Hello everyone,

Tomorrow the school will have our first School Performance Tour (Arts Council) performance for the year. (2:00pm) Using the creative arts to instruct and inform, this time the topic is Stamping Out Bullying. The School Performance Tours are usually very well received by staff and students, and consequently, are keenly anticipated. The costs for the performance are covered as part of school fees, so as long as the school fees are paid, then there is nothing else required.

Many families have returned the school dental forms, particularly those with children in the lower grades. Accessing this service is highly recommended, but to allow sufficient time in their schedule the dental forms need to be returned as soon as possible please, as a late return will mean missing out. Spare forms are available for collection in the office for those who need another copy.

PCYC is our After School Care Provider. They do a wonderful job looking after the children who access this service. There are sufficient enrolments for After School Care that the service will continue for 2016. After School Care can be accessed casually or on a regular basis. There has been a change in staffing however, as Kelly has resigned this position for another in Sarina. We welcome Savanah to our school!

The government has announced changes to the Smart Choices guidelines as a result of consultation with key stakeholders such as Queensland Health and P&C Queensland. The most notable change that will impact this school is cakes with icing or sweet fillings. We have time up our sleeve to make changes in the tuckshop, but unfortunately the sharing of birthday cakes / sweets with your child’s class will have to stop too. To prevent ‘it’s not fair’ by stopping half way in the year, the ‘no birthday cake’ policy will start immediately.

-- Roslyn Waldron (Principal)

“Sing & Spell” sight words

An amazing new resource has arrived in the Prep / 1 room – “Sing & Spell sight words”.

Sight words are those words that must be recognized “on sight,” because they cannot be sounded out. That’s because they usually don’t follow phonics spelling rules, so they can be tricky for beginning readers. We are very excited to be trialing a new, FUN, alternative to the traditional “drill and skill” method of teaching these words: The children eagerly anticipate this learning time now because they are enjoying learning catchy songs with movements. Research shows that learning is more effective when children are using their whole body from a multi-sensory approach. This new resource certainly incorporates these elements and most importantly fun. If the children aren’t having fun then it’s not memorable. We look forward to sharing these songs and dances with you as we learn them!

Important Dates:

25 February: School Performance Tour (Arts Council)
25 February: Final day for school dental forms to be returned.
7 March: Commencement of student teacher placement.
14 March: Cross Country date #1
21 March: Cross Country date #2 – in case of cancellation of date #1
Listening

Recently, I needed to speak to a supermarket representative and identify how I could get feedback on a request I had left at the store. The store representative and I spent several minutes locked in conversation that was going nowhere. I said “I would like to know the process of getting feedback on my request because last year I did not hear back.” Her reply was “We are not perfect and make mistakes, I was not here last year and cannot comment on this.” AGHHH. What I wanted was to have her hear my need for understanding of the stores process and how I could get the feedback I needed. Later, I realized her need was for me to understand she was not responsible for what happened last year.

Listening, in communication, is so important! And just as important is giving feedback that you have heard what is said. If I had heard from the store representative “I can hear that you want to know if your application is successful.” I would have responded “Yes, yes, yes!” I am also sure if I had said “I appreciate that mistakes happen and that you were not here last year.” Then all might have gone more smoothly.

Sometimes our own needs and wants get in the way of really listening and meeting the need of the other person to know they have been heard. Active listening is a skill that can be learned. You can teach your children how to reflect the feeling and content of conversations they have with you and from books you read to them. If you do this and they learn this skill they will become great listeners and communicators.

Chappy Di.
Learning to Read

Now, more than ever before, the ability to read underpins our lifestyle and life choices. So it is not surprising that ‘reading’ has such a strong focus in our classrooms and that parents input is actively sought through homework and class help.

When learning to read, children access information on the page through 3 inter-related and equally important ways – the structure of language, what is being talked about (meaning), and the visual cues in the words.

Relying on phonics/sounds alone to work out words severely limits reading development and fluency.

Sight words are really important, as there are many words that simply do not follow the rules, but there are also 7 key strategies that beginning and emergent readers learn to use tackle unfamiliar words. These strategies are often used together. eg. The student reads up to an unfamiliar word, identifies the beginning sound of the unfamiliar word and then using picture clues is able to work out the word. Rereading the sentence then promotes fluency and understanding. Saying the beginning sound and reading on to the nearest comma or full stop is very powerful. This combination allows readers to use sentence structure and meaning.

If we do need to linger on the word, then we ask the children to look for little known words in the larger word, or take the word apart (not sound it out). In this way, students can take the word apart using blends (eg. cl, sh, th) rather than tagging each letter with a sound. It also allows for later understandings such as tense markers (eg / ing) or suffixes (eg –ion).