Term 1 Week 4 Thursday 20 February 2014

PRINCIPAL’S PAGE

Staffing News

Merrimac State School has received its staffing allocation for our Special Education Program (SEP) for the 2014 school year. In total we have received three teacher positions. Currently our SEP full time teachers are Mrs Bocaccini, Mr Tony Niotakis and Mr Guy Fitter. Miss Amy McDonald will continue to work one day a week in the SEP for this term. Our school has also received 73 Teacher Aide hours to support the SEP program. This is an increase of ten hours on last year. This is in response to the growing number of children within our Special Education Program. We currently have 41 children who receive additional support by SEP Teachers and Teacher Aides both in the classroom and in the playground. The size of our Special Education Program is comparable to most schools our size on the Gold Coast.

Our school has also received an increased allocation of Support Teacher (Literacy and Numeracy) teacher time. Mrs Roxanne Sloss is our permanent full time Support Teacher. Mrs Marion Prentis will start next week also undertaking the Support Teacher role four days a week. To enable her to do this, Mrs Prentis will not be able to continue teaching 3C each Friday. Miss Amy McDonald will replace Mrs Prentis and teach Year 3C each Friday.

Student Attendance

Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between student attendance and academic performance. The attendance rate at our school for 2013 was 92.5%. This is very much in line with the state average. Our South East Education Region has set a target for its schools of 95% attendance rate. This is the target that our school has adopted as its target for 2014. Education Queensland is promoting its slogan that ‘Every Day Counts’. Our school has a high number of students who attend school every day within a school year. As a school and as parents we should be continually stressing to our students the importance of attending school every day.

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to fulfil their academic potential and there is also a legal requirement for parents/caregivers to ensure their children regularly attend an appropriate approved program of education. All parent/caregivers need to be aware of the following requirements for authorising student absences and late arrivals:

- All student absences must be authorised by a parent/carer. This can be done by sending a note in with the student on his/her return to school, by phoning or emailing the school office or by speaking to the relevant teacher in person. If you know your child will be away for three or more consecutive days, you must notify the school office.
- All late arrivals must be authorised by a parent/carer. Students who do not arrive at their classroom by 9.00am are to report to the office on arrival at school to obtain a late slip. If students who arrive late are not accompanied to the office by a parent/carer, they will need to have a note to explain their reason for being late or the parent/carer will need to phone the office prior to the student’s arrival.

For a small number of students, regular attendance is a problem. It is recognised that some students do suffer serious or reoccurring illnesses and occasionally pressing family matters or crises can stop some students from coming to school. Such absences are quite understandable, but some students seem to have regular absences, a day here and a day there, over the school year and often it is possible to see a pattern in these absences. All teachers mark their electronic rolls twice daily and it is possible to monitor student attendance on a regular basis. Frequent absences make it difficult for students to keep pace with classwork and can make it difficult for teachers to properly assess students. Maximising attendance at school enhances students’ academic progress and it helps prepare them for the expectations that will be required both at high school and later in life when they join the workforce. Please don’t let your children down by letting them stay at home unnecessarily when they should be at school.

I will keep parents informed at the end of each term, how our school is travelling towards its attendance goal of 95%.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of our school. Parents and grandparents are always welcome in various areas within our school. If you are able to help out in the tuckshop or bookshop please contact the school with your details. We look forward to meeting more of you in 2014. If you are free on a regular or casual basis we would appreciate your help.

Children at School after 3.15pm

Children are supervised in the parent car park till 3.15pm. Any children who have not been collected by this time are asked to wait in front of the school near the Administration Building (between the large car park gum tree and the main small gate entrance to the school). This allows Admin to monitor that students are all eventually collected by their parents. Please do not ask your child to meet you anywhere else if you will be collecting them after 3.15pm. This practice could prove unsafe.

Playground Leaders

Prep students have enthusiastically welcomed the Year 6 Playground Pals to their morning tea play time. The students completed a six week training session in Term 4 last year to prepare them for the responsibility of showing prep students how to play and interact in their new school environment. They have learnt about age appropriate games, how to talk to younger students and problem-solving skills. They are also committed to fortnightly training during 2014 to maintain and grow their leadership skills.

