Welcome Back

Welcome back to school for another exciting year. We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and holiday break. Welcome to our many new students, staff and families who are starting with us this year. We have three new staff members: Marisa Jackson and Vesna Zagorac both teaching in the 5/6 area and Rachel Layton teaching in grade 3/4. We have 54 new students starting at Merri Creek this year, our 52 preps have settled in quickly demonstrating how prepared they were for school. We trust you will all have a lovely year and will be welcomed by the fantastic Merri Creek Primary Community.

The new sustainable pergolas and decking areas are almost completed and will be a wonderful place for children to play and learn both during class times and at recess breaks. Display boards have been hung in the 5/6 room, library and in various places in the corridors. We are yet to receive a timeline for the beginning of the new works on the refurbishment of the older building but once these works begin there will be relocation of classrooms to either the art room or portable classrooms. We will keep you informed of these changes once the plans are finalised.

We would like to send our appreciation to Sophie Gebhardt, Susan Bamford-Caleo and Jodie Brown who did an excellent job keeping the gardens alive over December and January. Your effort in keeping our school grounds in excellent and lush conditions for us all to enjoy is much appreciated.

Parent Information Night/ Welcome Picnic

We will be having a Parent Information Night followed by a Welcome Picnic on Wednesday 10th February to give you the opportunity to meet your child’s teacher and other families from your child’s class. The information sessions are held at 6pm in individual classrooms followed by the picnic around 6.45pm in the school grounds. Please note the picnic is BYO food, drink, chairs, picnic rugs etc. Specialist teachers will supervise the students in the yard while the information sessions are operating for parents.
**Hats**

It is Education Department policy that all students are required to wear an approved sun smart hat from September through to April regardless of the weather. All students are to wear a hat which provides adequate sun protection to face and neck which means they must either wear a broad brim or legionnaire style hat. Caps are not acceptable as they do not provide enough protection to the ears and neck. Students without an appropriate hat will be excluded from play.

Please clearly write your child’s name on the hat to ensure it can be returned if misplaced. It is also a good idea to have a spare hat in their locker at all times in case they leave their hat at home or in the car!

**Lost clothing**

It is astounding how much clothing we send to charities like the Diabetes Foundation each term which is left at school by our families. We are happy to return all named clothing to its owner but every day large quantities of lost items appear in the lost property area.

We have two requests of families to help keep this problem under control. Firstly, write your child’s name on all removable clothing. Most lost property consists of jumpers or tops which are taken off as the day heats up and hats which get taken off after breaks. Secondly, we ask you to check that your child has the clothing they wore to school with them when they are picked up each day. It is much easier to find it on the day it is misplaced. If clothing is noticed missing at collection time and doesn’t appear to be in the bag area or classroom, remember to ask your child if they attended specialist classes or other areas of the school during the day as sometimes property is left in the library, art or music rooms or where a class had PE lessons. As you can appreciate, sorting and returning the lost property takes a lot of time and we would prefer our teachers to spend this time planning and working with children, so if your child’s property can be managed from your end then less time is needed at our end.

**Lunch/Food**

It is difficult to find the right amount of food to send with your child to satisfy them throughout the day. Last year we noticed students were often complaining that they were hungry in the afternoon. It is important to know your child’s eating habits and provide food accordingly. While we have a lunch order service, children cannot access food from a
canteen so they need to bring sufficient amounts from home. This can be tricky to manage because some young students find it difficult to choose what to eat if their lunchbox has too many choices. If this applies to your child, discuss it with them and the class teacher so they know what amounts are appropriate. As a guide they will require:
- 10am: one piece of fruit
- 11am: snack
- 12.30: lunch – a combination of a few items such as a sandwich (or more for older students), dry biscuits, protein (egg, cheese, chicken etc), salad, fruit, vegetable sticks or yoghurt.

The best way to judge is to see what your child brings home each day and have conversations with them and their teacher. We often have children tell us they don’t like the food parents are sending and given the amount of food ending up in the compost bins it can be hard to know exactly what they are eating.

Many classes will be eating lunch inside this year as a way of keeping tabs on eating habits and trying to reduce the number of lunch boxes left in the playground daily. Again we ask for you to assist us by writing your child’s name on all of their lunch containers so we don’t get so many ending up in landfill.

What are threadworms?

Threadworms are tiny, very thin white worms up to 13 millimetres long that live in the intestine and around the anus (bottom). They are also called pinworms. They look like small threads of white cotton, hence their name. They are widespread in Australia. Although people of any age can get them, children are the most susceptible.

Where do threadworms come from?

Threadworms produce large numbers of microscopic eggs. These eggs are present in house dust and stick to clothes, carpets and bedding. They can also be transmitted through contact with a person who is already infected with worms. It is very easy for people to ingest the eggs because the worms produce so many of them and they are so small.

After the eggs have been ingested they pass into a person’s small intestine (bowel) where they hatch and mature. A few weeks after hatching out these worms can reproduce — usually about a month later. When the worms are fully grown, the female comes out onto the skin around the bottom at night and lays eggs. At this time, symptoms may develop, including the classic one of a severe ‘itchy bottom’. The worms can also often be seen on bowel movements or around the anus especially at night.

