Hello Everyone,
We’ve had another fabulous week of learning at Thomastown West. I absolutely love visiting the classes and seeing children engaged in their learning! Our smooth start is also a credit to our teacher’s professionalism, time, effort and energy!

REMINDER: Parent Information Sessions
This Tuesday 21st February, similar to last year, we will be running multiple parent information sessions during the day. A note was sent yesterday giving you more details about the sessions. Please return the bottom part of the note and give it to your classroom teacher.

Students only attend school at the time of the information session the parents are attending.

Grade 5 Camp
Last week our Grade 5 students spent 5 days at Cottage by the Sea in Queenscliff.
Sincere thanks to Selma Raif, Mark Benatmane, Lenora Deniese, Connie Gaeta and Annette Honeysett for ensuring the camp was an absolute success. We are very lucky at TWPS, having such dedicated and hardworking teachers!

I have been told that our students were amazing and consistently lived by our school values. I loved hearing the stories about how resilient our students were when they were learning to surf. The staff at Cottage by the Sea were very impressed! Well done Grade 5!

EVERY DAY COUNTS!
Every day DOES count when you are learning at school! Unless students are sick... It’s NOT OK to be AWAY!

As you might have seen on our school sign, we have a whole school goal and focus on improving student attendance at TWPS. To acknowledge everyone who attended school yesterday, we celebrated with a FREE icy pole!

HINT: Next week we will have a Wonderful Wednesday!
**PLEASE arrive on time!**

Well done to the families who arrive at school on time every morning. There are still a few families who arriving after 9am. As a Mum, I remember when my girls used to get ready for school... I understand that there can be challenges! But there are many reasons why arriving on time is so important.

Some benefits for your Child Arriving on time for School and Class:

- Makes sure that your child doesn’t miss out on the important learning tasks that happen early in the day when they are most alert.
- Early morning learning activity is often reading or writing your child can lose so many opportunities to learn these critical life skills.
- Helps your child to learn about routines and commitment.
- Gives your child time to greet their friends before class and this can reduce the possibility of disruptions in the classroom.
- Class disruption can make your child feel uncomfortable and can upset other children.
- Arriving on time every day makes children feel good about themselves.

If you would like additional support or advice about arriving to school on time, please don’t hesitate to contact myself or Bianca Bagnara (our new Student Welfare Officer).

**TWPS School Council**

Just a friendly reminder that our next School Council meeting is Tuesday 21st February at 6:30pm. This meeting is very important as Graham Stevenson, a Department of Education Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL) will be attending the meeting to begin the official process of appointing a substantive Principal for Thomastown West Primary School. Could all School Council members please ensure they attend earlier Parent Information sessions so that they can attend the School Council meeting at 6:30pm.

**TWPS School Council Elections**

School Council Elections are held each year. I have included the Schedule 3 2017 Notice of Election and Call for Nominations for School Council, a nomination form and some frequently asked questions about School Council with this Newsletter. There are a number of vacancies so I hope you will consider supporting the school by joining School Council.

School Council:
- Is a legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of a school
- Is the major governing body of the school
- Plays an important role in school accountability and improvement processes
- Endorses the key school planning, evaluation and reporting documents All school council decision-making takes place within a framework of legislated powers, Ministerial Orders, directions, guidelines and DET policy objectives
- Assist in the efficient governance of the school
- Ensure students’ best interests are primary
- Enhance the educational opportunities for students
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations
- Establish the broad direction and vision of the school within the school’s community
- Participate in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan

Did you know there was a process for students who arrive after 9am?

- After 9am families and students enter via the office to get a late pass.
- To avoid further disruption to the grade’s learning, parents are asked to say Good bye to their child at the office.
- When students arrive at class, the student gives the late pass to the teacher and the late arrival is recorded on the roll.
• Develop, review and update school policies
• Develop, review and monitor the Student Engagement Policy and the School Dress Code
• Raise funds for school-related purposes
• Approve the annual budget and monitor expenditure
• Maintain the school’s grounds and facilities
• Enter into contracts (e.g. cleaning, construction work)
• Report annually to the school community and to DEECD
• Generally, stimulate interest in the school in the wider community

**Book Packs**
Thank you to those families who have already paid their book pack amounts. These are crucial funds which enable us to fully resource all of our wonderful programs. Just a reminder that in order for the children to have their requisites this needs to be paid in full or a payment plan entered into.