The students are supported in their work by Mrs Hall and Mrs Chalip, our Guidance Officer. Students self-nominated for the program and it has been gratifying to see a large number of our Year 6 students participating in the program. At the end of the semester, they will be recognised by a Playground Pals Certificate and as an extra curricula activity on their report card. It is also a great program to have on a student’s record if they choose to pursue leadership activities in Year 7. Merrimac State School would like to thank all our Playground Pals for a fantastic effort so far this Term and for making our Prep playground a fun, safe and happy place to play.
Student Leadership Ceremony

The date for the badge presentation ceremony is next Tuesday 25 February commencing at 2.00pm in the PAC. A number of special guests have been invited to assist with the presentation of badges. Parents are also invited to attend this special ceremony.

School-wide Positive Behaviour

This is the second year that Merrimac State School has been involved in the school-wide positive behaviour program. Last year, school staff and the current Year 6 and 7 students worked on a new framework for our school rules, Safe, Respectful Learner. In 2014, every class has a lesson focus designed around one of these rules each week. The behaviour concepts are then followed up on parade.

To help launch our new rules, the students chose six water dragons as mascots. Their names are Ralph and Rosie. New signs with our school mascots and the rules are on display in the PAC. Signs will be put up around the school to reinforce this message.

To add a little fun, we have also had a ‘Find a Ralph’ competition where students hunted for pictures of the mascot around the school. Students have also been invited to submit a poster explaining our rules in a year level poster competition. The quality of the artwork has been outstanding and our Year 6 and 7 school leaders had a very difficult time in judging the winners. The winners were announced on parade this week and copies of their work can be seen on display in the foyer of the administration block.

Congratulations to our Ralph and Rosie Poster Winners

Prep Kate Word Year 4 Torja Lepp
Year 1 Marli Lavender Year 5 Miguel Athfield
Year 2 Ally Hounsell Year 6 Freezia Huang
Year 3 Alisa Robertson Year 7 Teijare Rhodes

NAPLAN Testing Dates

Please note the following dates which have been set aside for this year’s National testing for all Years 3, 5 and 7 children:

Tuesday 13 May Language Conventions/Writing Task
Wednesday 14 May Reading Comprehension
Thursday 15 May Numeracy Testing
Friday 16 May Catch Up Day for any testing

School Forts/Playgrounds

Students are reminded that the school forts/playgrounds are out of bounds both before and after school. At these times there is no staff on rostered duty and therefore there would be no assistance if an accident happened. Parents are asked to support this school rule and are reminded that it applies to all children whether parents are in attendance or not. After School Care children are not allowed on the school forts until after 3.20pm each afternoon.

School Uniforms

Parents and students are reminded that our school has an approved School Dress Code and Jewellery Policy. These have been approved by our school’s P&C Association. Along with the school’s responsible Behaviour Plan, parents are made aware of these policies when enrolling students at our school. Copies are available from school or can be found on the school’s website. Parents are asked to reinforce our school’s expectations with their children.

Children are reminded that shoes (joggers or runners) are supposed to be predominantly black or white. They should not be bright multi-coloured shoes. Children should not be wearing fluorescent shoes to school or to out of school activities.

Request for References

From time to time requests are made by parents and children for references to various Private Schools. The Gold Coast Primary Principals’ Association has determined that such references should not be supplied. This decision is endorsed by our School Council. It is felt that the making available of the School Report Card and any Statewide Testing is sufficient documentation for all Private Schools. This means that the school will not be able to assist with requests for written references. This also applies to individual teachers in an official capacity. A copy of the child’s Report Card and Statewide Testing will be made available if requested by parents.

Special Education Program (SEP) Building

The construction of our new SEP Building will soon be commencing. The construction fencing is now in place and the project is expected to be completed by mid-April. Please take extra care around this area.

