Hello Everyone,

Welcome to another information packed newsletter! As usual, so many marvellous things have occurred at our wonderful school over the past week! Please take the time to read the entire newsletter.

Our Parent Information Sessions were held Tuesday night and I am sure you will agree it was a successful afternoon and evening! I commend all teaching staff on their ongoing dedication and commitment to provide quality information for all of the parents, carers and grandparents who attended. It was also fabulous having representatives from our Hub partnership agencies: Whittlesea Community Connections, PRACE and the Smith Family. Thank you Nina, Anna and Nadine for attending and providing valuable information that can support our families.

Well done everybody and thank you for your participation!

Participating in your child’s education does pay off. Current research strongly indicates that when parents engage in their children’s education it leads to improved achievement.

On Wednesday, we celebrated student attendance again at TWPS! Mrs Wright and I are pleased that we improved our attendance from last week with 319 students attending on Wednesday. However, we have 343 students enrolled at our school... Let us see if we can achieve our goal and have EVERYONE attend school on Monday! On Tuesday, we will have our final SURPRISE to celebrate student attendance! Miss Bagnara (Miss B) our Student Welfare Officer, will be organising the TWPS CUP OF LIFE to begin next week. Good Luck! I think we should organise a special prize for the FIRST class who wins!

The start of a new school year is also such an important time for our school community because it
establishes the foundation for the rest of the school year. It is a time of optimism and anticipation as the children begin building the trusting relationships with their teachers and peers that will sustain them throughout the year.

I hope when we look back on Term 1 and the remainder of 2017 it will be punctuated by many individual highlights as each child achieves their personal best. I hope they feel more empowered through our student voice for action, student voice for communication and inner voice initiatives to accept that through taking action, they can become one significant step for change, as illustrated in one of my favourite stories, which is worth reflecting on...

Once upon a time, an old man used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea.

The boy came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?” The young boy paused, looked up, and replied, “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves,” the youth replied. “When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I’m afraid you won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

adapted from The Star Thrower, Loren Eiseley (1907 – 1977)

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

Sandi Young
Acting Principal

DATES TO REMEMBER

28th February Terrific Tuesday: Celebrate student attendance!
16th March The Human Race incursion
20th March Harmony day
Hi everyone!

My name is Bianca Bagnara (Miss B) and I am the new Student Welfare Officer at Thomastown West Primary School. I am very excited to be working here and can’t wait to get to know you all!

Firstly, I want to say a big thank-you to all TWPS students who have been extremely friendly and are always willing to lend a hand!

Who Am I?

I thought I would take some time to tell you a little bit about myself. I have always been interested in working with children and families so I completed a Bachelor of Psychology (with Honours) in 2011. Over the past five years, I have worked in a variety of roles with children, adolescents and their families including working with children with autism and working with families who have experienced trauma.

My most recent job was as a Family Support Worker in a program that worked with families at risk of homelessness. I was very fortunate in this role to be able to work with many different families. I worked with families who wanted assistance regarding housing, domestic violence, mental health, alcohol and drug issues and financial issues. Many of my clients also identified as being asylum seekers or refugees and did not speak English as a first language. A big part of my role was to assist families to link in with local services to support them.

Why work in a school?

I decided to move to a job in a school because I love working with children. I think school is incredibly important for children and their families. Personally, I am a lifelong learner and believe that there is always more to learn. I think primary school is when children can begin their learning journey in a fun and supported way. I see TWPS as a community where students, parents, teachers and school staff work together to get the best results for all families. I hope that in the coming months I will be able to get to know more of the children and their families.

If you feel that you need support, please feel free to contact the office and I am happy to have a conversation about support options which are available. Or if you catch me walking around the school, come and say hello.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so make sure your child has something healthy to eat before school! But if you’re not able to have breakfast before school, do not fear as Breakfast Club will be running in 2017! It operates from 8am to 8.30am every day in the Multi-purpose room and is FREE! We have tasty fruit, cereal, toast and milo every morning available for the children.

There are many ways that you can support your child to have a fun and safe day at school. Remember to speak with your child about their school day and ask “Did you play safely today?”

The following article was taken from www.kidsmatter.edu.au and gives some strategies for how parents can encourage positive behaviour with their children.
Good values guide good behaviour

“Go on, I dare you!” said Ella. The children were using the neighbour’s fence post for target practice. Tao picked up a stone and took aim. The stone hit the post and then bounced off onto the neighbour’s car breaking the windscreen.

“Oh no!” said Tao. “Good shot, Tao!” cheered Ella. “We’re in trouble now,” said Harry. “Come on, let’s go before anyone sees us,” said Tao.

Later that day, their neighbour came over. He wanted to know if anyone had seen what happened to his car. “Do you know anything about it?” asked Harry’s mother. “We don’t know anything about it,” said Ella. But Tao began to cry, “They dared me to do it.”

“It wasn’t his fault, Mum,” said Harry. “It was that stupid game.”

‘Dare’ games like this story are a common way for children to test the limits that adults set for them. At the same time, children try out their own strengths and each other’s. While this kind of behaviour is a normal part of childhood, effective guidance from adults is needed to help children develop skills to make responsible decisions and to stand up to social pressure.

Teaching children values

Values are the internal guides we have for our behaviour. They help us to make choices, and to make judgements about what is right and wrong, good or bad, fair or unfair. While cultures differ in the emphasis they place on particular values (eg. individual freedom or duty to family) there are many which are common to all cultures like respect, caring, and justice. Parents and carers are children’s first and most important teachers of values. Schools also have a major role to play in teaching values. Some of the ways that schools help children learn positive social values include:

• teaching children how to think about values and how to behave in ways that are caring, respectful etcetera
• teaching cooperative behaviours inside the classroom and in the playground
• making sure that behaviour and discipline issues are managed in ways that are positive, consistent and fair
• providing opportunities for children to practise good citizenship – through peer mentoring, student representative council, community projects, etcetera

How parents and carers can help

Parents and carers can use a range of strategies to help children learn about social values. The following ideas can help.

