Dear Minchinbury Public School families

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL
Welcome to our school for 2013. It is terrific to see the girls and boys back at school so happy and enthusiastic. They look very smart in their school uniforms and appear ready for the challenges of another school year. We are looking forward to even greater success for our students and school this year.

Staffing Information
This week we welcome Mrs West to our school. Mrs West is our new Assistant Principal looking after Stage 1. Mrs Williams has returned to the school part-time and we are very happy to have her back. Ms Dayhew is relieving as Assistant Principal at Oatlands PS this term. She should rejoin our school next term. Last Thursday afternoon, Ms Tanja Kane received a transfer to Richmond North PS that is much closer to her home. Ms Kane has been a long-standing teacher at Minchinbury PS having taught classes across the school for the last thirteen years. Her contribution to the performing arts has been invaluable and we will miss her greatly. We are currently negotiating a replacement for her. Ms Treena Newman will be taking 2K this week. Please see the attached staff list for details of the various classes and teachers for 2013.

Our executive staff this year is as follows:
Principal: Mrs Pauline Baker
Deputy Principal: Mrs Elise Berwick and Mrs Natalie Bourke
Assistant Principals: Mrs Natalie Bourke (Stage 2)
                     Mr Stuart Holstein (Stage 3)
                     Mrs Jody Sullivan (Stage 2)
                     Mrs Kathryn West (Stage 1)
                     Mrs Jessica Vyse (Kindergarten)
School Administrative Manager: Sue Moore
School Counsellor: Jessica Evans

Class Organisation
We are starting the year with the following class organisation. There are three Kindergarten classes, three Year 1 classes, three Year 2s, one Year 1/2 multi age/composite class, two Year 3 classes, two Year 4 classes, one 3/4 multi age/composite class, two Year 5s, two Year 6 classes and one 5/6 multi-age class – a total of 20 classes. Our school population is 499. This is a much smaller number of students than the school has had in more than fifteen years.

Each year our school has to make decisions about how classes will be organised within the DEC staffing formula. Unfortunately, the number of students in each year doesn’t always divide evenly into the number of classes we can form. This then means we need to form multi age/composite classes. At present, we have three multi age classes so that we don’t have excessively large numbers in classes. There is likely to be a change to our Kindergarten classes as they all currently have 24 students in them. It may be necessary to form a K/1 composite. We will let you know when and if this will happen. Our multi age classes have been organised within each of the stages from 1 to 3. The curriculum for all key learning areas (KLAs) is written in stages of achievement not year or grade levels. Achievement of stage outcomes usually takes between 18 months and 2 years - sometimes less, sometimes more.

Regardless of whether your child is in a multi age/composite class or a single year class, they are grouped for learning to meet their needs. Teachers are highly skilled in working in groups and utilise this practice in a range of KLAs. Rest assured that whatever class your child is in that he/she is learning the appropriate curriculum material for their stage of schooling.
Kindergarten News
Our new Kindergarten students enrolled last week and seem very settled. Teachers will complete the Best Start assessments during Week 3 (Monday 11 February – Friday 15 February). Reports and parent interviews will happen later this term.

Swimming Carnival
Students in Years 3-6 will participate in the annual swimming carnival on Thursday 7 February at Ripples. The carnival is for competitors only. Students not attending are expected to attend school on Thursday. Information about the carnival has already been sent home.

P&C Meeting
At the end of 2012 during our last P&C meeting for the year, there were only three members in attendance, so once again we were in the position of being unable to sustain a P&C Association at our school. There have been a few parents who have indicated they may be interested in taking part in the P&C this year. As a result, the school will hold a P&C meeting for interested parents at 9.15am in the AV room (bottom of the stairs beside the library) on Wednesday 13 February.

The P&C aims to:
- promote the interests of the school by bringing parents, citizens, pupils and teaching staff into close co-operation;
- assist in providing equipment required by the school;
- report to the Minister the material requirements of the school;
- assist the teaching staff in establishment of school policy and management in all facets of school activity.

Associations meet on a regular basis, at least once each school term, and carry out activities in accordance with their resolutions. It is of great benefit for each government school to have a P&C Association. This enables parents and citizens to meet together to determine the needs and aspirations of the school community. We would love to see you at our next meeting.

Canteen News
Our canteen is looking for volunteers to help with serving and preparing lunches. If you can spare an hour or so on any day through the week, please contact Marina French. We would also like you to consider your availability to help in the canteen in 2013.

Assemblies
Every fortnight students attend stage assemblies where merit awards are presented, classes present items for entertainment, and special events are celebrated. Parents are invited to attend any of the assemblies even if their child's class isn't performing. Students love to share their successes with others so it would be great to see parents visiting on these occasions. Assembly times can be found in the Stage Newsletters that will soon go out.

