Dear parent/caregiver

Lieve ouder/verzorger

This week we saw a spectacular full moon in our sky. It seemed so very close to us and it shone brilliantly in the night. At Minchinbury PS, we encourage our students to always do their best and to set their sights on the moon and stars. We know we have talented hardworking students at our school and they make us proud every single day. It is very rewarding to work with their interested and expanding minds. The sky is the limit when it comes to the possibilities that lay before them. Thank you for sending your wonderful children to our great school!

Local Schools, Local Decisions

After a lot of consultation, the NSW government is rolling out a series of reforms to the way schools are run which should result in improved teaching and learning. These reforms began to be implemented from the beginning of this term with the introduction of schools being able to employ local contractors for work up to $5000. Other recommendations to take place include:

- A restructuring of State Office with devolution of support direct to Regions.
- Funding for schools to reflect the complexity of schools.
- The ability to manage our own resources.
- Strengthening of performance management for all staff.
- Standards-based progression and pay.
- Schools able to choose the number of roles within staff and who will fill them.
- Use of local contractors.
- Sharing staff and resources.
- Comprehensive school plans and annual reports.

Over the next few years a number of changes will be rolled out across all public schools in NSW. You can get further information from the website http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/lslld/index.php

Every Student, Every School

This is an initiative providing better learning and support for the 90,000 students with a disability, learning difficulties or behaviour support needs in our public schools through a strong focus on professional learning and support for teachers and support staff. It is supported by the Commonwealth Government’s ‘More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership’, providing almost $48 million in 2012 and 2013 to build the capabilities of schools to meet the educational needs of students with disability. This investment will lever off the $1.18 billion already provided by the NSW Government for students with disability.

Every Student, Every School is structured around a Learning and Support Framework for all NSW public schools. Establishing this framework in every school will provide an important foundation for the delivery of educational services in our schools into the future. The main components are:

- professional learning for skilled and knowledgeable teachers;
- support for students with a disability in the regular classroom;
- special schools as centres for excellence;
- Instruments and materials to better understand and meet additional learning and support needs; and
- access to information and expert support.

Our school will be working within these changes from the beginning of Term 3. You can get further information from the website: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/every-student-every-school

OC Applications

Parents seeking opportunity class placement for Year 5 entry in 2013 are required to submit an application by 18 May 2012. Generally students are in Year 4 in 2012 when applying for Year 5 entry in 2013. Online applications open on Monday 30 April 2012. The online application form can be accessed at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/ocplacement/onlineapp/index.php.

All other applications must be completed on an official printed application form. Application packages will be available at school from Monday 7 May 2012. Application forms, whether submitted online or lodged with the principal, should be received by the student’s current primary school by Friday 18 May 2012.

Voluntary Contributions

Thanks to those parents who paid the Voluntary Contribution by the end of Term 1. We received just over $4000 in contributions. The winner of the winter uniform prize draw for paying contributions during Term 1 was Alexander McCormack in KT. Parents are reminded that voluntary contributions will be accepted at any time during the year.

P&C Meeting

Unfortunately our P&C meeting was unable to go ahead on Tuesday 8 May as we did not get enough people to form a quorum. The next meeting will be Tuesday 5 June at 7.00pm in the staffroom. We are always looking for new members and would love to see you at our next meeting. Come along and find out what’s happening in our school – bring a friend!

PSSA Competition

Teams have been selected to participate in interschool competition in netball, rugby league soccer and touch football. The first round of competition will be Friday 11 May (not 4 May as previously advertised). Information has been sent home to all
team members regarding the expectations of players, payments for bus travel and equipment needed.

PULSE
The first rehearsal of our PULSE choir was held on Wednesday, 2 May. Mrs Guerin was very pleased with the quality of our students’ singing and their behaviour was outstanding. Well done, everyone!

Just Like You Program
Students in K-2 are participating in the ‘Just Like You’ program that is aimed at increasing their understanding about the needs of students who have a disability. A visiting speaker is talking to K-2 students about disabilities; what it is like to be disabled and how they can help. The program ran on Thursday 3 May and will be held again today.

Cross Country
This carnival was held on Thursday 3 May. Thanks to Ms Zuber and Mr Brough for organising this event. There was a problem in relation to the very first race with some confusion over the course. This was rectified for all other races. We apologise for the confusion or any upset caused. The school will endeavour to rectify this problem in the future. Successful placegetters will now go on to represent our school at the district carnival.

NAPLAN Equating
The school has been selected to participate in the NAPLAN 2012 equating study by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has been commissioned by ACARA to administer the tests for the equating study. Equating tests are administered so that the difficulty of the current NAPLAN tests can be adjusted, if necessary, to the same level of difficulty as previous NAPLAN tests. The process involves a sample of students from all states and territories and school sectors sitting the secure equating tests as well as the current year’s tests. Students in Year 3, students in S2K and Year 5 students in S2/3U and S3C will complete a NAPLAN Equating test in numeracy this morning. Mrs Berwick and an independent supervisor conducted these tests.

