks, water and juices can be purchased in the dining car. Alcohol is not permitted on the journey.
- Persons travelling on a concession must carry the appropriate concession card at all times throughout the journey and must present the card with the ticket if requested.
- Footwear must be worn at all times.

Parent and Teacher Interviews

Parent and Teacher Interviews will take place later this term. A calendar will be sent home for parents to nominate times that are suitable. We would like students to attend interviews with their parents. If you have any concerns prior to these times please don’t hesitate to contact the school.

Meg Saunderson  msaun23@eq.edu.au

Increased resources to empower principals and their school community

The Queensland Government is committed to empowering principals and their school communities to deliver high quality education and to lift outcomes for every state school student in Queensland. That’s why there has been a significant increase in the amount of resources allocated to schools, as well as a concerted effort to allocate these resources directly to schools. Now, more than ever, principals have the resources and the autonomy they need to lead school improvement. The direct allocation of the Great Results Guarantee funding, the Students with Disability Resources, and the Whole School Support − Student Learning Resources give schools the means to lift outcomes for all their students. Our school is working hard to make the most of the opportunity to work with our community using high impact strategies that will make a positive difference for all of our students.

Hostile persons on school grounds − verbal direction

From January 2015, Principals will have the power to give a verbal direction (rather than a written direction) to hostile persons to leave and not enter school premises for a period of 24 hours. Principals can also ban a person for up to 60 days
New program for reading, spelling and writing
This year we have begun a new program to help students understand the speech sounds in words. It is called SSP (speech sound pictures). We will be using ‘Duck Hands’, Lines and Numbers to reinforce this and to rewire the brains of students to increase phonemic awareness (the smaller speech sounds in words).

Parent information session
There will be an information afternoon for parents before homework begins so that we are all speaking the same language. It will be in week 2, Tuesday February 3 at 3.15pm in the P - 6 room. If you are unable to attend it would be great if you could email me so that I can send you a link to a video explaining the coding process.

Download the free app
Use the SSP Spelling Piano app to reinforce code knowledge, blending skills, and to overcome phonemic awareness issues while having FUN!
Tip: If you can't hear Miss Emma's voice when you play the piano keys, go to Settings and then Sound. Check that the ringer and alerts button is switched all the way up. Once this is done it should all work.

Classroom news
P - 6 room
English
We are all starting at Duck level 1, the green level in the new program. The sounds in this level are S, A, T, P, I, N. Students need to be able to identify these sounds anywhere in a word, not just the beginning or the end and need to be able to recognise the sounds consistently to move to the next level. Each day we will also be undertaking writing. Building our writing stamina so that we can write for longer and longer periods of time.

Maths
In Maths we will focus on the development of number sense and understanding. It will include counting sequences, number facts, place value, number representation and the properties of numbers.

Geography P - 2
This term P-2 will undertake a unit called Places around us. They will:
- create maps and models to represent features of places
- describe location and direction in relation to these places
- identify where features of places are located
- investigate the organisation of spaces and represent their location and features on pictorial maps

Civics and Citizenship
This semester students will develop civic knowledge and understanding, and apply citizenship skills to explore democracy in the context of the familiar and personal. They will:
- explore democracy through learning about decision making within communities
- consider the purpose of creating rules for groups and how individuals participate in their community

NAPLAN
During term 1 and 2 students in Year 3 - 6 will be reviewing NAPLAN style questions in mathematics, grammar, spelling and reading comprehension as well as practising work with calculators.

Student leadership applications came home this week
Election of Sports Captains will take place this term. Due to the lower number of students we will only have one sport captain for each house. On Tuesday students in Year 4 and 5 were given the Student Leadership Framework and application book. Student application booklets are due back on Monday in week 2. During the next week students will be preparing their speeches to present at a special parade that will take place at 9.00am on Friday of week 2, February 6.

Student leadership conference
On Thursday February 19 there will be a leadership conference in Rockhampton for our Year 5 - 6 students. It will begin at 9.00 and conclude at 2.30.
Design Technology
All students will be decorating a cake for entry into the Marlborough Show. We will begin at the explore stage, looking at different designs and ways of creating the desired effect. Then we will come up with original designs and make a prototype using play dough. This will enable us to decide what modifications are needed before creating the actual design using icing.

PE
In PE this Semester we are undertaking swimming lessons. These will begin in week two.

Art
This term students will be busy preparing their pieces for entry into the Marlborough Show.

Library
Don’t forget library borrowing day for the P - 6 is on Thursday. Please remind students to bring a library bag.

Birthdays
December: 23rd Mrs Polkinghorne; 29th Shelby
January: 7th Brodie; 18th Cooper; 20th Madison

OUR SCHOOL CAPTAINS
Clayton Armstrong - Vice Captain
Hannah Chapman - Captain

New Faces
Polly White - Prep
Chloe Bleakley – Year 2
School timetable
We are still waiting for another teacher to be assigned to our school to cover my Administration Day, until that time I will be teaching for the full 5 days.

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Pack up classroom; gather homework folder, readers, spelling
End of day parade and messages
**Needed Term 1**

Parent volunteers

To supervise Cross Country Training

From 8.30am to 9am

Monday, Thursday and Friday.

If you can help out please call the office

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**P & C MEETING**

Next Wednesday, 4\(^{th}\)

February, 2015

@ 3.15pm

**ALL WELCOME**