The State Government Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) helps ensure that no student misses out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. **Apply today!**

The Department of Education and Training also have an App you may be interested in using. It has information about the curriculum and tips about how to support your child at home. Download ‘SchoolMate’ today!

**Student Engagement and Wellbeing**
For all students, this term’s Inquiry Unit is about School Wide Positive Behaviour, our School Values and Rights. The teachers have been explicitly teaching social and emotional skills.

Student safety is important to us all! Especially during playtimes. Recently I have noticed some children playing roughly outside. I have spoken to teachers and many students and it appears that some children are finding it difficult to manage their anger, cool down and stay calm.

**At this school we all have the right to do as much work and learning as possible.**

**Helping children to cool down and stay calm**

The following article was taken from [http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/)

The following examples are for families to use at home. They are most suitable for older primary aged children. The methods described can also be adapted by school staff to help children cope with managing angry feelings at school.

**Children who have trouble managing anger**
Children lack strategies for thinking through the situations that are troubling them. They may find it difficult to know what is making them angry or to talk about their feelings. Talking with children in supportive ways about angry feelings helps to teach them effective ways of managing anger and builds positive relationships.

It is best to wait until the child is calm and relaxed to talk about angry feelings. When angry feelings are running high it is very hard for children to listen and think coolly. Parents, carers and school staff can help by encouraging children to explain their points of view and listening sympathetically. Being able to talk about angry feelings allows children to feel understood and supported. It helps them to think more calmly and find better solutions.

**Did you play safely today?**

The following article was taken from [http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/)
How to talk through children’s angry feelings

The following example shows some possible ways a parent or carer might talk with Dylan, who has come home from school grouchy. He is rough with his younger brother and gets angry when he discovers that a toy is missing. Then he gets angry when his mother asks him to help. Here his mother persists, gently but firmly, with getting Dylan to say what he is really angry about. She talks to him about ways he could manage his feelings and deal with the problem.

- Acknowledge anger and encourage the child to explain what it’s about: “Are you sure you’re not angry about something? You seemed really angry when you got into the car.”
- Empathise with the feeling – but don’t excuse aggressive behaviour: “So, you were upset because your friend blamed you for losing his football. You must have been really mad to treat your brother like that.”
- Ask about the effects of angry behaviour – on others and on himself: “How do you think your brother felt when you yelled at him? How did you feel after you behaved like that?”
- Teach or reinforce ways of managing angry feelings: “What could you do to cool down your angry feelings so you can think it all through?”
- Discuss ways of solving the problem that has led to angry feelings: “How can you sort it out with your friend? What could you say that would help him understand how you feel?”
- Support your child’s efforts to solve the problem: “How did it go? Would you like me to help with...?”
- Notice and praise efforts to manage anger: “I like the way you kept your cool with your little brother when he took your stuff.”

When children get caught up with angry feelings it can be quite difficult for them to calm down. This is because the body gets ready to fight when we are angry and can take some time to return to normal. Teaching children steps to cool down their anger can help.

1. Rate your anger

Using a rating scale to notice how angry they are helps children become more aware of their angry feelings so that they know when to use calming strategies. Draw a thermometer to show the scale points of between zero and 10. Add some words that describe low levels (eg 0 = calm; 2 = a bit irritated), medium levels (eg 5 = quite cross), and high levels (eg 9 = extremely angry, ‘losing it’). Talk about the body signals that accompany each level. Ask children to rate their anger and watch it to see if it changes. This encourages them to look for the signs of angry feelings and to see if they can lower their anger levels. It is much harder to change anger when it is high, so when the rating goes above 6 it is usually best to teach children to move away from the situation. They can move to a special quiet space or ask an adult for help.

2. Relax

There are lots of ways to relax. Some useful ways to teach children to use relaxation strategies to calm their angry feelings are:

**Deep breathing**

Slow deep breathing has a very helpful calming effect. Getting children to practise breathing in deeply and breathing out very slowly, can help to calm down angry feelings.

**Visualisation**

Have children visualise a very relaxing scene in their minds. For example, they might imagine themselves floating on an air bed in a swimming pool. You can combine deep breathing with visualisation. For example, ask children to imagine a candle in front of them. As they exhale, ask them to imagine making the candle flicker but not go out.

**Robot/rag doll technique**

The robot/rag doll technique is useful for helping young children release muscle tension. Ask children to tense up all muscles in the body and visualise themselves as robots. Have them hold this tense state for approximately 15 seconds. Then ask them to release all the tension and visualise themselves as rag dolls, with all muscles very loose, and stay relaxed like this for 15 seconds.