Woolworths Earn and Learn Program
From Wednesday 9th May, you can participate in this promotion being conducted by Woolworths supermarkets. Last year we took part and received valuable teaching resources including programs for our interactive whiteboards. All you need to do is start collecting stickers at the checkout of your local Woolworths supermarket (self-service too) to place on your child’s sticker card. There’ll be one sticker for every $10 spent, excluding purchases of liquor, smoking/tobacco products and gift cards. Once completed, simply drop the sticker card into a collection box, either at your school or at your local Woolworths.

A sticker card will be sent home with this newsletter. Spare cards may be available at the office.

Entry to School via Back Gate
Some concerns were raised at our last Work Health and Safety committee meeting about students and parents entering the school (in the morning) by the lower, Barossa Drive gate and not proceeding directly to supervised playground areas - Area A (playground bordered by the hall, canteen and administration blocks) or under the COLA.

Students and parents should go directly to these playgrounds and not walk past the Stage 2 demountable classrooms (to drop off bags, wait for friends, etc) and across the back and/or front of the J Block (Kindy) rooms. These areas are out of bounds before school. There is no line of sight for duty teachers to these areas. This means that the safety of students is not guaranteed if they remain in these areas.

When you enter the school in the morning, by the Berossa Drive gate, everyone is expected to:

- Walk up the path to your left, past Miss Terrazzolo’s room and the Stage 3 classrooms, to Area A.
- Students may then decide to wait for the bell in Area A (if before 8.30am) or go to the COLA (after 8.30am).

Even though students may be accompanied by their parents in the morning, we expect that students will follow school rules. Kindergarten parents are also asked to refrain from waiting outside Kindergarten rooms in the morning, before the bell. If you want to wait with your child, please wait in Area A or under the COLA.

Minchinbury PS

A great school..... close to home!
Early Arrivals
We currently have a number of students who arrive at school between 7.30 and 8.00am. Please make sure your child arrives at school just before or after 8.30am, when the first bell is sounded and the bell signalling movement to classes at 8.55am.

Teachers are not on duty before 8.30am and it is difficult to ensure students’ safety before this time. If your child needs to be at school earlier than 8.30am, parents should consider before and after school care run by Cubby House Australia from 7.00am. You might consider having your child wait at a friend’s house (if arranged between parents) or talk to neighbours, friends or relatives about child-minding before school.

Definitions

**English**

*Coordinate Conjunctions*: form a link between one word and another. The words they join are usually the same or a similar part of speech. These linking words are called coordinate conjunctions. The common **coordinate conjunctions** are:

and but for nor or so yet

She was wet **and** tired.
He was tired **but** happy.

Coordinate conjunctions can also join groups of words to one another.

They wandered across the hills **and** across the deserts.

Coordinate conjunctions can join one sentence to another.

This is her book. That is his book.
This is her book **and** that is his book.

**Maths**

*Divide*: to share something into groups

![Diagram]

These 40 people are divided into 8 groups.

Technology

*Landline*: Traditional wired phone service.

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**Brain Bender**

A very elegant woman was asked her age at a party. She replied “in 4 days I will be exactly two times the half of 23 & 7/12ths”. What was her age?

*Answer next issue*

Last issue’s question.

What has two arms and four legs?

Answer: A chair

Useful Websites for Parents

**ACARA – My School**

The My School website provides profiles of around 9,500 Australian schools that can be searched by school location, sector or name. The website provides statistical and contextual information about each school, as well as results from the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) that can be compared with results from schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds across Australia. Information about the National Assessment Program can be found on the NAPLAN website.

My School can be accessed at:


Minchinbury PS

A great school….. close to home!
Positive Behaviour for Learning

This week’s target is:

‘We are prepared for school!’

Our school encourages students to become independent and take responsibility for organising themselves for school each day. In the early years, parents often pack their child’s bag for them each day. As they become familiar with the routines of school, you can share that responsibility with your child. Instead of putting things in bags for your child, ask them to help you pack their bag. As they get older, let them pack their bag the night before school, reminding them of items to include eg hat, homework book, pencil case, permission notes etc.

UWS PENRITH OBSERVATORY
FAMILY ASTRONOMY NIGHTS

Saturday 19 & Saturday 26 May – 7pm – 9pm

These nights will include a presentation, a 3D movie and stargazing through the University’s computerised telescopes (weather permitting).

Cost: $15 adult, $10 child, $40 family.