Some children have no symptoms at all, but some of the other signs of threadworm infection your child may show are:

- tiredness;
- disturbed sleep;
- teeth grinding;
- bedwetting;
- nose rubbing; and
- loss of appetite.

Threadworms do not go away by themselves, and people do not build up immunity to them, so they must be treated in order to eradicate them totally from the body.

How serious are threadworms?

They are more embarrassing than anything else, because they can cause an irresistible urge to scratch the bottom. They are generally harmless and don’t cause long-term damage. However, scratching can aggravate the problem and make it more difficult to treat.
Camps
This year the grade 3/4 students will be attending a new camp at Queenscliff, Camp Wyuna. There will be two camps, one for grade 3/4 Trevor and half of Jenni’s class and another for 3/4 Rachel and the other half of 3/4 Jenni. These camps will be in the last week of term March 24th and 25th for the first camp and March 25th and 26th for the second. Detailed notes will be sent home soon for the grade 3/4 students. This year the grade 5/6 students will be going to Catherine’s Creek in the Strezlecki Ranges in early term two. Information about this camp will come home later in the term.

2010 SCHOOL CHARGES AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION
We are very appreciative of the fact that we have received the prompt payment for the 2010 School Charges and Voluntary Contribution for over 170 children, which helps us greatly. If you haven’t yet paid, the amount payable is $210 per student, with a maximum of $480 for a family of three or more students. (If you are unsure that you have paid the levy please check with the office.)

School Council Elections and Call for Nominations
Merri Creek Primary School Council has 12 members – eight parents and four staff. Approximately half the members two year terms expire annually. Our current school council is comprised of:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Members
Dionne Wright - Principal and Executive Office, Jo Wheeler, Gaye Wilde and Trevor Allen. Gaye and Trevor’s terms are ending.

Parent Members
Steve Watson – President, Maryrose Cuskelly – Vice President, Tony Ladson – Treasurer, Tim Rawling, Sean Cooney, Kate Jones, Melinda Moore, Justine Costigan.

There are four parent electorate vacancies on the 2010 School Council, with the expiration of the two year terms of office held by Tim Rawling, Steve Watson, Maryrose Cuskelly and Tony Ladson.

Nominations Accepted 15th-22nd February
Interested parents and staff are able to complete a nomination form available from the office from Monday 15th to 22nd February. All nominations must be received by 4.00pm on Monday 22nd February. You may complete a self nomination form or choose to be nominated by a person in the same member category – either a parent or staff member at the school.

A list of nominees will be displayed around the school by Wednesday 24th February and if elections are necessary then the ballot papers will be sent home to every parent in the school, with the ballot closing Tuesday 9th March at 4.00pm.
School Musical 2011 – We need your help!

While the next school musical is a long way off, the planning and writing usually begins the year before so we will commence this process later in the year with the grade 4/5 students (who will be our grade 5/6 leads in 2011). Without giving too much away the musical will involve a family travelling in a car and we thought it would be opportune to ask families to write down any anecdotes from their travels over these or previous holidays which might be funny or topical for us to use. For those familiar with our musicals you will know that we like to appeal to our adult audience members so if you can write down any humorous (or not so humorous at the time) situations that you have experienced while travelling in a car and give them to Jo Wheeler, we might be able to include these in our script. No names will be used so you will be saved any associated embarrassment!

FETE

This year’s school fete is being held on Saturday 20th March. This is only 6 weeks away so please start collecting items for our stalls. Rosters will be going up soon for all families to commit time to assist on stalls. Please read the special fete newsletters which will be coming home regularly throughout the term to keep informed of ways you can assist.

FETE MEETING

Only 6 weeks until Fete day – Saturday 20 March 2010!
If you would like to be involved in anyway – big or small – please join us for a meeting at Emma and Tim O’Meara’s house – 30 Traill St, Northcote - on Tuesday 9 February at 8pm.
Feel free to contact us at any stage – Annie Unkenstein and Mick Symons – Fete Coordinators – Phone 9489 2009 – Email: anneunk@optusnet.com.au

No Free Lunch…….!!?

OK, now that the Christmas tree has been put away, the holiday is fast fading into memory and school has started, we need to get cracking with organising our Auctions for the fete.
We need your help to make this work and to get the most benefit for the school.
WHO:  Call on your contacts, your boss, your friends, family, your favourite traders and anyone else you can think of, to donate ….
WHAT:  desirable goods or services that we can auction at the fete.
HOW:  Use the ergonomically designed donation vouchers attached to this newsletter. The vouchers include a letter of introduction from the school, which explains why it is that you are seeking a donation. And, on the reverse side, the donation voucher lists the information required for the auction. Put them in your wallet for that chance encounter with a generous soul!
THEN:  Please return all completed vouchers and/or goods to the office, where you can add them to the Donor List. You can then nominate to either collect a Thank You letter to return in person to the donating business, or if you prefer we will happily post one to them.
IF YOU GET ON A ROLL:  Extra vouchers can be obtained from the office.
Any queries? Call Nerida on 0425 111 108
The Auction Team really appreciates your help with this – Nerida Crewdson, Melinda Lowe & Emma Salzano.

