Goonawarra is G.R.E.A.T!

At Goonawarra we all aim to be -

Generous    Responsible    Enthusiastic    Ambitious    Trustworthy

Register to get your electronic copy of the newsletter via the 'Document' tab on our website. Make our webpage your homepage.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Monday, 16th December: School Council Meeting at 6:30pm.
- Tuesday, 17th December: Playgroup Christmas Break Up – 10:00 to 12:00pm.
- Wednesday, 18th December: Grade 3 / 4 & 2/3S End of Year Break Up at Maddingley Park
                           Grade 6 Graduation at 6pm.
- Thursday, 19th December: Prep – 2 Christmas Concert 2:30 – 3:30pm followed by Parents
                           Afternoon Tea.
- Friday, 20th December: END OF TERM – EARLY DISMISSAL at 1:30pm.

Dear Parents, Teachers & Students,

‘Creating Learning Opportunities through Quality Education.’

LAST NEWSLETTER FOR THE YEAR

May everyone have a safe, happy, rewarding and meaningful time this Christmas!

Remember, school finishes at 1.30pm next Friday and then commences for everyone (Preps – Grade 6) on Wednesday 29th January!

Book packs can be purchased on Tuesday, 28th January 2014 from 9.00 am – 4.00 pm and Uniforms from 9.00 am – 2.00 pm.

THANK YOU:

As this year concludes I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone; parents, staff and students, for your support, encouragement, commitment and dedication to the Goonawarra school community.

A school is a living and breathing community.

There are many ways a community, such as a school can operate.

It can ‘exist’ or it can be ‘alive.’

It can lean on the past or it can learn from the past.

It can accept mediocrity or it can strive to meet challenging goals.

Based on information we have all read, seen or heard from various sources (no matter how shallow that information may be), we form opinions about organisations, schools, businesses, people, groups etc. These opinions often remain the same unless you have a personal contact with the group or individual, and then your opinion may be altered or confirmed.

My desire, my goal is to provide an environment at Goonawarra –

- in which students are happy, safe and engaged in their learning including becoming literate, numerate and curious in all that they do.

- where parents feel welcome, valued and connected with the school and participate as much as they can in the many aspects of school life.

- where all staff (teaching and non-teaching) approach all aspects of their work in a
professional manner while being caring, compassionate and committed to providing the best possible learning experience for all students and a friendly, helpful and supportive service to their parents.

To this end, I thank everyone for what you have contributed throughout 2013 to make ‘Goonawarra GREAT’ and I trust we can work together in 2014 to make ‘Goonawarra even GREATER!’

A special thank you to Mr Doug McLeod who has been the School Council President for the last few years. Doug has served the school community extremely well during this time and his expertise on the School Council will be greatly missed. With his last child at Goonawarra leaving this year Doug can no longer serve in this role.

GRADUATING STUDENTS:
Thank you and goodbye to our Grade Six students. All the best for your secondary school education! They will be attending the following schools –

Sunbury College - 22 students,
Sunbury Downs College - 14 students
Salesian College - 2 students
Aitken College - 1 student.

FAREWELLS:
As our Grade six students graduate, for some families it is the end of their formal association with Goonawarra PS. We thank the following families for their contributions and support over the years –

Ali, Camilleri, Cohen-Hunter, Fernando, Gardener, Hogan, Matthiasson, Methven, McIntyre, Moon, Parker, Patmore, Rizk, Springfield-McLeish, Suwito and Wilkins,

Several other families across the school are also leaving. These are McRae – McLeod, Clark, Tarantello & Stomilovic.

**On another note, we will be welcoming 27 new families next year to Goonawarra.

PARENT HELPERS MORNING TEA:
This morning we thanked the many parents who assist the school in so many ways throughout the year. The staff greatly appreciates the assistance they receive. Can I encourage as many parents as possible to become involved in the life of the school in the new year.

STAFF FOR 2014:
In last week’s newsletter I listed all the staff and their job descriptions for 2104. You can look this up online on our website.

FAREWELLS:
Mrs Barbara Macey will end a very satisfying, rewarding and enriching teaching career at the end of this year. Mrs Macey has worked tirelessly to provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment for many students who have had the opportunity to be in her care at Goonawarra. Mrs Macey's final day will be Friday 20th December – last day of Term.

