



## GOROKAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

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**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Gorokan Public School we believe that supporting students in their early days of school sets them up for a successful education. To this end, we have provided a fulltime teachers' aide for each of our five Kindergarten classes for the term to ensure maximum support is offered to our youngest students in order to guide and encourage them to adjust to school life both in the classroom and on the playground.

**2019 Classes** - The students have settled in extremely well into their new classes. All classes this year are parallel, meaning that they are made up of students of mixed abilities. Within each class, we have strategically placed groups of students of similar ability and each group receives differentiated instruction to ensure that the individual needs of students are being met. Some composite classes have been formed to cater for the staffing formula used in schools and these classes are also parallel.

Please try to attend the **parent teacher information session** for your child's grade in Week 4 (as outlined in last week's Newsletter). Attending this session will allow you to familiarise yourself with your child's new teacher, their learning environment and ensure you are informed for the year ahead.

**Parent Teacher Interviews** – Remember as explained in last week's newsletter, you will have an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher in a one-on-one meeting where you can share with them important information that will assist teachers to maximise learning and provide individualised support. Further information will be sent home shortly regarding these meetings to be held in week 5.

**Introducing New Staff** – I would like to introduce our new staff members to the Gorokan Public School community. A warm welcome is extended to the following newly appointed staff members:

- Mrs Shauna Crook who has taken leave from her position of Learning and Wellbeing Advisor at the Department of Education to relieve as Instructional Leader Special Education and student wellbeing;
- Mrs Dianna Jeanpierre is our newly appointed Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten) Assistant Principal;
- Miss Shaylene Bates will be teaching Year 3;
- Miss Evelyn Luck will be teaching Year 2;
- Ms Pauline Whaites (RN) is our school nurse;
- Ms Tamara Sidorenko will be teaching our newly established third special education class, and
- Danny Hughes will assist Ms Sidorenko.

I would also like to acknowledge and commend the exceptional service of Mr Ron Tyrrell and wish him well as he takes a leave of absence. Mr Tyrrell has been a long serving and well-respected teacher and outstanding leader of Aboriginal Education at Gorokan Public School.

**Safety Around Our School** - As we begin the new year I must remind everyone that we all need to work together to ensure safety around our school. Please attend to the following:

- Use the "No Standing" drop off zone at the front of the school on Dudley Street to drop off and pick up students. **Don't stop in this area for longer than two minutes.**



These signs mean:

- You can stop and drop your child off or pick them up
- **You can stop for no longer than 2 minutes**
- You may get out of the car to assist your child but **you must remain near your car.**

Police and Council Rangers patrol our school zone regularly and can issue fines to drivers who fail to abide by these rules.

**Set for Success** - Here are some suggestions to help set your child up for a great year:

- Pack school bags the night before school.
- Have plenty of sleep on school nights.
- Dress your child in full school uniform each day (including the correct school hat and jumper). Have it ready the night before school days.
- Be at school on time. Aim to be at school by 8:45am each day.
- Pack healthy food for fruit break, recess and lunch. A water bottle is essential and can be refilled with chilled, filtered water from any one of the school's five water fountains. Ensure they have a healthy breakfast at home or at the school's breakfast club.
- Practice the **Gorokan High Five** to build resilience and independent social problem solving skills:
  1. *Stop it I don't like it.*
  2. *We don't do that at our school.*
  3. *Ignore.*
  4. *Walk away.*
  5. *Tell the teacher if the problem persists.*

Together we can make a difference.

*Jermund Zammit*

Principal

### Dates to Remember

Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Tuggerah Lakes/Wallarah Zone Basketball
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> February	Years Three & Four Parent/Teacher Information Session
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> February	Years Five & Six Parent/Teacher Information Session
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> February	Kindergarten Parent/Teacher Information Session

Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> February	Years One & Two Parent/Teacher Information Session
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Wallarah Zone Tennis
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Wallarah boys' and girls' football (soccer) trials
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	P & C AGM 3pm
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 7 2020 High School Forms Returned
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	Selective High School Placement Test
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	School Cross Country
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September - Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 6 Canberra Excursion

### Kindergarten Supervisor - Mrs D Jeanpierre

**School Hours Week 3** - Kindergarten students begin school at 9:00am and conclude at 2:30pm for this week only. As of Week 4, all Kindergarten students will continue to commence school at 9:00am but conclude at 3:00pm with the older students.