3. Use coping self-talk

Using coping self-talk involves saying things to yourself to calm down. Children can be encouraged to say things to themselves like:

- Take it easy, take some deep breaths
- Stay cool, it’s okay if I’m not good at this
- Chill out, don’t let him bug me
- Time to relax!
- Try not to give up
To teach children to use coping self-talk, it is helpful to model it yourself. For example, you could make a point of saying out loud, “I need to relax”, “I’m going to cool down” or “I won’t let this get to me”. You can also use coping statements to coach children through stressful moments. Asking older children what they could say to themselves when they need to cool down their anger helps them learn to use coping self-talk for themselves. This is best practised before children get angry.

Education Matters, Teachers Make a Difference & Every Day Counts!

Sandi Young
Acting Principal

Schedule 3 2017 Notice of Election and Call for Nominations for School Council

An election is to be conducted for members of the School Council of Thomastown West Primary School Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4.00pm on Friday 24th February

If a ballot is necessary, it will close at 4.00 pm on Friday 10th March.

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school by Friday 3rd March. The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Category</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
<th>Number of positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Member</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the Declaration of the poll in 2017 and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2018</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET Employee</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the Declaration of the poll in 2017 and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2018</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sandi Young
Acting Principal 17/2/17

There are three possible categories of membership:

- **A mandated elected Parent category.** More than one third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Training Development (DET) employees can be Parent members at their child’s school as long as they are not employed at the school.

- **A mandated elected DET employee category.** Members of this category may total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.

- **An optional Community member category.** Its members are appointed by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DET employees are not eligible to be Community members. The term of office for all members is two years. Half the members must retire each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.
School Council Elections 2017

Schedule 5A: Self-nomination Form for Parent Member Category
I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a parent/guardian representative on the Thomastown West Primary School Council.

Name: ...........................................................................................................................................................................................................

Residential address: ........................................................................................................................................................................

............................................................................................................................................................................................................

Home telephone: ................................................................. Business telephone .................................................................

Email: .....................................................................................................................................................................................................

I am the parent/guardian of .................................................. who is/are currently enrolled at this school.

I am an employee of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Yes / No (please circle)

I am prepared to serve as a Parent member of the above-named school council.
I hereby declare that I am not an undischarged bankrupt and that I am not currently serving a sentence for an indictable offence.

Signature of Candidate ................................................................. Date    /    /

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

- ☐ Personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

- Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable).

- You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on 9404 1548

- You may choose not to give some or all of the information requested; however, your nomination may not be accepted. If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.
School Council involvement

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I need special experience to be on school council?
No! What you need is an interest in the school and the ability to work cooperatively with others to help shape its future.

2. Why is parent membership so important?
Parents on councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school. Parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

3. How can I become involved?
The most obvious way to become involved is to vote in the elections that are held in February or March each year. Since ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant, you might seriously consider standing for election as a member of the school council, or suggesting to another person that they stand for election.

4. What do I need to do to stand for election?
The principal arranges and conducts the elections. Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do. The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations in the second half of February or early in March. For parents, this notice will probably be given to your child so you may need to check with them whether it has been sent home. Details of the election process are available from the school or see: School Council – Elections

Membership

5. Do I have to have children at school if I want to be on school council?
Most positions on school council are for parents with children at the school. However, there are two other categories, DEECD employee members and community members, for which you do not have to have a child at the school.

6. Can I remain on school council if my children leave the school?
If you are a parent member of school council and your child is no longer at the school, you are no longer eligible to serve on council as a parent member. The exception is if your child finishes school at the end of the normal school year for your child's year level, in which case you may continue on council until the next council election, if you wish to.

If there is a community position available, the school council may coopt you to that position.

7. Can we coopt an ex-school counselor or a person who has children at another school onto our school council?
Yes, but only as a community member.

8. Can a coopted member be the school council president?
Yes. A coopted member (community member) can be a school council president.

9. Who can be a school council president?
Almost anyone. The only people who cannot be a school council president are DET employees in either the DET employee or parent category of membership.

10. What is coopting?
Coopting allows school councils to bring a person onto the school council who does not fall within the parent or DET employee categories but who may have additional skills and perspectives that the council needs.

