ANZAC PARADE

Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. It is the day on which we remember Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. On 24 April we held our ANZAC parade to pay our respects to those in the defence forces, past and present.

CATCH UP MORNING TEA AND RACE DAY / PLANNING GET TOGETHER

Thanks to those Parents and Carers who attended the second Catch Up Morning Tea on Tuesday 13 May. This was a very informal event during which Megan Apalais (our P&C Vice-President) gave an update of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program which our school and many others around the state are adopting.

Megan would like to thank those parents who attended the Race Day Planning meeting on 21 May. The P&C’s Race Day event will be held on Saturday 15 November in the marquee at the Toowoomba Turf Club. The Race Day usually starts mid-afternoon and finishes late at night. It will be a great night with a two course meal, multi-draw raffle and a live band for entertainment so do try to organise child-minding / respite for this event! Parents and Carers ‘in the know’ advised me that those wishing to attend the Race Day event who require respite, should secure respite for this day NOW! It is my understanding that respite for some agencies is already booked out till December!

Megan would like to invite all parents and carers to another Catch Up Morning Tea on Wednesday 18 June at 9.30am. A Race Day planning meeting will follow afterwards, for those who are able to stay.

SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Our school SWPBS team (including parent rep Megan Apalais) continue to meet each fortnight after school. At the last meeting we continued with work on our school’s SWPBS Action Plan. We developed a range of positive expectations that we will have for student behaviours in different areas of the school across the entire day. It will be our school’s Behaviour Matrix. Our school team has come up with our draft ‘purpose statement’ which we are circulating to families and staff for feedback.

Proposed Purpose Statement:

Toowoomba West Special School is committed to promoting a safe, respectful and responsible school community that enables our students to reach their full potential.
As a group these were the parameters we addressed in developing this purpose statement:
- Positively stated
- Sort and sharp
- Supportive of all students
- Contextually and culturally appropriate

**Proposed School Values/Expectations:**

| SAFETY | RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY |

As a group these were the parameters we addressed in developing these school values/expectations:
- Reasonable expectation of all students
- What do we want to see at TWSS?
- How do we want to feel while at TWSS?
- How do we want the students to feel while at TWSS?
- What lifelong skills do we want our students to learn at TWSS?

If any of you would like to give the school feedback about our purpose statement and our values / expectations, please feel free phone or drop in to let Glenn or me know personally.

Thanks on behalf of the TWSS SWPBS Team

**STAFF CHANGES**

We welcome new teachers Jessica Harding and Jacinta Green to our staff this term. Both women have come from Brisbane recently where they were working as special educators. Jessica will be replacing Theresa Westaway who is now on Maternity Leave. Jacinta (Jazz) will be working Wednesdays to Fridays in the ECDP (Early Childhood Development Program) with Cara.

Alison Green (our Business Services Manager) is away for the rest of the term as she recovers from knee replacement surgery. During that period our Administration Officers Mary O’Shea and Sandra Thompson have increased their hours and on Thursdays Sara Williams is in to work on Finance issues. Our front office is undergoing its transformation at the moment and hopefully all should be back to normal this week.

**AFRICAN BEAT – SALAKA ENSEMBLE**

Last Wednesday 14 May African Beat presented a structured and highly interactive drumming performance by one of West Africa’s top cultural troupes The Salaka Ensemble. “Salaka” means “sharing” in the Ga language of Ghana. The performance by visiting artists from Ghana immersed our students in the rich culture and rhythms of Africa, in an entertaining and educational way. Best of all – it was hands on!

Our hall proved to be a great venue for this event.

The students learned a traditional African song to accompany the drumming rhythm, and experienced African dancing. The show introduced students to an array of traditional African instruments of all shapes and sounds. Students from Clifford Park Special School came across to join in with us (and this helped to make the event affordable for everyone).

Every child had an opportunity to join in with the drumming.

**MISS MAREE VISITS SCHOOL!**

Most of you would know Maree Miller, one of our most experienced and longest serving teacher aides here. Maree underwent surgery in March and is having extended leave as she rehabilitates after this surgery. Maree is able to use crutches now and walk unaided.

Last Friday Maree celebrated a significant birthday and she came in to visit and celebrate with us. Students had prepared a beautiful banner and came up to the staff room to give her a big hug and wish her a happy birthday.
OFFICE MAKEOVER!

Those of you who have visited our administration block late last week will know of the transformation which has been taking place in our front office. After more than 30 years our front office has been refurbished! It looks very smart and has new functionalities. Thanks go to Glenn, office staff and our cleaners who were instrumental in preparing for the move and setting up the new office.

Glenn donned his civvies last Tuesday to help dismantle the old office in preparation for the new installation.

Alison Green, our Business Services manager, is recovering after surgery but came in to visit last Friday and sat at her new desk.