**Pick Up** - This week remains unchanged. As of Week 4, all Kindergarten students will be taken to the Infant's COLA by their class teacher, for collection at the end of each day. Please speak to your child's teacher if you have any concerns with this new arrangement.

**Sport** - Sport will commence this week and be held each Friday. Please ensure your child wears their correct sport uniform with appropriate footwear on sports day.

**Parent Information Session** - The Kindergarten information session will be held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 3:15pm in the school library, not Thursday. Sorry for any confusion.

**Permission Notes** - Please return all permission notes promptly to support the various activities offered at our school.

**Newsletters** - The Newsletter will be sent home each Wednesday with the eldest child in the family. Please read these carefully.

### Stage 1 Supervisor - Mrs C Henderson

It has been a lovely start to the new school year. Students have settled in well to their new classes and are getting to know their new classroom routines. In class we are revising the Gorokan

Public School rules ***Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner.***

**Parent Information Session** - Parents and carers of students in Years One and Two are invited to an information afternoon in the library at 3:10pm on Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. During this time teachers will talk about school organisation, planned excursions, classroom routines and expectations and share information about upcoming events. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Water & Hats** - The weather is very hot at the moment, so please ensure that your child brings a bottle of water to school every day. Hats also need to be worn every day. Please make sure your child's name is clearly written on any of their belongings that they bring to school.

#### **Stage 2 Supervisor - Mrs R Ranse**

**Parent Information Session** - A reminder that this will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb in the library straight after school.

**Dismissal Routine** - As of this week, students will not be dismissed in the afternoons from their classroom. If your child is in 4A, 4J, 4/5M or 3P, please meet them under the Primary COLA. If your child is in 3L or 3S, please meet your child under the Infants COLA.

#### **Stage 3 Supervisor - Mrs G Farrell**

**Parent Information Session** - The teachers on Stage 3 would like to invite all parents and carers to a parent information session on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February starting at 3:15pm in the library. We anticipate the session will go for 30-45 minutes. The teachers will cover expectations for Year 5 and 6 students, the units covered this year, as well as high school transition, leadership, excursions and events, predicted costs, behaviour cards and sporting opportunities and other information pertaining to each class. Notes will go out shortly. Parent interviews will be arranged in the coming weeks.

**Contact Details** - Please make sure your child's information is up to date e.g. address, phone numbers and emergency contacts.

**Year 6 2020 Selective High School** - Following are some important dates for 2019:

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019** - Test authority advice sent to all applicants.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019** - Selective High School Placement Test.

**Canberra Excursion 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> September** - Notes will be sent out in the near future with costs and a suggested payment plan. Approximate cost will be \$380.

**Year 5 2020 Expression of Interest High School Enrolment** - The forms will be sent out soon and need to be returned completed by 12<sup>th</sup> March. Your address on our school records indicates your child's designated high school.

**Bathurst Excursion 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> August** - Notes will be sent out in the near future with costs and a suggested payment plan. Approximate cost will be \$380.

#### **Special Education - Mrs S Crook**

All of our students continue to work hard at being safe, respectful learners at Gorokan Public School.

**Class Captains** - We are very proud of our new class captains and look forward to them making a real contribution to our school.

**Donations** - The students in K-6S are going to be reusing regular household items to construct a variety of objects as part of their individual programs this term. We would be grateful for donations of cereal boxes, cardboard tubes and other containers that you no longer need. If you have any of these items, and would like to donate them, please bring them to Mrs Sidorenko or Mr Hughes in the K-6S classroom.