Band News
Band rehearsals and tutorials began on Monday 4 February for both the training and intermediate bands. Students participating in the band program this year should have received their tutorial schedule by email. Any problems, please contact Mrs Anderson.

Homework
Students should begin homework this week. All classes have homework assigned weekly. Kindergarten homework is informal in nature at the beginning of the year and includes activities like listening to stories, nursery rhymes, helping with shopping and food preparation, and talking about what's happening in the family. Formal homework will be set later in the year.
Homework will be set four nights per week. The days may vary from stage to stage. Teachers will set homework so that it can be completed within a given time frame. This will vary for individual students according to their ability, level of interest and difficulty involved. However, the following general time allocation will serve as a guide:

Early Stage 1 1-15 minutes (Term 4)
Stage 1 20 minutes
Stage 2 30 minutes
Stage 3 45 minutes.

Should your child be spending an excessive amount of time to complete homework or appears to be experiencing difficulty with the tasks, please write a note for the teacher in the homework book or contact the school to make an appointment to discuss the matter with the teacher.

Parents can help with homework by:
- taking an active interest in homework;
- ensuring there is time set aside for completion;
- encouraging and supporting students to complete homework;
- providing where possible, a suitable place for homework to be done;
- monitoring homework by signing completed work; and
- communicating with teachers any concerns about homework.

Uniform Shop
The uniform shop will be opening on a **Tuesday** this year. It will open every Tuesday in Term 1 and 4, and then every fortnight in Terms 2 and 3. Uniform shop trading hours are 8.45am – 10.00am.

**STUDENT WELFARE NEWS**

Anaphylaxis

A reminder to parents that we have a large number of students enrolled who have peanut, egg and insect allergies. In keeping with recommendations from the Department of Education and Communities, the school does not sell peanut products including peanut butter sandwiches and SAOs. Some students are so sensitive to peanut products that a reaction can be triggered from just touching someone who has eaten peanut products. Parents are asked to consider not sending peanut products to school with their children.

All teachers at Minchinbury PS have been trained in the management and treatment of students with anaphylaxis. Students with anaphylaxis are required to provide the school with a Health Care Plan from their doctor. Mrs Berwick will meet with parents of students with health issues to develop an appropriate plan. If your child is diagnosed with a medical condition, please contact the school to provide the relevant treatment procedures.

Positive Behaviour for Learning

Minchinbury PS is a Positive Behaviour for Learning school. **Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)** refers to a system of school-wide processes and individualised instruction designed to prevent and decrease problem behaviour and to maintain appropriate behaviour. The process facilitates the development of quality learning environments in which all students feel safe, secure and can flourish as individuals.

The school has been implementing this approach since 2006. We look at:
- A proactive systems approach to school-wide discipline (NOT a curriculum) designed to be responsive to current social and educational challenges;
- A focus on prevention;
- A focus on instruction;
- Using data gathered to inform our practice.

Our school has developed three expectations of behaviour – we want all Minchinbury students to be
Respectful, Safe Learners. Each week we have a target: behaviour that we are developing with students eg we move safely around the school. These are explicitly taught, practiced and reinforced across the week. All expected behaviours are stated in the positive, that is, what it is we want students to do eg walk to lines, speak politely, wear your hat instead of using the negative “don’t….”.

In each newsletter we will provide information about our weekly targets and you might like to reinforce these with your child. We will also provide some information about what’s happening with PBL.

Before and After School Care
This year we have a new Before and After School provider. Jigsaw OOSH will provide excellent before and after school care for our students. They operate from 7.00am to 8.30am and then again from 3.00pm to 6.00pm daily. Their programs provide a range of interesting and varied activities for all students as well as nutritious snacks. Please consider using the centre for your ‘before and after’ childcare needs and help to keep this valuable resource at the school. You can contact Jigsaw OOSH by phone on 9762 5757 or through their website www.jigsawoosh.com.au

Family Information
If you have had a change of residence, phone number, emergency contact details or custody agreements, please complete the blue form that will be issued shortly and return it to the office as soon as possible.

Parents Visiting the School
All visitors must report to the office to sign the visitor’s register and take a visitor’s identification card before going to classrooms. Please make sure you follow these procedures when visiting the school so that we can account for all people in an emergency situation.

There should not be any need for parents to visit classrooms during learning times, especially between 9.00am and 11.00am. All birthday cakes can be left at the office and they will be sent to classrooms just before recess as this is the most appropriate time to cut and distribute treats.

