



## GOROKAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dudley Street, Gorokan 2263  
Phone: 4392 4200 Fax: 4393 1698  
Email: [Gorokan-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Gorokan-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)  
Website: [www.gorokan-p.schools.nsw.edu.au](http://www.gorokan-p.schools.nsw.edu.au)

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Gorokan Public School, we believe that wearing the school uniform consistently, instils a sense of pride amongst the students and the school community. Thank you to the parents and carers who support the school by ensuring that their children are sent to school in the correct uniform each day.

**Garden Kitchen** - The student leaders and Mrs Voorwinde had the pleasure of working in partnership with a crew of school supporters from Bunnings Lakehaven and the Gwandalan Community Garden volunteers to finish the school's new garden kitchen. Bunnings generously donated food preparation benches, tables, chairs and garden supplies towards the project. Much appreciation is extended to all involved.



**Parents and Citizens Association** - Gorokan Public School has an active P&C who support and enrich the education of the students through a number of activities. Thank you to the parents and carers who have been involved in the P&C. The school appreciates your dedication and commitment and I hope that you will continue your involvement in 2019. New people are always encouraged to attend as we value the opportunity to hear new ideas and grow this dedicated team of school supporters. **Please note that the Annual General Meeting date has changed and will now be held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 3:15pm in the school library.** Apologies for any inconvenience this change may cause.

**Absences** - Attending school regularly will ensure students have the opportunity to maximize their learning potential. Any whole day or partial absence must be explained to the child's teacher in writing or via return SMS. The school will continue to notify parents of absences via SMS on any day that students are absent from class during rollcall. Please note absences must be explained within 7 days or they are locked in as unjustified leave.

**Parent Teacher Interviews** - All parents and carers are invited to meet with their child's teacher over the next few weeks of this term. The aim of these interviews is for parents and carers to exchange information that could enhance the learning outcomes of students over the course of the year. The stage supervisors have provided further information about this in their sections of this newsletter and a separate note has been sent home to all parents and carers.

**Bus Travel** - Buses provide a safe means of transport to and from school, however the behaviour of some students on buses is sometimes a concern. A potentially dangerous part of the journey is crossing the road at the homeward end of the journey. Please support safe bus travel by:

- Talking to your children about safe, responsible behaviour on buses,
- Reminding students that riding the bus is a privilege that can be revoked if students misbehave whilst traveling to and from school,
- Reinforcing the road safety messages delivered at school,
- Stressing the need to wait until the bus has gone before crossing the road, and
- Waiting on the same side of the road when meeting students at the homeward end of the journey.

**Bicycle Safety** - The school policy for bicycles states:

- If students ride a bicycle to school it must be walked (not ridden) in the school grounds and left in the bicycle racks. Bike locks are essential to help prevent theft.
- Students are not allowed near the bicycle racks during the day.
- Students departing from the front gate will walk with their bicycle across the pedestrian crossing. Students must wear a helmet when riding their bicycle and obey all the road rules.

Generally speaking, young students under the age of 10 years simply do not have enough road sense or the skills necessary to be safe road users. Every year there are numerous reports of fatal or near fatal accidents involving young riders. Therefore students under the age of ten are not permitted to ride bicycles to and from school.

**Visitors to the School** - All visitors to the school must report to the office. All volunteers must sign in and wear

a visitor's badge. On leaving the school they need to sign out and remove their badge.

**Health Care Plans** - Students with diagnosed medical conditions who require medication, treatment or an emergency response plan at school must have a current health care plan. A note was sent home recently to parents and carers of the students who are registered on the school database. Please ensure that a prompt response is provided to the school to ensure the safety and wellbeing of these students.

**Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO)** - Mrs Sharon Flanagan is the school's anti-racism contact officer. She has undergone training for this role, which aims to resolve any issues of racism in the school and to help educate students in understanding the impact of racism.

**Behaviour Cards** - I would encourage all parents and carers to regularly monitor the behaviour card ratings. These cards are sent home with the students every Friday and must be returned the following Monday. The rating given by the teachers will capture the students overall behaviour according to their demonstrated classroom and playground behaviour.

Together we can make a difference.

*Jesmond Zammit*

Principal

### Dates to Remember

Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Family Photos, Leaders and Group Photos
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Selective High School Test authority advice sent to all applicants
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	P&C AGM - 3:15pm in Library
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> April	School Cross Country
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September - Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 6 - Canberra Excursion

### Kindergarten Supervisor - Mrs D Jeanpierre

**Parent Information Session** - Thank you for attending our Kindergarten Information session last Wednesday. We hope it was informative and you had the opportunity to meet with the ES1 teaching staff. We look forward to a wonderful year, working closely together to support your children.