New School Website and QSchools Smartphone App

The QSchools app is available to the school community as a free download via the Apple iTunes store and Google Play. The QSchools app has just been updated and now includes information on our Tuckshop, Bookshop, enrolment forms and documents, as well as continuing to give information on newsletters, calendar of events, newsfeeds and alerts. All parents are encouraged to access this free App on their iPhone or Android phone. If you already have the QSchools app installed, please update the app to access the latest features.

Messages

There are times when parents need to get important messages to their children during the school day. The usual way of doing this is for the parent to ring the school and office staff will pass the message on to the child at an appropriate time. If a parent wishes to contact a teacher or other staff member, please call the school to make an appointment or ask that the staff member return your call. We try to keep interruptions in the classroom to a minimum during the school day. We thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Parents are asked to contact the office prior to 2.30pm if they want a message given to their child before school finishes at 2.55pm.

Religious Education (RE)

Religious Education commenced today. All RE lessons are now held on a Thursday. Except for Roman Catholic and Bahá’í, children remain in their class groups for their thirty minute RE lesson. The children receive a general non-denominational Religious Education lesson. Participation in these lessons is encouraged. Children who do not participate in religious education will be supervised in a nearby classroom. Parents wishing to exclude their children from Religious Education classes during the year need to do so in writing.

All students participating in general non-denominational Religion classes require activity books which were part of the year level booklist and will be delivered in the next week to the students who have paid for them through the booklist.

The cost per year is $6.00 and includes two activity books which add interest and fun to RE lessons. They are full colour with puzzles, word games, colouring activities and song sheets in the back. Please see the bookshop if you still need to purchase these books. Bookshop hours are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8.00am – 9.00am.

Catholic RE Book requirement

Children who participate in Catholic Religion should give their $5.00 directly to their Religion teacher in Religion class to obtain their Catholic RE book.

Arts Council Performance

‘No Way’ is an interactive dance theatre production that tackles the serious issue of bullying in a creative and vibrant way. Using moveable puzzle pieces to reveal questions and scenarios about bullying, the two dancers will draw students into the heart of the bullying problem and help them to discover a solution. It is set to
a dynamic soundtrack of music. Cost is $6 per child. Flyers have been sent home. Please fill in the permission form and send to the finance window with $6 enclosed before Friday 21 March. NO LATE PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED so pay now and avoid disappointment if your child is away on the final payment day. Direct deposit is not available for this event.

Session Times: 9.00am Yrs 4-7 11.30am Prep-Yr3

Students Personal Details
We have received over 200 changes to phone contacts and addresses. Please ensure your contact details are always up to date with the school as we may need to contact you urgently. We would like to have an email address for all families. Please ensure that you return a current email address as part of your details. If no changes are required do not return the sheet. Please note that parents/carers are always the first emergency contact. If you are including extra emergency contacts please ensure they are local residents as they will be contacted if we are unable to contact you first.

Also parents are advised that the OneSchool database we use does not allow for students to have 2 residential addresses. The SMS option is also only available to 1 parent.

Breakfast and Fitness Program
The before school Breakfast/Fitness Program on a Wednesday morning before school is going very smoothly. Thank you to all those Years 5, 6 and 7 students who are regularly turning up. We have now decided to open up the Breakfast/Fitness program to interested Year 4 students. Students will need to commit to attending each week from 7.50am to 8.45am to be part of the program. Thanks to the parents who have been helping with the breakfast program. It is very much appreciated. We also thank Carrara Woolworths and Merrimac McDonalds for their ongoing support of this program.

Gooding Drive Parking
A number of our parents are parking of an afternoon along Gooding Drive and crossing this very busy road. There is a lot of traffic along Gooding Drive and it is a 70 kph zone. Parents should only be crossing at the designated traffic lights. It only takes a couple of minutes longer to do the right thing and ensure that our children are safe.

P&C NEWS

P&C AGM Meeting
Our next P&C meeting on Monday 10 March is our Annual General Meeting. All committee positions will become vacant and a new committee will be elected for the following positions: President, Vice President, Minutes Secretary, Correspondence Secretary and Treasurer.

There will be a number of vacancies within the P&C executive. Also we need to elect a Fundraising Coordinator and fill positions on several P&C sub committees. Interested parents are invited to come along and be part of our P&C.