The cooption of community members is a decision made by school council. For example, the council may decide that it wants to use the coopted positions to coopt a member from the local community, such as an accountant, a builder or someone with particular skills they feel they might need.

If a school council has provision for community members, the council should decide who it wants in those positions and how nominations will be dealt with, i.e. whether council will seek specific people or will accept a representative of an organisation or body.

DET employees cannot be coopted community members.

Community positions are filled for two years, the same term of office as other members. They also have the same voting rights and responsibilities as other members of council.
11. Are parent club (Parents and Friends) positions coopted?
There is no mandated parent club position on school council.
School council may choose to invite a parent club to nominate one of its members to fill one of the community positions on school council.
Whoever fills the coopted positions should do so for two years, the same as other school council members. If, for example, a parent club representative leaves the school then he/she should resign and the position be filled by cooption of another person for the remainder of the term of office.

12. How long do coopted members serve for?
Two years. The terms and rights of coopted members are the same as regular school council members.

13. Do staff members on leave (or working elsewhere) have to resign from school council?
Example: one of our staff members who is on school council comes up for re-election this year. However, she has gone to another school for Term 1. Can she/he re-nominate even though she won’t be back until Term 2?
Yes, she can stand for election and her colleagues will make the decision if there is a vote.
A person on any form of leave (including secondment), whether with or without pay, from employment with DET shall for the purposes of the Order:
• be considered to have the DET employee status he/she had immediately prior to going on leave
• be considered, if leave is for a period of six months or less, to remain a member of the DET employee electorate of which the person was a member immediately prior to going on leave.

14. We have a school counselor who does not turn up to most meetings. Can we remove them from school council?
If an apology is recorded and accepted by the council that a person cannot attend, then the person has been granted permission to be absent. If no apology has been received, then the person may be considered as not being active and creating a casual vacancy. However, this would normally occur only after repeated failures to attend or send an apology.
Ministerial Order No 52 states that a casual vacancy is created when (among other things): a member is absent from three consecutive meetings of the school council without special leave previously granted by the school council and subject to a decision of the school council. This means that the council would need to move a motion, recorded in the minutes to remove a member.
It is always a good idea to discuss with the member their reasons for non attendance and give them the option of either attending in the future or resigning rather than being removed. Removal can cause angst and misunderstanding in a community so should be handled sensitively.

15. Can our current school council president stay on as school council president when her/his children stop attending our school?
Only if they can be coopted as a community member. If you have a community position available this person can be coopted by the school council to that position. A community member may be elected as the school council president.

16. Can a parent who works at the school be on school council?
Example: We have a parent member of our school council who is often employed as a CRT at the school. Is s/he able to be a parent representative of the council? S/he would average 2-3 days employment at busy times during the year.
If this person averaged more than 8 hours per week, either as an ongoing employee or a fixed term of at least 90 days, he/she is a member of the DET employee electorate.
DET parents are counted within the DET employee category when counting for a quorum.

17. Is the principal counted as a DET employee?
The principal is always included in the count of DET members.

18. What does ex-officio mean?
Ex-officio means that the principal has a position on school council as a right. The position has full voting rights.
Hi Everyone! It has been great catching up with students and parents this week and to see their smiling faces. I look forward to another year of caring, sharing and encouraging.

**Playgroup**

Sadly, playgroup will **NOT** be running on Thursdays and Fridays this year. I will not be leading playgroup this year. **BUT** Whittlesea Community Connections will be running a **MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUP ON TUESDAY MORNINGS-9.30-11.30 AM.** This playgroup will begin on Tuesday, February 21st. You and your child can enrol on the day at the HUB at TWPS. **Playgroup is FREE.** (see attached flyer)

**CONFIDENCE**

Often the students I work with need encouragement to become more confident, to cope better with change. Australian Educational Psychologist, Michael Grose, has the following advice for parents to help their children grow in confidence:

Don't let lack of confidence and anxiety hold your child back

BY MICHAEL GROSE

Children with healthy self-esteem and self-confidence learn more, achieve more and are generally happier than those with low confidence levels. Building children’s and young people’s confidence is complex. Great confidence-builders use a number of approaches that impact on how kids’ think; how they feel and what they can do. Here are some practical strategies that you can use to build real self-confidence in kids of all ages:

1. **Model confident thinking** - Kids soak up the language, thinking and behaviour of those closest to them in their environment. Parents and teachers, play a part in modelling confident thinking and behaviour particularly when it comes to tackling new activities. In particular, let kids hear positive self-talk when you tackle something new. They should hear something like, “I’ll have a go at this. If I don’t do so well then I can try again tomorrow.” This is far more effective than “I’m no good at this. I’ll probably stuff it up.” As well show kids how to reframe their negative self-talk by showing them how to find a positive in difficult situations.