To Book: Phone (02) 4736 0135 (Mon, Wed or Thurs)
email: r.mccourt@uws.edu.au

Food for Thought
After this week’s stunning full moon….

“For most people, we often marvel at the beauty of a sunrise or the magnificence of a full moon, but it is impossible to fathom the magnitude of the universe that surrounds us”.

Richard H. Baker

Have a great week!
Heb een geweldige week!

Pauline Baker
Principal

10.5.12

CareFlight
The second biggest killer of young children at home is driveway accidents

Minchinbury PS A great school.... close to home!
Regular School Attendance
Information for parents and carers

All children have a right to an education. Only by regular school attendance can children make the most of educational opportunities, leading to greater social and economic outcomes.

Schools play a vital role in the social and emotional development of children. Regular attendance enables students to develop a sense of belonging to a peer group and assists in building important coping and friendship skills. Confident children are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour.

If students miss out on the basic skills in the early years of school, they may experience learning problems in later years. Ultimately, unsatisfactory attendance at school may affect the awarding of the School Certificate.

Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, school staff, as a part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences. Parents and schools have specific responsibilities concerning children’s attendance at school.

Responsibilities of the principal

Principals are legally responsible for maintaining accurate records of student attendance. When reasons for absences are provided to the school by parents, principals are accountable for their decision to record a student’s absence as justified. Principals may decline to accept as satisfactory an explanation for an absence and will record that absence as unjustified.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to illness are frequent or prolonged.

Responsibilities of parents

The Education Act 1990 requires that parents (including carers) ensure that children of compulsory school age are enrolled at and regularly attend school, or are registered with the Office of the Board of Studies NSW for home schooling. The New South Wales Department of Education and Training may take legal action against parents and carers who do not send their children to school without a valid reason.

What is a justified reason for being absent from school?

Justified reasons for absences may include the student:

- having an unavoidable medical or dental appointment (preferably, these should be made after school or during holidays)
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- being required to attend an exceptional or urgent family circumstance (such as attending a funeral)
- being sick, or having an infectious disease.
Head lice infestations can be a common occurrence, particularly in primary schools. Parents should check their child's hair regularly for head lice and undertake treatment where eggs or lice are identified. Information on how schools can support parents to manage and prevent the spread of head lice can be accessed from the student health section of the Department's website at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/headlice/index.php. Advice from NSW Health indicates that there is no need for students to be sent home or excluded from school because of head lice. Having head lice is not a justified reason for prolonged absences from school.

Absences for reasons such as some of the following may not be justified:
- Shopping
- Sleeping in
- Working around the house
- Minding younger siblings and other children
- Minor family events such as birthdays
- Hair cuts.

It is important to realise that parents (including carers) may be prosecuted if children have recurring unjustified absences from school.

Keeping the school informed

If your child has to be absent from school, it is important to tell the school and provide a reason for the absence. To explain an absence parents and carers may:
- send a note, fax or email to the school
- telephone the school, or
- visit the school.

Whenever possible, parents and carers are encouraged to provide an explanation for absences before the absences occur.

The principal of the school has the right to question parents’ requests for their child to be absent from school. They may also question an explanation given for a child’s absence from school.

Holidays

Parents and carers are encouraged not to withdraw their children from school for family holidays. If this is necessary parents should discuss these absences with the principal and may be requested to apply for a Certificate of Exemption from attendance at school. This will ensure that these absences are not permanently recorded as unjustified.

When considering applications for Certificates of Exemption, principals may consider a variety of factors. These may include compassionate reasons, family reunions, the educational merits of the holiday and agreement for the student to complete assignments while on holiday.

In some cases application for Distance Education may be more appropriate than seeking an exemption from school attendance.

Arrival on time

Arriving at school and class on time:
- ensures that students don’t miss out on the important learning activities scheduled early in the day when the students are most alert
- helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives students time to greet their friends before class and therefore,
- reduces the opportunity for classroom disruption.

Need help?

If you are having difficulty getting your child to attend school regularly, you might like to talk to the school principal or the school counsellor. In primary school you could also approach the assistant principal and in secondary school, your child’s year adviser would be a good contact.

Home school liaison officers offer support with attendance at school. Some school areas also have Aboriginal student liaison officers who support the attendance of Aboriginal students.

Telephone your local Department of Education and Training regional office and speak to the student welfare consultant if you would like further support. A list of regional office telephone numbers can be accessed at the web site address: www.det.nsw.edu.au/contactus/index.htm or by telephoning 131 536.

Lateness is recorded as partial absence and must be explained by parents or carers in the same way as other forms of absence.

Must my child attend all activities, including sport?

YES. Sport and other physical activities help the healthy physical and mental development of children. Sports and sports carnivals are normal school activities and students must attend.