PRINCIPAL’S PAGE

Staffing News
Mrs Lee White, our Master Teacher, is on Maternity Leave from 22 February to 5 October. Mrs Marion Prentis will be our Master Teacher during this time.

Congratulations to Ms Sam Jacobs who will be our acting Literacy Coach three days a week from 22 February through till the end of Term Three. This is a great opportunity for Miss Jacobs to work with our staff in enhancing teacher pedagogy and improving student learning outcomes across the whole school. Miss Jennifer Hiscock will be replacing Miss Jacobs for this time and be teaching 2C each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Miss Jacobs will still be teaching her class each Thursday and Friday. We welcome Miss Hiscock to our school and I'm sure she will do a great job working with Miss Jacobs teaching 2C.

Student Leader Badge Ceremony
Congratulations to our Year 6 School Captains, Sports Captains and Music Captains who were presented with their badges on Tuesday's special assembly. Our special guest presenter was Miss Stacey Marlow, a former student of Merrimac State School. Stacey was a student leader at Merrimac in 1999. She now runs a very successful dance company ‘High Fidelity’.

Stacey gave an excellent speech which contained many important leadership messages for our new school leaders.

We certainly appreciated Stacey taking the time and being part of our School Leadership Ceremony.

Mrs Powell and our choir did a great job with their performance. Thanks to:
- Miss Murray for her organisation of this special event and the ongoing work that she does with our school leaders
- the parents and family members who attended the ceremony
- the tuckshop for supplying the Leadership Cake
- the P&C, in particular Mr John Clark, for organising the display in the Performing Arts Centre

Playground Leaders in Prep
Prep students have enthusiastically welcomed the Year 5 Playground Pals to their morning tea and lunch play times. The Year 5 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 Semester One of 2016 to maintain and grow their leadership skills.

The students are supported in their work by Ms Hall and Mr Boff, our Behaviour Teacher. Students self-nominated for the program and it has been gratifying to see a large number of our Year 5 students participating in the Playground Pals 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 6. 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.

Breakfast and Fitness Program
The before school Breakfast/Fitness Program on a Wednesday is going extremely well with a good turnout of students each week. Chappy Steve and Mr Epiga are doing a great job. The program is open to interested Years 4 to 6 students who can commit to the program each week from 7.50am to 8.45am. Thanks to the parents and staff who are 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.

Student Attendance
Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between student academic performance and school attendance. The attendance rate at our school for 2015 was 93.3%. This is slightly above the state average of 92%. 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 2016. There is no reason why our school should not meet this target.

Currently our attendance rate as of today is 96.2%. It would be fantastic if we could maintain this high level of attendance. Last year we introduced Attendance Awards for students with high levels of attendance. We will continue with these awards in 2016.

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/caregiver. 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 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 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 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 also make it hard 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%.

**Camp Quality Puppet Show for Prep-Year 2 Students**
For over 25 years the Education Program, ‘Camp Quality Puppets’, have helped children and teachers learn how to create a supportive school community for children affected by cancer, whether they are living with cancer themselves or have a family member living with cancer. The program consists of a live educational puppet show focussed on optimism and friendship. It aims to dispel myths about cancer in a child-friendly way. The free performance will be at Merrimmac State School for Prep-Year 2 students on Friday 26 February. Year 2 students have a 12.15pm performance in the PAC and Prep and Year 1 students will attend a 2pm show.

**Staff Car Park**
Students and families are not able to use the staff car park for either dropping off or collecting students, or as a walkway to enter or exit the school. Student access to this area is strictly restricted to disabled students only with a clearly displayed disabled sticker on the car. Other families using this car park increase the level of danger and congestion in an area not supervised by duty teachers.

**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 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 is an unsafe practice.

**Religious Education (RE)**
Religious Education commenced last Thursday. All RE lessons are held on a Thursday afternoon. Except for Bahá’ís, 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 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. 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.

**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 2016. If you are free on a regular or casual basis we would appreciate your help.

**Student Personal Details**
Student Personal Details sheets have been sent home this week with every student. Please check the information carefully. If any changes are required please amend the sheet and return it to the school office as soon as possible so that we can update our computer with your current details. 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 parents/carers.

**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 to be predominantly black or white. They should not be bright multi-coloured shoes. Children should not be wearing fluoro coloured shoes to school or to out of school activities.