2. **Focus on effort & improvement** - Current thinking shows that people who believe that they can increase their intelligence through effort and challenge actually get smarter and do better in school, work, and life over time. One way to develop a growth mindset is to focus your language on effort an improvement rather than on the results of what they do. By linking success with effort you are teaching them success comes
from something other than their purely ability, talents or smarts.

3. **Praise strategy** - While effort is key for achievement, but it’s not the only thing. Kids need to try new strategies and seek input from others when they’re stuck. They need this repertoire of approaches—not just sheer effort—to learn and improve. It helps too to focus language on better and smarter ways on improving. Comments such as “That was a smart idea to tackle the hardest task while you were fresh!”(strategy) and “You recognised the first few steps were the most important but then after that you were right” are descriptive statements that have significant instructional value for kids.

4. **Develop self-help skills from an early age** - A child’s self-esteem comes as a result of his or her successes and accomplishments. The most important competencies to build confidence are basic self-help skills. These form the building blocks upon which other competencies such as organisational skills and many social skills are formed.

5. **Let them spend more time in environments where they feel confident** - Some children thrive on the sporting field but struggle in the classroom; they may be confident risk-takers outdoors but are held back by self-doubt in social settings. While self-confidence tends to be situational, it is also transferrable. That is, often when you feel brave in one area of their life then these feelings tend to merge into other areas. Confidence has a snowball effect so increase the time your child spends in areas where they shine to give their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth a boost.

Most importantly, great parents and teachers have a knack of communicating confidence in kids. They find ways to let kids know that they believe in them – that they know their kids will perform and succeed, that they have faith that they can deal with life’s challenges and know that they can become more independent.

I look forward to working with you and your children in 2017. Please contact the school office if you wish to meet with me.
Robyn Mulholland
Student Wellbeing
Room 19 Presents....

Reach for the stars

In room 19, we have been learning about our goals, we have traced our hands and have written all of our goals on. I have written my own goal and it's to improve in my track run. We have asked the whole class to do it and have posted their traced hands on a piece of paper, that says...

REACH FOR THE STARS

Room 19, Learning Goals

This term, we made “Reach for the stars” goal and my goal is to be fluent and have expression in reading.

By Ruberta Baker

This year Room 19 have been reaching for the stars by setting goals in term 1. Here is a beautiful picture of all our goals. By cedia

2017 Learning Goals

Nadia Belhaj 16.2.17

In room 19, we made hands where we had to write our 2017 learning goals. My goal was to improve on my batting in rounders and to get better at division.

— Nadia
PROGRAM INFORMATION
Welcome to the 2017 year!!
We look forward to another wonderful year with many fun experiences.

After a busy day of learning it is important for children to have a chance to relax and participate in activities they enjoy.

Each session is planned for with the children’s interests in mind, offering structured and unstructured activities. This allows children plenty of choice. The experiences offered teach children a variety of skills.

Our programs are all about guided choice for children. There are daily planned activities on offer or children are able to enjoy free play, making use of our art and craft supplies, construction play, dress ups, board games, quiet corner and if needed the homework space.

Children not only love coming to our program to have fun with friends after school but also because of our caring and well trained staff.

PREPS AND NEW STUDENTS JOINING OUR PROGRAM
To assist prep children to settle into the program
- they are collected and brought to the After Care hall until they are full time students. Buddies may also be assigned to them for an introductory period.
- Activities are developed that accommodate the needs of younger children.
- Our staff will ensure younger children are well catered for, happy and participating during the program.

To assist new students to the program
- They are introduced and a student of same or similar grade level is asked to show them around and befriend them.
- Parents will receive verbal feedback on how their child is getting on.

PUPIL FREE DAY
Tuesday 21st February is a pupil free day. Oshclub will not be operating as our minmum booking number of 15 was not reached. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

DATES TO REMEMBER
➢ Tuesday February 21st Parent Info Session (Students attend with Parents to session)
➢ Tuesday February 21st School Council Meeting 6:30pm start
➢ March 13th Labour day Public Holiday
➢ March 21st Harmony Day
➢ Friday 31st March Last day of Term 1