If you come to school early, please make sure that you are supervising your pre-school children keeping them out of gardens, not playing on stairs, swinging/standing on railings and the like. Please help us keep our school safe by keeping an eye on your children. Parents are also reminded that smoking is not permitted on any school site. If you wish to smoke you must leave the premises.

INTERESTING INFORMATION

Parking in School Grounds
Parents are reminded once again that there is no parking in school grounds for the purpose of picking up and dropping off of students in the mornings and afternoons. There are only a limited number of parking spaces and these are for staff and deliveries. Please make sure when entering and exiting the school that you use the pedestrian gates and not the car park gate.

Eftpos Facility
The school now has the ability to accept payment for things like voluntary contributions and excursions via eftpos or credit card. Excursion notes will include information for paying by credit card. Parents wishing to use eftpos will need to come to the office to do this. We know many parents will be pleased that we are now able to provide this service.

Interactive Whiteboard
A new Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) was installed in Room 7 of F Block (KV classroom) this week. We hope that this will allow Kinder classes to have greater access to this technology and opportunities to team-teach and learn from other experienced staff. Each IWB costs $8500. As we are able to raise
extra funds during the year, we will try to purchase additional permanent IWBs for installation in other classes in the school. We will now have nine permanent IWBs and three mobiles to cater for 20 classes. It would be wonderful if we could have one in every room.

Useful Educational Apps – RedFish 4 Kids (Fresh Planet Inc)
Played by children, tested by educators and approved by parents all over the world, RedFish features an elegant touch interface, charming graphics and offers hours of delightful interaction for children aged 2-7.

Pop the balloons! Light the fireworks! Choose your ice cream cone flavour! Compose a tune and hear it played back for you!

Watch in amazement as students Blast Balloons (and count to 3), Bake a Cake (and learn that it takes flour, eggs, milk, butter and connect it to the letter C), make a Puzzle, sort shapes by colours (or colours by shapes) and generally have a fun time.

They will be proud of their achievements and will want to share their discoveries with you. Let them play freely with Redfish, you'll be amazed what those developing brains can do while having lots of fun and laughter. Students are learning reasoning, deducing, analysing, logical thought, problem solving and decision-making skills.

### DIARY DATES

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### NOTES HOME THIS WEEK

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Food for Thought

Have a great week!

Pauline Baker
Principal
4.2.13

Minchinbury PS

A great school….. close to home!
2013 Staff List

Mrs Pauline Baker  Principal
Mrs Elise Berwick  Deputy Principal
Mrs Natalie Bourke  Relieving Deputy Principal (Monday) Assistant Principal (Stage 2)
Ms Jessica Evans  School Counsellor

KF  Mrs Marilyn Fisher
KT  Mrs Terrie Vasek
KV  Mrs Jessica Vyse - Relieving Assistant Principal (Kindergarten)

1A  Miss Amy Woodbury
1N  Ms Natalie Terrazzolo
1TW  Mrs Kristy Troy (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)
     Mrs Cassandra Williams (Thursday, Friday)
1/2W  Mrs Kathryn West – Assistant Principal (Stage 1)
2K  TBA
2M  Mr Nathan McKenzie
2R  Mrs Thuraya Razay

3B  Mrs Linda Bartlett
3O  Mrs Natalie Oxley
3/4L  Mrs Jean Leitch (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) and
     Mrs Jody Sullivan (Thursday and Friday) - Assistant Principal (Stage 2)
4J  Mrs Robyn Jamieson
4P  Ms Taryn Pears

5G  Mrs Wendy Guerin
5U  Mrs Jeannine Umback
5/6H  Mr Stuart Holstein – Assistant Principal (Stage 3)
6C  Ms Megan Cook
6R  Mrs Rochelle Charlton

Mrs Nancye Elliott  Library
Mrs Debbie Booth  Library / Computers RFF
Mrs Helen Anderson  Music  RFF
Mrs Bronwyn Llewellyn  Reading Recovery / Learning and Support
Mr Jason Brough  RFF / Learning and Support
Mrs Mira Zuber  Learning and Support Teacher
Mrs Melissa Bell  English as a Second Language
Mr Bruce Noble  English as a Second Language

Mrs Sue Moore  School Administrative Manger
Mrs Wuania O’Connell  School Administrative Officer
Mrs Dianne O’Connor  School Administrative Officer
Mrs Anne Aylward  School Administrative Officer – Library (Thursday)
Mrs Natalie Becci  School Learning Support Officer
Mrs Michelle Boughton  School Learning Support Officer
Mrs Karen Locke  School Learning Support Officer
Mr Rod Dollin  General Assistant

Mrs Marina French  Canteen Manager (Mon – Thurs)
Mrs Nicole McKechnie  Canteen Manager (Fri)