Teach by example

Children often learn more from what you do than what you say. Your own behaviour is important for showing children how you would like them to behave. Talking about the reasons for your behaviour can help to make your values and expectations clear.

Read and discuss stories that demonstrate positive values

Choose children’s stories that reflect the kinds of values you want children to learn. Talk about the story and what can be learnt. You might ask questions like: “How do you think that person feels? Why do you think he/she did that? Was it a good idea? How could he/she have done it better?”

Check what children are watching on TV

Make sure that the programs children watch and the electronic games they play are suitable for their age and reflect positive values. Watching violence on television and playing violent video games can lead to aggressive behaviour.
Teach children to learn from mistakes

Mistakes provide opportunities for teaching and reinforcing positive values. Support and acknowledge children when they admit mistakes and help them find ways to make up for them. Ask them to suggest ways of repairing any damage they have caused to relationships, people or property.

Help children to think about values

Talk with children about the social values and attitudes they encounter in everyday situations and on TV.

Teaching children to question and think about social values helps them to be clear about their own values and strengthens their ability to resist pressure from peers, advertising and other media.

Teaching children about values supports their social development. It helps them develop the knowledge and skills they need to play a positive role in society.

Bianca Bagnara  
Student Welfare Officer

Hi Everyone!

**SLEEP** - A number of students who have had difficulties concentrating in the classroom have told me how late they are getting to bed and actually come to their own conclusion that they are TIRED at school! As we all experience, it is difficult for an adult to function on little sleep. Children and young people actually need more sleep than us to cope well with their daily activities.

Late bedtimes, coupled with using technology just before bedtime creates an even bigger problem as it is difficult to calm our brains from all the activity, making falling to sleep difficult.

**HOW MUCH SLEEP?**

Here’s How Much Experts Think You Should Sleep Every Night

The National Sleep Foundation, a non-profit group, aimed at promoting healthy sleep and safety, recommend the following hours of sleep for different age groups.

- **Newborns (0-3 months)**: 14-17 hours each day
- **Infants (4-11 months)**: 12-15 hours
- **Toddlers (1-2 years)**: 11-14 hours
- **Pre-schoolers (3-5)**: 10-13 hours

  - **School age children (6-13)**: 9-11 hours
  - **Teenagers (14-17)**: 8-10 hours
  - **Younger adults (18-25)**: 7-9 hours
  - **Adults (26-64)**: 7-9 hours
  - **Older adults (65)** 7-8 hours

It is also recommended

that children turn off all technology an hour before their bedtime, allowing the brain to slow down ready for sleep.

SO, PLEASE HELP YOUR CHILDREN BY MAKING A FAMILY DECISION AROUND WHEN TO TURN OFF TECHNOLOGY AND GOOD BEDTIMES – the long term benefits will be happier, healthy children who can concentrate more at school!
In China, teachers allow children to sleep in class for 20 minutes to learn better.

There was never a child so lovely but his mother was glad to get him to sleep.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

**Playgroup**

**MULTICULTURAL PLAYGROUP ON TUESDAY**

**MORNINGS- 9.30-11.30 AM.** This playgroup will begin on **Tuesday, February 21**. You and your child can enrol on the day at the HUB at TWPS. Playgroup is FREE.

**Selling Goods at School**

**Students are NOT to sell goods at school** unless it is part of an educational program supervised by a teacher. Teachers will send notes to parents and carers when it is appropriate.

Whilst entrepreneurship is to be commended, some students can feel intimidated or pressured to buy items that they do not need or cannot afford. Remember:

At this school, we all have the right to feel comfortable and safe.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to Mrs Young or Mrs Wright.
**BE WHERE I AM!**  **SEE WHAT I SEE!**

**FEEL WHAT I FEEL!**

Take me to the beauty of the sea. The sparkling water are all the blues of the sky. The wind flies past me filling me with freshness and comfort. The wind becomes one with me. I look out into the depths of the ocean and a feeling of calm streams through me.

By Maram.

In my imagination that afternoon, I danced through the mystical, majestic forest. With ever step I took I heard the crunch if the colourful, Autumn leaves and the sound of the birds chirping happy and peacefully.

By Emily

My soccer final… It is dark. Then the bright lights turn on and the crowd roars with excitement as the game begin and the kick off starts. The crowds cheer for our team. Nervous, excited and energised are the feelings in my heart. I kick the ball and the game begins. I am ready to play.

By Yazan

I was at a soccer match. There was a crowd full of people around the stadium and they were roaring so loud that I couldn’t hear anything. The bright light shined so bright I couldn’t see anything and then players started to run onto the big field. I could feel what they were feeling. Excitement and happiness.

By Adam

In my dreams, I sit alone by the shore, the full moon illuminating my pale face making it as white as snow. The smell of salt fills my body as fireflies wander around me, living their short lives. Stars are seen from the Earth and light up the sky, with their bright light. If I were a firefly, I would spread joy to anyone in the world by just being alive. My own little stars have now stopped shining and the sun has started to rise. I slowly get up from my spot on the cold sand and put my shoes back on. As I walk further and further away from the spot that I sat, staring out to the ocean, I see a flash of light and hear a beeping sound. I know what will happen next ....I am about to wake up. By Sinem
Student TOILETS update

We have had a few parents provide feedback about the spider webs in the toilets. Mrs Young has spoken to the cleaners and they have confirmed they are cleaning the cobwebs away daily. Unfortunately, they are reappearing each morning. While the students are not at school this weekend, we have planned a thorough spray. Fingers crossed this works!

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