**Parent Teacher Interviews** - The interviews begin this week. Please ensure you have nominated a suitable day and time to meet with your child's teacher over the

coming weeks and notify the school office if you are unable to attend.

**Class Awards** - Congratulations to these students for receiving class awards at our grade gathering last week. **KC** - Emily K, Zachery D, **KDT** - Daniel D, Ayla C, **KFL** - Oliver W, Jaxon T, **KJ** - Connor D, Emelia C, **KL** - Maxon M, Lucas D.

**Behaviour Monitoring Cards** - Monitoring Cards commence this week. All students will take their card home on Fridays to be signed by a parent/carer. Please ensure you return the card to school each Monday for the continued use and monitoring of student behaviour. It is important we work together to ensure consistent messages are being delivered.

**Home Readers** - Blue home reading folders have been sent home (at no cost to families) with a borrowed picture book for you to read and enjoy with your child. These books may be returned to school as often as desired and swapped for a new book. Replacement costs for lost blue folders are \$25.00.

**School Rules** - Please revise our school rules with your child regularly to ensure positive experiences at school are maximised. The school rules are: be safe, be respectful and be a learner.

### Stage 1 Supervisor - Mrs C Henderson

**Parent Teacher Interviews** - Parents/carers of students in Years One and Two are invited to meet with their child's teacher to share information and set goals for the year. We find these meetings a wonderful time to get to know more about your child. Notes have been sent home with details of meeting times. We hope that you can make time for these important meetings. If you have not received a note please let your child's teacher know so that another one can be sent home.

**Homework and Home Reading** - Homework for Stage One students began this week. Your child will bring home books to read, a booklet of sight words to know, a laminated handwriting sheet and a maths checklist to work through with parents/carers. Students are encouraged to read with someone every day, or listen to a lovely story read to them. Please fill out the home reading card and send it back to school with the books on Friday. New books will be sent home on Mondays.

The maths checklist shows a series of counting activities that can be done anywhere, anytime. If you have any questions about how to help your child with these please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

**Excursion** - Notes for our Stage 1 excursion to see *Billionaire Boy* at The Art House Theatre on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May have been sent home. The cost of the excursion is \$25.00 and payment is due in full by the end of the term. If you have not received this note please let your child's teacher know so that a new one can be sent home.

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

**Afternoon Pick Up** - A reminder that Stage 2 students line up under our COLA area in the afternoon. Please meet your children in this area. Also, if you wish to speak to your child's teacher, please contact the office for an appointment as teachers are unavailable in the mornings due to needing to prepare for the days lessons. Thank you for your support.

**Stage 2 Sport** - Years 3 and 4 will be having sport on Tuesday afternoons. They will also have P.E (Sports in Schools) on Monday's. Students are required to wear their sneakers on both of these days and yellow sports shirt on Tuesday's.

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

**Parent Teacher Interviews** - Parent teacher interviews have been arranged for weeks 5, 6 and 7. Notes have been sent out indicating available times. Please complete the information sheet and return it to your child's teacher ASAP.

**Fundraising** - We will be having a spider day on Friday of Week 6 and need donations of soft drinks (not coke/cola), plastic cups, straws and ice-cream.

**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 6 High School 2020** - Expression of Interest High School Enrolment forms were sent out last Friday and need to be completed and returned by no later than Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March. Your address on our school records indicates your child's designated High School.

**Year 6 Souvenir T-Shirt** - Students will be designing the front pocket and the back design at school. A note will come home in the next few weeks, when all costs are finalised. The cost is between \$30 and \$35.

**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**

**Living Skills** - Both Mrs Greentree and Ms Sidorenko have been cooking with their class as part of their Living Skills program. The children have been learning how to stir, mix, chop, crumb and lots of other excellent cooking skills. I really enjoyed the chicken burger that K-6S made me and I hear the spaghetti bolognaise that K-6G made smelled and was delicious!

