Welcome back to all our existing staff, students and families and a BIG WELCOME to our new students and families.

At the end of last year we were given the go ahead to purchase new equipment for the technology room and food room through the Trade Training Consortium we are part of. Therefore when our students participate in these subjects they will be using the best technology available.

This year there are a few changes as you are all aware. As we have students studying VCE subjects via Polycom we have integrated PE sessions in the secondary area and also have a new space for our Early Childhood learners. It is a new and exciting place to be as we are always trying to keep up-to-date to support our learners in the very best way.

Also for 2014 we are trialling a fortnightly Pipeline. Below are the dates that you can expect a copy of the Pipeline home. Please ask your children on these dates or check the school website as it is our main form of communication to our community.

**Term 1**
February – 4th, 18th
March – 4th, 18th
April – 1st, 15th

**Term 2**
April – 23rd
May – 6th, 20th
June – 3rd, 17th

**Term 3**
July – 15th, 29th
August – 12th, 26th
September – 9th

**Term 4**
October – 7th, 21st
November – 5th, 18th
December – 2nd, 16th

This year we are sending home a school calendar (these will be available at the Werrimull Whack) which has all the dates for 2014. NO EXTRA DATES WILL BE ADDED, please be aware some dates may change due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. Also we will endeavour to send home as many forms on the same Tuesday as the Pipeline but this is not always possible and we thank you in advance for your understanding. Please ask your child/ren each and every day if there are any notes.
CHANGE OF DATE

SWIMMING SPORTS ARE NOW ON WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2014.

This year there will be a small toddlers pool provided for NON-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN to paddle around in as the forecast is 35 degrees. Parents MUST ACTIVELY SUPERVISE their own children in this pool AT ALL TIMES.

DON’T FORGET FRIDAY IS THE WERRIMULL WHACK STARTING AT 9:30AM WITH LUNCH AT 12PM AND THEN SWIM FROM 1 TIL 2PM. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A SALAD ROLL, CRUNCHA OR FRUIT BOX PLEASE CONTACT NARELLE NO LATER THAN THURSDAY 11AM WITH YOUR ORDER.

Just a reminder about excursions that students MUST bring their notes back in the day before the excursion is due to leave e.g. if the excursion is happening on Tuesday the notes are due back on Monday. If they are not back to the front office the student will not be attending the excursion. It is the students’ responsibility to take the permission forms home have them signed and returned to school before the cut-off date. Also if you are collecting your child from the excursion directly the school needs a written note to this effect handed in with the permission form.

It is coming to that time of the year again where we need to elect a new SCHOOL COUNCIL. As I mentioned last year it is an extremely important role that the parent community MUST fill for us to be able to operate as a school. Below is a little bit about what it is and why it is so important.

What is School Council?
* Is a legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of a school
* Is the major governing body of the school
* Plays an important role in school accountability and improvement processes
* Endorses the key school planning, evaluation and reporting documents

What are the objectives of School Council?
* Assist in the efficient governance of the school
* Ensure students’ best interests are primary
* Enhance the educational opportunities for students
* Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations

What are the functions of a school council?
In essence, the function is one of helping to set the long-term future for the school and maintaining oversight of the school’s operation. It is not about running the school – that is the job of the principal.

Three of the critical functions are:
1. Participate in developing the School Strategic Plan and engaging the school community
2. Approving the annual budget and monitoring expenditure, and
3. Developing, reviewing, updating and monitoring policies including the Student Engagement Policy (how the school promotes expected student behaviour, how bullying will be managed and the school’s approach to supporting student wellbeing) and the School Dress Code (this includes how students are expected to dress during school hours including traveling to and from school, if the school has a uniform and what that looks like, and any arrangement with clothing suppliers that the school might enter into)
Additional functions include:

* Preparing an annual report relating to financial activities and the School Strategic Plan and presenting the Annual Report to the School Community at the annual public meeting of school council and publishing and making available the annual report to the school’s community.