Farewell also to Mrs Rhiannon Honey (was Smith until recently married) who has conducted Physical Education and PMP sessions as well as helping out in several classrooms. Mrs Honey's final day will also be Friday 20th December – last day of Term.

ABSENCES:
As the end of the year approaches we have been able to study two sets of data to see if there is any connection between them.

The data is centred on –
- The number of days students have been absent this year. (There are 200 school days per year).
- The academic progress of all students.

In relation to the absent days –
59% of students have missed between 0 -12 days of school (12 days is the State average). 30% of students have missed between 13 – 24 days of school. 11% of students have missed more than 25 days of school. (58 days being the highest).

The second set of data on student academic development was derived by classroom teachers giving each student in the class an A, B or C rating in relation to their progress and overall standing with other students.

Findings:
Of all the students who received an A rating –
63% were absent for only 0 – 12 days
32% were absent for 13 – 24 days
5% were absent for 25 or more days.

Another way of looking at the data –
‘A’ rated students in the 0 – 12 days absences made up 20% of all students.
‘A’ rated students in the 13 – 24 days absences made up 10% of all students.
‘A’ rated students in the more than 25 days absences made up 2% of all students.

Conclusion:
The data strongly indicated that the more time a student spends at school the greater the opportunity to learn more, to retain more information and to increase knowledge which will all potentially improve student learning outcomes.

If this conclusion is correct and we value the educational development of our students, then why do 41% of them miss more school than the State average of 12 days per year?

The beauty of these figures is that they all reset to 0 for the start of next year.

There may be long term consequences of past absences (gaps in learning), but as we move into 2014 can we all strive to give every child, every opportunity possible to develop and learn as much as they can by having them attend school as much as physically possible.
THE STUDENT END OF YEAR REPORTS,
The end of year reports will be sent home tomorrow, Friday 13th December.
There are some changes you will see in the Reports. These changes are a result from Victoria moving from
their own curriculum (VELS) to a national curriculum (AUSVELS).

Some curriculum areas have already changed across while others will follow in the future.

On the grid page there are a number of dots.
The solid black dot indicates your child's current position in each subject.
The clear dot indicates where your child was 12 months ago. This is still a VELS assessed curriculum area.
The dot with a small dot inside it indicates where your child was 6 months ago. This is an AUSVELS assessed curriculum area.

The days absent for this semester (2nd half of the year) were calculated up to the 22nd November which was the date when the reports were first printed. Including a later date would have delayed the printing of the reports as well as their distribution to families.

The rest of the report contains comments from the classroom teacher, specialist teachers and myself.

I trust you find time, maybe after the Christmas rush, to sit quietly and read and reflect on the report. I suggest you then discuss it with your child. Congratulate them on their successes and develop with them strategies which will lead to improvement.

If there are parts of the report you would like to discuss with a staff member, then please contact them tomorrow or early next week to arrange a mutually convenient time.

P & F CHRISTMAS STALL:
Many thanks to the P & F for organising this activity today. It was a huge success! There will be a few items on sale tomorrow morning for those students who may have forgotten the stall today.

PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY:
Last week two Grade Six students, Jemma Rizk and Dean Ieremia had the opportunity to shadow me and be ‘Principal for a Day’.

Here is their story -
The day began by welcoming and greeting parents and students out the front of the school. Then we helped Mr Fairweather lead Assembly. It was scary but fun. We then showed a new school family for 2014 around the school and answered their questions. We did some jobs for Mr Fairweather and he set us some challenges to think about. We helped with the Prep PMP program which was a lot of fun.
This was followed by recess in the staffroom with all the teachers. It felt very weird in there! After recess we tried out the new ipads. They were very fast with getting information and connecting to programs. They will be really good for the students next year.

We then spent time writing and talking to Mrs Pinti and Mrs Reilly about what students do at recess and lunchtimes in the playground.

We went over to the shop at lunchtime and had a roll and drink.

Being Principal for a day was a great and exciting experience for us.

Jemma and Dean.

