Tuesday, 6th October 2015

FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I wanted to take this opportunity to say how much I am looking forward to working at Monkland for the next few years as Principal. I hope you all had a relaxing holiday and are ready for the final term of the school year. This time last week my wife and I welcomed our fourth child, a baby boy, who was born at Hervey Bay Hospital. Needless to say, I am still trying to get used to nightly feeds and changing nappies again. It is a wonderful reminder, however, of the great privilege and responsibility that comes with being a parent, and something that is shared by us who work with your children every day.

Over the next few weeks, I will be spending a lot of time getting to know how Monkland State School operates and looking at how we can move forward and continue to provide the very best education for our students. As part of this, I will be talking extensively with staff and students, but I would also very much like to hear from the parent and caregiver community about what we can do to become an even better school. I believe strongly that the most effective school communities are built on mutual respect and understanding, and that open and honest communication is paramount. I would like Monkland State School to become a school of choice in Gympie; that is, I would like us to be recognised for the quality of our teaching and have other families choose Monkland over other schools in Gympie.

One of my expectations for Monkland is that every partner, whether staff, student or community, engages in appropriate and respectful behaviour towards each other, and that we learn to respect each other’s opinions. I have found that many problems in schools are primarily a result of a breakdown of communication, and that often we only receive part of the information. Should an issue arise that you have a concern about, I ask that you contact the school so that we can work constructively and positively to addressing those concerns.

I look forward to working with everyone at Monkland and getting to know everyone over the next term.

Kind regards,

Mr Craig Barrett
Principal
6th October, 2015

Attendance
I am aware that attendance at Monkland is below our set targets. As parents and caregivers, it is a moral and legal obligation for us to send our children to school. When marking the rolls at school, we use a number of codes to track the reasons behind absences. It is important that these are correct as attendance rolls are legal documents and are often used in court cases and by agencies such as Child Safety and the Queensland Police Service. Where we are not provided with a reason for an absence, rolls are marked with a U for Unexplained. These rolls can be updated once we are provided with a valid reason.

This term, the school will be constantly tracking student absences and following up with families. From this week, the school will call parents and carers on a daily basis when their child is marked absent. Where students have an absence due to a medical illness of more than a few days, we would also appreciate a medical certificate to add to a student’s file. When it comes to illness, it is preferable that students are given sufficient time to recover in order to prevent recurrence of illness or spreading it to other members of the school community. I encourage parents and caregivers to call the school as soon as they can to inform us of an absence and the reason. Parents and caregivers can leave a message on the night service if the office is not open.

The school also recognises that there are many challenges to raising children today, and that we are here to support parent and caregivers with many of the issues that may prevent children attending school. I know from past experience that sometimes families do not have access to regular or reliable transport, that sometimes clean uniforms or appropriate footwear are not available, or that even food for lunches is a problem. At other times, families may be facing issues such as breakups or domestic violence. If there are any barriers standing in the way of your children attending school on a regular basis, please come and see me. While you may feel embarrassed, please note that I will treat any issues in a confidential and supportive manner, as my primary aim is the welfare of our students at Monkland.

By working together, we can ensure all students have the best education.

Changes to Child Protection Standards
Before the holidays, I was able to attend a training session for Principals regarding changes to the Child Protection Standards in Queensland. As you may be aware, staff at Queensland Schools have mandatory reporting for a range of issues, including suspicion of abuse or neglect. The State Government has introduced several new supporting organisations to support the work of Child Safety and the Queensland Police Service. These new services are Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support, both of which are overseen by Child Safety.

Family and Child Connect is a local, community-based service that helps families to care for and protect their children at home, by connecting them to the right services at the right time.

Parents can seek support through the service to:
- develop parenting skills and managing child behaviour
- build better relationships between family members, including help with any violence at home
- improve budgeting and managing money
- manage alcohol, drug or gambling problems
- access housing, healthcare or other community or government services.

The service can also link families to more intensive support services that help families stay together.

More information can be found at http://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect/ or by calling 13FAMILY (13 32 64).

Monkland State School takes its Child Protection obligations incredibly seriously, and will not hesitate to refer any issues to other agencies in order to ensure student safety.

Prep Enrolments for 2016
If you have a child who will be eligible for Prep next year, or know someone who does, we encourage you to enrol them before the end of the year. This allows us to better prepare staffing and class allocations to minimise changes in Term 1. We are running an introduction to Prep program and I encourage any potential Prep students to attend with their parents for a taste of schooling.

Pupil Free Day
A reminder that Monday 19th October is a Pupil Free Day. This is a mandated day for all Education Queensland staff. At Monkland I will be working with teachers and staff to conduct a review of our curriculum and key programs in preparation for 2016.

ROAD SAFETY IN OUR SCHOOL GROUNDS
Monkland SS is one of the very few schools in Gympie where parents can drive on the school campus. As we all know, children are very unpredictable and sometimes act before thinking. To ensure the safety of all students, some road rules must be followed on school grounds. They are:
- The speed limit is strictly 10 kms/hr
- There is no parking in the stop, drop, go area
- Unaccompanied students are to walk across the school driveway and the road in front of the school at the crossing
- The top car park is for staff and pre-approved P&C members only who are working in that area. Parents are to park in the areas from the old tennis court down.
At Monkland State School, student learning is our core business.

So WHAT? My child is only a little bit late!
Just a little bit late doesn’t seem much, but did you know…?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Just missing...</th>
<th>Equals...</th>
<th>Which is....</th>
<th>Over 13 years of schooling, that’s...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes per day</td>
<td>50 minutes per week</td>
<td>Nearly 1.5 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly HALF A YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes per day</td>
<td>1 hour 40 minutes per week</td>
<td>Over 2.5 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1 YEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes per day</td>
<td>Half a day per week</td>
<td>4 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1.5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour per day</td>
<td>1 day per week</td>
<td>8 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 2.5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you know that your child’s best learning time is the start of the school day?
That’s when every minute counts the most.

School starts at 9 a.m.
Students need to be at school by 8:50 a.m. in readiness for learning.

Attendance counts
Next P&C Meeting

Monday, 12th October
3.30pm in the Library

All welcome!

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