**Student Welfare**

**Every day counts – school attendance**

We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day.

Missing school can have a major impact on a child’s future – a student missing one day a fortnight will miss four full weeks by the end of the year. By Year 10 they’ll have missed more than a year of school.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Coming to school every day is vital, but if for any reason your child must miss school, there are things we can do together to ensure they don’t fall behind:

- Speak with your classroom teacher and find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your teacher and ensure your child completes the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your child must miss school, speak with your classroom teacher early as early as possible.

From 1 March 2014, new laws will mean that parents can be fined for not sending students to school without an acceptable reason.

If you’re having attendance issues with your child, please let your classroom teacher know.

**Financial Assistance: Information for Parents**

**Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA):**

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided by the Victorian Government to lower-income families to help with education-related costs. If you have a child under 16, and you hold a valid Health Care Card, Pension Card, or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible to receive the EMA. The allowance is paid in two instalments, one in March and one in August.

The payment is intended to assist with education-related costs such as: uniforms, excursions, textbooks, and stationery. You can elect to have your EMA paid in one of the following ways:

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your own nominated bank account; or
- Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses; or
- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection.

In 2014, the annual EMA amount per student is $200 for prep students, $150 for students in years 1 – 6, $300 for year 7 students and $250 for students in year 8 – until age 16.*

* A pro-rata amount is payable for students turning 16 in 2014.

How to Apply: Contact the school office to obtain an EMA application form. Closing Date: You need to obtain an EMA application form from the school office and return by 28 February 2014. For more information about the EMA, visit http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/financial/Pages/default.aspx
From the Principal’s Desk

We held our annual welcome BBQ this week to meet & greet existing, new and prospective parents. I know I speak on behalf of my staff when I say we found it an enjoyable experience and a great chance to chat with our parents. It was fantastic to see some parents from our local kindergartens, too. Thank you to everyone involved, particularly our staff and students, who spend their time planning these sessions. A special mention must go to Kaylene, Merrilyn and Tracey for their organisation of the evening. If there are any questions or queries then don’t hesitate to call.

We also hosted the Hamilton Walking group on Monday, which saw our small school welcome over 40 walkers into our staffroom where morning tea awaited them. School Captains Cooper Stone and Ebony Donhardt presented a welcome speech on behalf of staff and students. A great time was had by all.

A quick reminder: We have a uniform policy here at school and as such full school uniform is compulsory. This includes black shoes. We are proud of how smart we look in the community; therefore we seek your assistance in the matter. If for any reason you are unable to provide uniform, please let the school know so that we can provide assistance. Thank you to all those parents who continue to work with the school to ensure students follow policy.

As we continue to spread the word on the teaching and learning that occurs here, as well as our strong values and policies, we are beginning to gain considerable interest from the community for enrolments in 2015. I have said, and I will say again, we are committed to remaining a small school where students have individual, personalised learning. Therefore, if you know someone who wishes to enrol their child for 2015, then I would suggest they approach the school now with their intentions.

Tina Walkeden
Principal
George Street Primary School

Our students are learning

ARTIST OF THE WEEK—WEEK 1

This week, the Year One students made patterns with torn coloured cardboard. We looked at some Dr. Suess books, discussed different patterns, then they created their own hat. Well done Lachlan, a hardworking student and our Artist of the Week!

Mrs. Lee’s Class

Children have been learning about friendship. A good friend is kind, polite, helpful, will play with you and always says kind things to you. Students have been practising giving ‘warm fuzzies’ to each other so they feel good about themselves.

Mr. Membrey’s Class

Students have been developing their story writing skills. In small groups, students developed the details of characters and plot in the planning stage, brainstorming ideas and handwriting them on coloured paper. Students then worked together to write their stories using word processing applications on the iPads, such as ‘Pages’. Students completed the task by sharing their ideas before verbally presenting their work. The iPads are proving to be a success in engaging the students in literacy.

Mrs. Field’s Class

Students experiencing the new Ipads. They were discovering some of the maths apps, along with taking the opportunity to take photos and explore. Our classroom has a “Book Nook”, for the children to sit quietly and relax, which is a great spot to use the Ipads.

Next issue: features articles from the classes of Mrs. Mibus, Mrs. Walkeden, and Ms. Gallo