HELP NEEDED:
- The following teachers Mrs Sullivan, Mrs Romer, Miss Baird, Mrs Howard, Mrs Hornby, Mrs Hargrave and Mr Fitzclarence all need to pack up their classrooms in the next two weeks in preparation for next year when they will be in another room. If you could offer any assistance, it would be greatly appreciated. See the teachers directly to offer your help.
- Anthony Bailey (school dad) has offered to paint the wooden seats outside the classrooms starting with the Preps and Grade One (facing the synthetic grass). It is a big task and he would appreciate some help. Please contact the office if you could assist Anthony. The paint will definitely give these areas a fresh face lift.
- Over the holidays please feel free to use the school grounds with your children. If you see any damage or unruly behavior, please contact the Police on 000.

If you can assist with any of these tasks, please contact the office.

PLAY GROUPS:
Play Groups for 0 – 5 year olds and their parents operate in Room 12 (next to the gym) every Tuesday between 10am – 12pm and 12:30 – 2:30pm and Thursday between 10am – 12pm.
Contact Karen Reilly at school for more information – 9744 7137.
Playgroups will continue up until the 19th December and then resume as from Tuesday 4th February 2014.

PLAYGROUP CHRISTMAS BREAKUP:
Next Tuesday, 17th December
10am – 12pm
All playgroups invited.
Bring a plate of food.
Have a great time!
CHOIR CAROLLING:
Yesterday the choir was on tour singing carols around Sunbury. We started at Riddell Gardens Aged Care followed by Sunbury Square Shopping Centre, Goonawarra Nursing Home and last of all Bunnings. The children performed admirably. It was a pleasure to hear from the elderly citizens that our children have impeccable manners. I would like to thank the parents and friends who came along to support their children. Special thanks to Gwenda Griggs for offering her time to come on tour. Merry Christmas...Sonja.

TERM DATES FOR 2014:
Term 1: 28th Jan (staff) / 29th Jan (all students including Preps) to 4 April  
Term 2: Tues 22nd April to 27th June  
**Easter Mon 21st April & ANZAC Day Fri 25th April**  
Term 3: 14 July to 19 September  
Term 4: 6th October to 19th December

Alan Fairweather  
Principal  
fairweather.alan.e@edumail.vic.gov.au

Extend OSHC at Goonawarra Primary School

ONLINE BOOKINGS: extend.com.au  
CALL OUR OFFICE: 1300 366 437

Summer School Holiday Program bookings NOW OPEN at a School near you!  
Monday, 9th December to Friday, 20th December* and Monday, 6th January to Friday, 24th January*

We have heaps of jam-packed activities and incursions ranging from Arts & Crafts, Cooking, plenty of games and sports and lots of Festive and Summer activities! Visit the Extend website at extend.com.au for program timetables, booking forms, and activity descriptions.

January bookings close Monday, 16th December – book now to avoid disappointment.

School Banking day is on TUESDAYS. Banking accepted on Tuesday 17th December but no rewards will be processed.

CANTEEN ROSTER:  
Friday, 13th December: Hanna Arafa, Megan Jordan and Lisa Teuma.  
Wednesday, 18th December: Nicole Huybers and Lisa Anderson.  
Friday, 20th December: CLOSED.
Community Safety Survey
Hume City Council is currently undertaking a Community Safety Survey. The purpose of this survey is to develop a new Community Safety Strategy for the city. The survey provides you with the opportunity to have some input into this new strategy. If you would like to have a say, copies of the survey along with pre-paid envelopes can be picked up from the front office of the school.

EAST SUNBURY NETBALL CLUB
REGISTRATION DAY
Sunday, 19th January
Goonawarra Recreational Reserve
9:00am – 11:00am
Interested ladies of all ages are invited to attend.
Players wanted of all ages and all levels.
Currently playing night is Thursday.

Melbourne Storm will bring Christmas celebrations to Sunbury Heights Primary School this Saturday, 14th December when it visits the area for a festive season party. 10 Storm players will visit the school from 1pm-3pm with the group departing Storm’s headquarters at AAMI Park with children and families from the Starlight Foundation. A group of lucky members will also join the festivities as a sign of appreciation for their ongoing support of the club.
On arrival at the school, the local rugby league club will run a sausage sizzle as well as a skills and drills session. Santa will make an appearance and there will be games and music for everyone to enjoy.
Storm members, fans and local residents are encouraged to attend to take part in the Christmas fun.
Further details can be found on melbournestorm.com.au