Becoming involved in the Parents and Citizens Association enables you to ‘have a say’ about your child’s education. You learn a great deal about the environment that your child spends so much time in. You learn about Education Queensland and how it operates. You meet new friends, learn to work as a team and most importantly you become a community member and feel a part of our school. Our P&C do a great job for our school. Please come along and support your child’s school.

The meeting will commence at 6.30pm in the school staffroom and all interested parents are invited to attend. Mrs Ros Bates, our State Member for Mudgeeraba will be in attendance at the General Meeting which will follow the AGM.

Homestay Experience
Expression of Interest forms to host a Japanese student from Katsuragi Elementary School in July/August were sent home last week to all Year 4-7 students. If you have not returned a form, please do so by Friday 21 February.

Katsuragi Parent IEC Meeting
The next Katsuragi IEC Parent Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 24 February at 3.15 p.m. in the LOTE Building (Japanese room). New members are warmly welcomed.

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK


FINANCE NEWS

Parents are encouraged to ensure payment is made by due dates as final numbers are often required and your child will miss out on an event if they have not paid by the due date. We are currently accepting payments for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Payment Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selected</td>
<td>Leadership Day</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>21 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strings/Band</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>28 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strings/Band</td>
<td>Instrument Hire</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>28 Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>$140</td>
<td>10 Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-7</td>
<td>Arts Council*</td>
<td>$6</td>
<td>21 Mar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please do not pay Arts Council via direct deposit

MUSIC NEWS

Please note the following times for Instrumental & Choral Groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8.00-8.45am</td>
<td>Snr Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8.00-8.45am</td>
<td>Snr Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8.00-8.45am</td>
<td>Beg Strings in Music Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.50-1.40pm</td>
<td>Int Strings in Music Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>2.55-4.00pm</td>
<td>Jnr Band commencing Week 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.00-8.45am</td>
<td>Snr Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>8.15-9.00am</td>
<td>Jnr Choir commencing 28 Feb</td>
</tr>
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Talent Quest – 3 weeks till the heats begin!
Merrimac Talent Quest Finals will be held on Friday 28 March.
Year level heats will be conducted in week 8 in the PAC. All students who wish to participate can commence practising now. Performance sections are:

*Dance  *Singing  *Drama  *Instrumental

All items must be within a 3 minute time frame. Keep reading the newsletter for more information in the coming weeks.
Choral Camp 24-26 March
There is a fabulous opportunity for selected students from the Senior Choir to attend a 3 day, 2 night Regional Choral camp at Mt Tambourine in week 8. Notes for this event have been sent home. Replies should be given to Mrs Powell tomorrow morning as we must have nominations in tomorrow 21 February.

PE NEWS

District Swimming Carnival
Well done to Conor Brown, Chase Laviolette, Ami Martin and Luka Zarew who took part on Tuesday in the Gold Coast South Swimming Trials. All swam very well. Congratulations to Conor and Chase who have now qualified in a number of events to compete at the South Coast Regional trials. We wish both of them all the very best.

District Trials
During 1st term there are a number of district trials for various sports. They are open for students turning 12 this year (unless specified). The student must play the relevant sport at a high level in order to nominate. Below is the list of various sporting trials to be held. If your child is interested and meets the above criteria, they can see Mr Singh for more information.

- Netball (11 & 12 years)
- Basketball (12 years)
- Rugby League (11 & 12 years)
- Touch Football (12 years)

Hot Shots Tennis
Students in Years 1-7 have been enjoying the fantastic Hot Shots Tennis Program during their PE classes. They have been practising their forehands, backhands, learning how to score and have a great time doing it. MLC Tennis Hot Shots are offering a free T Shirt and other cool stuff, because of your child’s participation.

Hotshots.tennis.com.au/claim to claim your free stuff.