**Messages for Students**
Please ensure messages for students are phoned through to the school before 2pm (extreme emergency situations excluded). It can be difficult to contact students if they are away from their classroom at a specialist class, on the oval, or at parade. We are happy to pass on important information regarding afterschool pick up but must have a reasonable timeframe to get the message to the students. We thank you for your assistance with this matter.

**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.

**Mathletics, Reading Eggs, Language Perfect and Soundwaves**
This week all students in P-6 who have paid the levy will receive their user name and password for Mathletics, Reading Eggs, and Language Perfect. Teachers will also provide the access code for the Soundwaves online resources for use at a later date. This levy was included in the year level booklist. This is a great resource to support your child’s learning. Please contact your child’s teacher if you need more information.

**2016 NAPLAN Dates (please note on your calendar)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 10 May</td>
<td>Language Conventions and Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 May</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12 May</td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 13 May</td>
<td>Catch-up tests for students absent on 10, 11 or 12 May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dates for Year 4 and 5 Camps**
The Year 4 Camp is at Currumbin Farm School - 14 to 16 March (4A, 4B and 4M girls) and 16 to 18 March (4C, 4D and 4M boys). The Year 5 Camp is at Runaway Bay Outdoor and Sports Centre - 15 to 17 June.
Thank you to Mrs Seward (Year 4) and Mrs Johns (Year 5) who are coordinating their year level’s involvement in this year’s camps.

Advertisements Disclaimer
Although we at times include advertisements in our school newsletter we do not necessarily endorse products nor the information provided. It is important that parents thoroughly investigate products and services advertised and make their own informed decision.

Parent Fitness (Boot Camp) Program – free for Merrimac Parents
Tina Nenadic from Ray White Robina Real Estate is continuing to sponsor a weekly Parent Fitness Program here at school. The program was very popular last year and has also started well this year. Simone Doyle who works for Ray White Robina Real Estate is the fitness instructor and will run the sessions weekly in the MPC/Tennis Court area each Thursday from 1.45pm to 2.45pm. It is completely free. Any parents who wish to be involved in the program can contact Tina direct on 0402984898. Simone can only cater up to 20 in the session so please register your interest with Tina as soon as possible.

Cartooning Art Classes
If there is sufficient interest, after school Cartooning Art classes may commence at Merrimac on Monday 22 February from 3.10pm to 4.10pm in the Science Room. Flyers were given out this week to all Years 3 to 6 students. Spare flyers are available from the school’s office. Slips need to be returned to the office by next Monday so that we can gauge that there is sufficient interest for the lessons to go ahead.

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. Update regularly to access the latest features.

From the desk of Ralph and Rosie
Merrimac State School Focus of The week
Over this past week, the children at Merrimac State School have been exploring how to “Be Respectful”. In their classes and on parade, the boys and girls at MSS have been asked to engage in discussions and role plays on this topic and why it is an important rule within our school.

Congratulations to classes 5D and P2 for receiving the Ralph and Rosie Class Awards this week. 5D received theirs for showing Respectful Learners. P2 received their award for helping to keep the bathroom clean and tidy. Well done to all the boys and girls for being Safe, Respectful Learners.

Parents you may be interested to know that FABIC have free workshops coming up. They include:
1. Communicating Effectively with People on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) on Thursday 17th March at 5.30pm to 6.30pm (Nerang Library)
2. Soprano Singing on Thursday 17th March at 5.30pm (Nerang Library)

Please contact Nerang Library on 07 5581 7180 or FABIC on 55 305 099 for further information. From Ralph and Rosie

Election Day BBQ Helpers Required
Our Parent International Exchange Committee (IEC) will be running a fundraising Sausage sizzle on Election day, 19 March, here at Merrimac. They are looking for helpers so if you have a spare hour or so on the day they would appreciate your help. If you are able to assist on the day please leave your name and phone number at the school office. Funds raised go towards our Sister School program.

Student Banking
Early next term on Tuesday 12 April from 8am - 9am, Ann Pinnock from the Commonwealth bank is available here at Merrimac to assist with new bank enrolments. If you would like to join your children up to the Student Saving program come along and have a chat with Ann.