Elizabeth (right) chats with Heather Jorgensen (our past Guidance Officer).

Dawn (centre) enjoys pouring over photo albums from the TWSS archives with Julie and Mary.

TEACHERS RETIRE

Recently we honoured the careers of two long-serving Toowoomba West teachers at a retirement function. Elizabeth Ivers and Dawn Garrett recently retired after more than 30 years of teaching with Education Queensland. Elizabeth first came to Toowoomba West in 1990 and Dawn in 1991. Dawn’s most recent teaching role here was with our students who have severe multiple impairments while both ladies have taught a full range of classes and age groups while at Toowoomba West. Elizabeth was often Acting Principal for me and past principals. We thank both women for their commitment and contribution to our school.

Elizabeth (right) chats with Heather Jorgensen (our past Guidance Officer).

Dawn (centre) enjoys pouring over photo albums from the TWSS archives with Julie and Mary.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR P&C PIE DRIVE

Forms will be coming home in a couple of weeks to order pies and a range of other goods from Homestyle Bake. Tina Wilson will be co-ordinating the orders and would appreciate help on the delivery day 30 July to make up the orders for distribution.

Till next time

Regards

Lea

PTO ➔
**Coming Events**

On Wednesdays Gail Saw, our Uniform Co-ordinator, comes in to collect and place orders for uniforms.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 26 May</td>
<td>5.30pm P&amp;C Meeting in staffroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 6 June</td>
<td>Old MacDonald’s Farm school visit - $5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 18 June</td>
<td>9.30 Parent / Carer Get Together followed by Race Day planning meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 15 Nov</td>
<td>P&amp;C Race Day</td>
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ACCESS TO JP

Mr. Glenn, our Deputy Principal, is a registered Justice of the Peace (Qual.). Should you need the services of a JP (Qual.) please enquire at the office to make a time to meet with Mr. Glenn.

Visits to Paediatricians or other specialists:

If your child has a paediatric or neurologist’s appointment coming up, please let your child’s teacher know. This will enable us to provide an update about your child’s progress at school. Paediatricians and other specialists tell us that they find information from school to be very valuable e.g. in relation to a child’s behaviour, ability to concentrate, cognitive and physical skills, energy levels etc. while at school. It would be desirable to have at least one week’s notice for a report.

**WHY READ TO YOUR CHILDREN?**

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a research partnership with the University of Melbourne. This latest research sets out to explore the connections between parents reading to their young children and their child’s later reading and other cognitive skills.

**Key Findings**

The frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct causal effect on their schooling outcomes regardless of their family background and home environment.

- Reading to children at age 4-5 every day has a significant positive effect on their reading skills and cognitive skills (i.e., language and literacy, numeracy and cognition) later in life.
- Reading to children 3-5 days per week (compared to 2 or less) has the same effect on the child’s reading skills at age 4-5 as being six months older.
- Reading to them 6-7 days per week has the same effect as being almost 12 months older.
- Children read to more frequently at age 4-5 achieve higher scores on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for both Reading and Numeracy in Year 3 (age 8 to 9).

- These differences in reading and cognitive skills are not related to the child’s family background or home environment but are the direct result of how frequently they have been read to prior to starting school.

**What can we learn from this?** Obviously students who have an intellectual impairment will not achieve such dramatic outcomes as this mainstream research has proved, but reading to your child regularly can have many benefits too. The earlier we start the better.

Some potential benefits of reading to your children are:

- A stronger relationship with you!
- Speech and language skills. Throughout childhood, your child is learning critical language and enunciation skills. By listening to you read, your child is reinforcing the basic sounds that form language. “Pretend reading”—when a child pages through a book and makes up the story with sounds or gobbledegook, is a very important pre-literacy activity.
- The basics of how to read a book. Children aren’t born with an innate knowledge that text is read from left to right, or that the words on a page are separate from the images. Essential pre-reading skills like these are among the major benefits of early reading.
- Better communication skills. By witnessing the interactions between the characters in the books you read, as well as the contact with you during story time, your child is gaining valuable communication skills.
- Helping them to understand how language works.
- Adjusting to new experiences. As your child approaches a major developmental milestone or a potentially stressful experience, sharing a relevant story or a social story about them can be a great way to help ease the transition.
- Helping to enhance concentration and discipline.
- The knowledge that reading is fun! Early reading helps them to see books as an enjoyable activity, not a chore.

Occasionally a parent will ask for additional homework that their child can be doing. One of the best things you can do to support your child’s education is to seize opportunities to read to your child whenever you can, involving them in the process, asking questions, predicting what comes next etc., all at an appropriate level. We find students LOVE to read books about themselves too – social stories made up of photos of them with limited text / symbols.