* Informing itself and taking into account the views of the school community when making decisions regarding the school and the students

* Arranging for the supply of the things needed for the conduct of the school (such as goods, services, facilities, materials and equipment) including the provision of preschool programs

* Providing meals and refreshments for students and staff and charging for this

* Raising money for things that the school needs and ensuring any money that council receives is properly spent on school-related purposes

* Making sure the school’s grounds and buildings are maintained

* Entering into contracts for things like cleaning the school or a school council building project

* Regulating and facilitating the after-hours use of the school premises and grounds

* Stimulating interest in the school within the community

* Approving overnight excursions and adventure activities, etc.

Limitations: What school council does not do:

* School council does not manage the day-to-day running of the school. For example, it does not employ ongoing teaching staff with no fixed date for termination, decide which classes students will be assigned to, or sort out issues relating to individual teachers and students and/or parents.

* Nor does it discuss individual issues relating to teachers or staff or parents – these are very clearly management roles, and therefore the principal’s job.

* School councillors are not appointed to represent specific interest groups or permit special interests to dominate the agenda of the council.

* School council does not renew the principal’s contract nor recruit or dismiss the principal - that is the role of the regional director. For the majority of schools, the school council is responsible for recommending to the Secretary, DEECD, a person to fill a vacant principal position.

* School Council is also not allowed to license or grant any interest in land; purchase a motor vehicle or plane; enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loans; form or become a member of a corporation; or provide education services outside of Victoria, unless it is given permission by the Minister.

Role of school council members

* For school councils to operate effectively, members need to respect everyone’s opinions – even those they disagree with.

* It is also important that once council reaches a decision, all school councillors sup-port that decision in the school community.

* Parent members on school council bring their experience as parents at the school and the views of the wider school community to school council meetings.

* DEECD employees bring their educational expertise to school council meetings.
Do I have what it takes to be on school council?

* You need to be keen, but you don’t need to be an expert.
* It helps if you like people and you do need to be able to work as a team member.
* You do need to be prepared to commit the time and effort needed to ensure the work of council gets done. 8 meetings per year!
* School councils work best when they have people from a variety of different backgrounds and who have different experiences.

Nominations and if required elections will be held in the coming weeks. Please contact Narelle for the forms. The AGM is on the 12th March 2014 at the school in the Polycom room at 6:00pm.

Any further enquires please don’t hesitate to contact me at school.

Due to the busy nature of the 21st Century I have included all staff edumail addresses so as you can communicate efficiently to your teacher or your child’s teacher. **If you have not provided your email address to the school please email Narelle asap so as teachers can be in contact with you.**

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Erin Fush
Dates to Remember

January
- Werrimull Whack: 31st January

February
- Swimming Sports: 12th February
- Mallee Swimming: 28th February

March
- Pancake Day: 4th March
- School Council AGM: 12th March
- Yr's 10-11 Work experience: 17th-21st March

April
- Tri School Cross Country: 3rd April
- Easter Fair: 4th April
- End of term 1, 1pm Finish: 4th April

Happy Birthday
- Taylah Carter: 3rd January
- Joshua Harris: 3rd January
- Hannah Fox: 14th January
- Jack Neyland: 22nd January
- Mary Kelly: 26th January

Please note this Friday students can wear their house colours.

As we are a sun smart school shirts must have sleeves.

No singlet tops

Because of the extreme heat this week please make sure your child/ren has his/her water bottle.
What’s Happening

Next week is our first week for the year and I look forward to seeing all the children after the break.

This Sunday 2 February, unless you hear otherwise, we have our first working bee and committee meeting for the year. Due to the extreme heat that has been forecast for Sunday this has been brought forward to 9am as the grass must be mown before Tuesday (it’s turned into a bit of a jungle over the summer break). If you are unable to make it please contact Chris Douglas.

As the weather is so hot at the moment (and won’t be cooling down in the immediate future) it is extremely important that you send your child along with a water bottle every day. We will ensure that their bottles are topped up throughout the day and before they make their way home at the end of the day.

Permission forms for various activities and bus travel will be sent home this week with siblings, please return them with your child on the first day of kindergarten next week.

Dates to Remember

2 February   Working Bee and Committee Meeting, 9am unless otherwise advised
4 February   First Day of Kindergarten 2014