#### **Sport News**

**Special Swimming Scheme** - Notes for our students in the Special Ed classes have been sent home. The program will be held at Toukley Pool from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March till Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

**2019 Zone Swimming Carnival** - Swimmers who have qualified for Zone will be given notes in the coming weeks. It will be held at Mingara on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March. Pool entry of \$4.50 is to be paid to the school. Transportation will be by private vehicles, organised by parents. Spectators need to pay as they enter the pool.

**Wallarah Zone Sporting Trials** - If your child is in Year 5 or 6 and plays any representative sport outside school, please let their teacher or Mrs Farrell know ASAP.

#### **P & C**

**P&C Annual General Meeting** - The next P&C meeting will be held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 3:00pm.



# Preventing childhood bullying

By Michael Grose

Childhood bullying is an insidious behaviour that thrives on secrecy and adult acquiescence.

The recent efforts by a father in Ohio, USA to hold his child accountable for bullying is commendable, even if the technique he used is questionable.

Matt Cox insisted that his ten year daughter walk eight kilometres each way to school for three days after she was banned from the school bus for bullying. He posted a film of her walking to school on social media, which has drawn over 15 million viewers. Cox's actions have drawn mixed responses from parents and professionals alike.

Let's look at the filming and posting of a disciplinary measure to social media first. It's a firm belief of the Parenting Ideas team that discipline works best when it's a private matter between parents and their children, and not something shared with others.

## Keep discipline private

Many kids feel uncomfortable when even their close family are aware of the discipline they are experiencing. The posting of the film on social media borders on the realms of humiliation, which probably wasn't this father's intention. Imagine thirty years ago if Cox's parents had filmed an act of discipline involving their son and screening it as a short in movie theatres across the country. There would have been a public outcry about this invasion of privacy. Now thanks to social media posting of private matters is the new normal, which often goes unquestioned.

Parents should be encouraging their children to think very carefully before they post anything on social media as once the genie is out of the bottle it can't be put back. This video could well come back to haunt his daughter in the years to come.

## Being accountable

It's laudable that this father wants to hold his daughter accountable for her actions rather than dismiss the behaviour as minor, or 'just one of those things that happen.' Too often parents excuse their children's poor behaviour, or simply don't take it seriously enough. This father backed the actions of the bus driver, which were presumably endorsed by the school. Parent inaction over children's inappropriate behaviour is a common frustration for many teachers and principals so I suspect knowledge of this dad's actions would have

been greeted by high fives by most of the staff at the girl's school.

Reflection is a precursor to behaviour change so the fact that she walked to school gave her plenty of time to ponder on her actions. However this type of punishment doesn't generally lead to a reduction in bullying in the long-term.

## Restore relationships

Relationship restoration is a key strategy used by many Australian schools that's proving successful in changing bullying behaviour. Increasingly, kids who bully are expected to face up to their victims in safe, teacher-lead meetings. They are required to recall their actions and account for their behaviour. They also hear first hand the impact that their behaviour has had on the person they bullied, which is usually very confronting. This restorative justice method promotes real accountability as kids are expected to make amends in some way for the hurt that they have brought to the other person. Research shows that many children who bully generally don't identify with the impact of bullying, so hearing first hand how their behaviour impacts on others is more likely to create some empathy, and hopefully, a decrease in bullying.

Like any behaviour change method, restorative justice doesn't work all the time. It needs to be applied in a calm, respectful way and it requires the support of the families of all children involved. This restorative justice method is less about seeking vengeance ('you'll get your come uppance') and more about seeking justice for the person who is bullied ('do you feel safe and also that you've been heard?') and achieving behavioural change from the child who bullies.

## Use the restorative approach at home

Parents can practise this restorative approach in their families by encouraging a child to make amends if they've upset or been nasty to a brother or sister. 'You mess up relationships, you make up relationships' is a fabulous way for kids to take ownership of their anti-social behaviours. Again to be effective this method needs to be carried out in a safe, calm manner at a time when children and teenagers are likely to listen.

Childhood bullying requires a zero tolerance approach from parents, teachers and coaches if it is to be stamped out. The approach taken needs to be respectful to everyone involved; aimed at achieving justice and maintaining personal safety rather than seeking vengeance and gaining pay back; and stay firmly in the private rather public domain.