**Fruit Break/Crunch and Sip** - Although students have time each morning for a fruit break, it can be difficult for some students to participate as they have strict preferences around their food choices. If your child only eats certain foods and it is a concern for you, an Occupational Therapist may be able to help. We have

tried to extend the range of food to cater for each child's tastes. Please be aware that only fruits, vegetables, yoghurt, water and juice can be eaten during fruit break. Here are some ideas to encourage your child to experiment with their food choices:

- Experiment with preparing and touching a wide range of foods at home.
- Try to expose your child to foods that are a range of colours, shapes and textures.
- Sometimes it can help to cut new foods in the same shape as your child's favourite foods – it is amazing how many foods you can cut into the shape of a chip or a nugget!
- Try introducing new foods along with more familiar favourites.

### **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 until Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March.

**2019 Zone Swimming Carnival** - Those 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. The cost of \$5 for pool entry is to be paid to the school. Transport will be private vehicle organised by parents. Spectators need to pay as they enter the pool. Notes will go home this week.

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

### **P & C- Mrs Jasmine Daunt**

**P&C Annual General Meeting** - I'd like to warmly welcome families to the next P&C meeting to be held Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 3:15pm. We will have a crèche' running for all who are interested .

### **School News**

**Catching the Bus from School** - A reminder that students line up under the infants COLA after school in order to catch the school buses in the afternoon. The teachers on duty will then take them up to the buses as they arrive. Please remind your child to come to the COLA and sit in their bus lines as soon as the bell rings in order to ensure this happens in a timely and safe manner.

Busways has requested that students be reminded that they require a valid opal card to travel on school buses. From March if a student does not have an opal card the family will be sent a bill for travel. Opal cards can be order online at <https://www.opal.com.au/en/about-opal/opal-for-school-students/>

## Unearthing kids' strengths

by Professor Lea Waters (PhD)

Personality strengths – our character – play a big role in helping us build our talents. Think about anyone who has built a talent and imagine if it could have been done without character. Imagine Einstein without curiosity, The Beatles without creativity, Mother Teresa without compassion or Neil Armstrong without bravery.

Yet for decades, scientists were blind to character strength. We focused on talent, often on physical strength and skills. In fact, when I first ask young children what they think a strength is, they almost always point to their biceps or talk about being able to lift something heavy.

Once you get familiar with the language of strengths and a framework for seeing them, you'll see character strengths easily in your child. In fact, you may find your child calls on their character strengths more often than on talent to meet life's challenges.

### Three key elements of a strength

You've probably seen a child joylessly perform at a piano recital. They may hit all the right keys, but there's no energy or enthusiasm. It's as if they don't want to be there. On the flip side, we've seen the child onstage who's clearly motivated and energised and who fearlessly flails through every mistake – of which there are many.

It turns out that three elements come together to form a strength. For purposes of strength-based parenting, we need to keep our eye on all three:

#### 1. Performance (being good at something)

Watch for when your child shows above-age levels of achievement, rapid learning, and a repeated pattern of success.

#### 2. Energy (feeling good doing it)

Strengths are self-reinforcing. The more we use them, the more we get from them. They fill us with vigour. You'll notice your child has abundant energy when using a strength.

#### 3. High use (choosing to do it)

Finally, look for what your child chooses to do in their

spare time, how often they engage in a particular activity, and how they speak about that activity.

For true strengths, these three elements form a beautiful feedback loop: great performance provides the child with a shot of high energy, so the child naturally chooses to do more. In turn, high use – also known as effort or practice – improves performance levels. So, for example, if you notice that your child is energised when they play the piano, and you provide enjoyable opportunities for them to play, if they're mining a true strength they will likely practise more, which improves their performance, which then energises them ... and so the loop continues.

Keeping this triad in mind will help you avoid pushing your child into an area that seems like a strength just because your child is good at it. It will also help you differentiate between whether your child is bingeing on an activity in an escapist way or expressing a true strength.

For example, when a parent asks me, 'My son is great at computer games and wants to play all the time. Is that a sign of a strength?' I reply, 'Observe his energy levels at the end. Is he drained and cranky? Or energised and full of life? Are you seeing the full triad?' Computer games can tap into a child's strategic and problem-solving skills or stimulate creativity (in some games, you invent whole new worlds). Or they might just be about filling time.

So look for all three signs. When you see your child do something well, with energy, and repeatedly, you'll know you've unearthed a strength.

#### Professor Lea Waters (PhD)

Lea is the best-selling author of *The Strength Switch*, the President of the International Positive Psychology Association, and the founding director of the Positive Psychology Centre at the University of Melbourne. For further details visit [leawaters.com](http://leawaters.com).

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