After Hours Instrumental Music Classes
All after hour music classes will be commencing at the start of next week. You will be receiving a letter today with times and rooms your child will need to be for their particular class.

School Start Bonus

These vouchers were sent to the homes of all of our prep families at the end of last year and can be redeemed at Australia Post offices.

Baby News

We would like to extend our congratulations to two of our 2009 and one of our 2008 teachers on the safe arrivals of their first babies at the end of 2009. Trevor Allen (grade 3/4) and wife Mel welcomed son Conor Jake Allen, a week early on 13th December. Jonathan Shearer (grade 5/6) and wife Meredith welcomed Felix Zebedee Shearer, three weeks early on 31st December just in time for New Year Celebrations. Familiar enough Lynda Joyce’s baby girl Heidi, was born exactly 3 minutes after Felix on 31st December. We wish them all the very best. We still await news on Matthew Parker who is expecting a baby over our summer.

Dogs at School

We are a dog friendly school and are happy for families to walk their dogs while dropping off and picking up their children. But for us to continue to allow this practice we would like to remind you that dogs must be on a lead at all times. They are to be handled by an adult at all times and are not to be tethered. Dog owners are responsible for picking up after their dog. Please be mindful that not all people love your dog and that some of our students have a fear of dogs, so by following these rules everyone will be safe and our practice of allowing dogs in the grounds can continue.

A message from MYM (Melbourne Youth Music) –

Does your child like to sing? If you would like your child to sing in an after-hours choir program, then read on. Melbourne Youth Music’s Saturday program would like to invite you to attend a free introductory rehearsal on Saturday February 6th and 13th from 10.30 am until 12 noon in room 109 of the School of Music, Victorian College of the Arts, 234 St Kilda Rd, Southbank.

Come and make new friends who all share a passion for singing and learn lots of wonderful music! Places are limited so please register your interest ASAP with the MYM office mym@mym.org.au or 9416 4366.

Lunch Orders

Please note there has been a slight price increase on a few items from our Lunch Order Services. Attached is a price list which will help in completing orders from home. We ask that you supply the correct money as the office is often short of small change. It’s very important to remind your child/ren to put their order into the lunch order tub once arriving at school.
Dear Parents/Carers,

Have your say in the development of our school's Student Engagement Policy. After completing the attached form, return this to school with your child, preferably before, or on the day of the school welcome picnic Wednesday 10th February.

**Education Maintenance Allowance for 2010**

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided to assist eligible families with the costs associated with the education of their children. To be eligible to receive the first instalment of the EMA parents/guardians must have a Health Care Card or Pension Card which is valid on the 27th January 2010.

**Application forms are available from the school office.**

The EMA application must be submitted to the school by the 26th February 2010 for the first instalment.

The EMA provides an annual amount of $225 for primary students and is paid in two instalments:

- **Instalment one:** Parent - $78.75  
  School - $78.75
- **Instalment two:** Parent - $33.75  
  School - $33.75

Parents with continuing eligibility, who are paid the first instalment of 2010 through this school, will not be required to complete a new application for the second instalment.

**NB:** The 2010 EMA application form includes a section for you to nominate whether you would like your EMA payment to be paid into your own bank account or to receive your payment as a cheque. The banking details required will include the BSB code and the account number.

**STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE & PERSONAL GOODS BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

Parents are reminded that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development does not provide personal accident insurance for students. Parents and guardians are generally responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including any transport costs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development also does not hold insurance nor does it accept responsibility for private property brought to school by students, we wish to remind students and parents/guardians of this at the beginning of this academic year and to discourage them from bringing any unnecessary or particularly valuable items to school.
### STAFF LIST

**Dionne Wright** – Principal  
**Jo Wheeler** – Assistant Principal

**Prep/one Team:**  
Gaye Wilde       Aasta De Kort       Josie Marsicano       Shae Nechwatal

**Team 2:**  
Mandy Parke       Anthony Atkinson

**3/4 Team:**  
Jenni Webster       Trevor Allen       Rachel Layton

**5/6 Team:**  
Julie Murphy       Vesna Zagorac       Marisa Jackson       Sarah Williamson

**Specialist Team:**  

**Education Support:**  
Gayle Stephenson       Andrea Maylor  
Maree Dousset  
**OSHC Coordinator:** Maree Doussett  
**OSHC Assistant:** Coordinator – Sharron Beggs  

**Integration Aide**  
Dallas Johnson       Liane Gough

**Crossing Supervisor:**  
James Graham

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### COMMUNITY NEWS

If you are interested in enrolling your child/ren into any of the following sport teams please see Andrea at the office for more information.

- Please note some of the below will be commencing this coming Saturday so be sure to get in quick (look out for any flyers on our Parent Notice Board).

**Ivanhoe Basketball:** [www.ivanhoeknights.org](http://www.ivanhoeknights.org)

**Fitzroy Junior Footy:** Robert- 0409 200 385

**Yarra Valley Hockey Club:** Craig- 9444 4352

**Aussie Hoops:** Tim- 0412 599 319

**Collingwood All Stars Basketball:** Megan- 0417 106 490