FINANCE NEWS
Information on Finance Emails
Invoices for excursions are emailed to all parents/caregivers of participating/invited students who have an active email on our database. If your child is participating you can make payment online but be sure to complete the permission form and return to the finance window for verification. Look on the top right hand side of the invoice for the excursion description.
Likewise when the payment date for the excursion closes and we cancel unpaid invoices if you did not pay for this excursion you will receive an adjustment notice email. This email can be ignored (please note it is not a credit amount).

We are currently collecting money for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Payment due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>$175</td>
<td>26 Feb 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Students</td>
<td>Program Hire</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>26 Feb 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>26 Feb 2016</td>
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MUSIC NEWS
Senior Choir Performance
Congratulations Senior Choir on a lovely performance of the song “The Best That I Can Be” at the Leadership Parade.

The Merrimac Talent Quest for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Monday 21st March
Auditions will be held by Year Level Teachers in the PAC Hall in Week 7. Teachers will judge three items per section for each year level to go through to the Finals. There will be 4 Sections:
- SINGING - INSTRUMENTAL - DANCE- DRAMA

Guidelines:
- Items 3 minutes maximum in length
- Items with inappropriate lyrics will be disqualified
- Max 6 students per group
- Singing Section - must have instrumental backing, vocal backings will not be accepted. A cappella is also acceptable.
- All finalists will receive a McDonald’s Certificate/Voucher.
- Years 3 and 4 will be judged separately to 5 and 6.

Instruments/Choir Rehearsal Schedule
Senior Choir - Whole Choir Rehearsal Monday 8am - 8.30am
Sectionals - Sopranos - Tuesday 8.15am - 8.45am
Junior Choir - Friday mornings 8.00am - 8.30am
Senior Band – Tuesday 3.00pm - 4.00pm
Junior Band - Wednesday 3.00pm - 4.00pm
Senior Strings - Thursday 3.00pm - 3.45pm
Intermediate Strings - Thursday 8.00am - 8.45am (Instrumental Room)
Beginner Strings - Thursday 8.00am - 8.45am (Music Room)

If you have any questions please pop in to see me. Any parents wishing to help out with the Music Student Groups as a Music
Parent Representative please see me too. My helpers last year were fantastic…. It certainly helps Concerts and Performances run smoothly. ~ Mrs Powell ~

PE NEWS

FREE Golfing Program
PGA Golf coach Lee Harrington is conducting FREE golf sessions on Friday mornings as part of the Sporting Schools program initiative. The program will commenced last week and will continue for six weeks until Friday 18 March. If you would like your child to attend the classes please email Lee at lee@thegolfschool.com.au, call her on 0413163312 or see Mr Singh at school.

P&C NEWS

P&C AGM Meeting
Our next P&C meeting on Monday 14 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.

Also we need to elect a Fund Raising 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 about Education Queensland and how it operates. You deal about the environment that your child spends so much time in. You learn about Education Queensland and how it operates. You learn a great

Term 1 Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 14 Mar</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 14 Mar</td>
<td>Year 4 Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 16 - 18 Mar</td>
<td>Year 4 Camp - Group One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 16 Mar</td>
<td>Last day of Years 5 and 6 Surf Program (Group Two)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 16 Mar</td>
<td>Good Friday holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 28 Mar</td>
<td>Easter Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 11 April</td>
<td>First school day of Term Two</td>
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BOOKSHOP and UNIFORM SHOP HOURS

During the school term the bookshop opens Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8am - 9am.

TUCKSHOP NEWS

Tuckshop Roster for week commencing 22 February:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Meal Deal 25 Feb $5.00*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 22/2</td>
<td>Mayumi</td>
<td>✓ Ham &amp; Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue 23/2</td>
<td>Yoko H, Mel</td>
<td>✓ Tortilla Wrap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 24/2</td>
<td>Federica</td>
<td>✓ Bag of Popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 25/2</td>
<td>Mayumi, Kim, Maria</td>
<td>✓ Frozen juice cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 26/2</td>
<td>Marina, Mayumi</td>
<td>✓ Bottled Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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• Add 50c to upgrade to flavoured milk or springwater

Many thanks to my volunteers this week and welcome to some new faces also. Your assistance in our school is greatly appreciated! A reminder to students that if you have any questions about your lunch orders to please contact the tuckshop immediately for attention. Parents, please check the coins you use. Unfortunately any foreign coins which come into our tills are null and void from banking within Australia and therefore our tuckshop loses out. Many thanks to all those who continue to support your school tuckshop. Have a great week! ~ Denise ~

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Students</th>
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