TUCKSHOP NEWS

Tuckshop Roster for Week beginning Monday 24 Feb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon 17/2</th>
<th>Mayumi</th>
<th>Meal Deal - Thurs 27 Feb $5*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue 18/2</td>
<td>Yoko H</td>
<td>• Ham &amp; Cheese Toastie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 19/2</td>
<td>Yoko M, Naoko</td>
<td>• Frozen Juice Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur 20/2</td>
<td>Mayumi, Maria S</td>
<td>• Sumo Cookie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 21/2</td>
<td>Naoko, Mayumi</td>
<td>• Bottled Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Please add 50c extra for an upgrade to flavoured milk or Aroona springwater

Many thanks to my volunteers this week. Your help is greatly appreciated. Collect your new menu from the tuckshop. Have a great week everyone.

~ Denise ~

COMMUNITY NEWS

Robina State High School Invitation for Year 7, 2015 Enrolment Information Night
Thursday 6 March 2014 5.30pm - 7.00pm RS Society Performing Arts Complex. We warmly invite interested parents to join us for an enrolment information session on Thursday 6 March. The session will provide an overview of our school, our curriculum, our specialised programs and our approach to Junior Secondary Education. Telephone 55623444 for more information.

Queensland Cancer Council’s Relay for Life
The cancer council will be hosting the Gold Coast Relay for Life. It will be held March 22 (3pm) - 23 (9am) at Doug Jennings Park, Gold Coast Spit. The relay for life is a unique 18 hour event where teams of 10 to 15 friends take turns to keep a baton moving in a relay style walk or run overnight. There are no age limitations or fitness requirements – Relay for Life is suitable for everyone.

It is an amazing experience where you can get together with your mates, camp overnight and enjoy the free entertainment, prizes and ceremonies that make Relay for Life so inspirational.

Each person on the team pays a registration fee of $20 for adults and $15 if under 18. This entitles team members to a polo shirt, plus breakfast the next morning. Relay is first and foremost a fundraising event. Team members are encouraged to raise as much money as possible. A shield for the highest fundraising team and a certificate for each team member is on offer for anyone who is in a position to raise extra money.

REMEMBER every cent your team raises goes to the Cancer Foundation to help pay for valuable research and SAVE people’s lives. You don’t even have to register or relay, just come along and join in on the stacks of live entertainment and scrumptious food.

Schools are crucial in keeping relay for life going and supporting all the good work that it does. The relay for life is the world’s largest team event in the campaign against cancer. It’s a mutual benefit for students also; relay for life will give you leadership’s skills for life and open up so many opportunities. Not to mention it will look good on your resume. Giving up your time for ONE day will MAKE a difference! How wonderful will that make your feel? So get your family, friends and teachers together and make this an event to remember.

For more information- For information and to register your team-

Do you have a child in year 4, 5 or 6?
Have you missed out on thousands of dollars?
In 2001 the Government introduced the ‘First Child Tax Offset’ and surprisingly many Australians did not know about it and have NOT claimed any benefits. If you have ANY child that was born between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2004 you may be eligible to receive up to $12500 of entitlements. The government has a 30 June 2014 deadline on this entitlement so please email childoffset@twelve.com.au today to receive more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Thurs 27 Feb: Student Leadership Day at Tallebudgera Beach School
- Mon 3 Mar: National Young Leaders’ Day in Brisbane
- Wed 5 Mar: School disco (Week 6)
- Mon 10 Mar: 5.45pm MOSHC meeting
- Mon 10 Mar: 6.30pm PAC meeting - AGM
- 17-21 Mar: Harmony Week
- 19-21 Mar: Somerset Celebration of Literature
- Mon 24 Mar: Arts Council Performances in PAC
- Thurs 27 Mar: RE Easter Performance
- Fri 28 Mar: Talent Quests
- 31 Mar – 2 April: Year Four Camp (4A, 4B and 4M girls)
- 2 April - 4 April: Year Four Camp (4C, 4D and 4M boys)
- Wed 2 April: Parent/Teacher Interviews (3.30pm to 7.30pm)
- Fri 4 April: Years 5 to 7 swimming carnival at Merrimac High School
- Fri 4 April: 11.30am to 1.00pm Prep to Year 2 Easter hat Parade
- Fri 4 April: Last day of Term One
- Fri 18 April: Good Friday holiday
- Mon 21 April: Easter Monday holiday
- Tues 22 April: First school day of Term Two