

Newsletter

15 February 2016



Millers Forest Public School

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MILLERS FOREST NSW 2324

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Annual General P&C Elections

Please be advised the following officers have taken up positions in the P&C for 2016.

President - Tracee Lee

Secretary - Hilary Burgess

Treasurer - Aimee Roche

Congratulations to our executive team and thank you for accepting these positions.

P&C Meeting

Our next P&C meeting will be held on **Tuesday, 1st March**. We will meet under the Cola. All parents are welcome including new parents and Kindergarten parents. Please bring along a plate to share.

Football Posts

I would personally like to thank one of our new fathers, Andrew James-Buehler, for welding the school football posts for us. They are now nice and strong.

P.B.L. Focus for this Week

The P.B.L. focus for this week is - **Do Your Best**

The focus for next week will be - **Be Kind and Considerate**



Non Scripture Class

If you do not wish your child/children to attend scripture classes on **Wednesdays** then you are required to put this request in writing. This year Mrs Avery will take all non-scripture students and teach a lesson in the Bluebird's classroom.



Seafood Free Zone

Please be aware that our school is a seafood free site.

School Contribution

The school contribution for 2016 will remain at \$45.00 per student. This contribution helps towards school resources for your children. Thank you to those families that have already forwarded this payment to the school office.

Guitar Lessons

Guitar lessons have started again every Tuesday for students in Years 1 to 6. The cost for guitar this term remains at \$45.00 per student and is due for payment by Tuesday, 16th February. Please place the correct money in a clearly marked and sealed envelope and hand in to the school office.

Talking About Students

I would please kindly like to ask parents to be mindful when discussing their own or other children when in the playground. Some parents are offended by this. Thank you.

Ms Phelps

PRINCIPAL

Harmony Day

We will celebrate Harmony Day on **Monday, 21st March**. A special assembly will be held at 9:00am for our school community to attend. Students are encouraged to wear traditional costumes from around the world. The P&C have organised a delicious Mexican theme lunch for Harmony Day as part of the lunch order program. Lunch orders cost \$5.00 and the order needs to be in by Thursday, 15th March.

Debating Training Day

Congratulations to Tayisha, Naomi, James, Nic and Tyrone who have been selected to be the Debating Team! The team will be attending a Debating Training Day this Friday at East Maitland Public School. Please ensure that permission notes for this have been returned to the office.

Schools Clean-Up Day

Our annual Schools' Clean- Up Day will be held on **Friday, 4th March** as part of the Clean-Up Australia campaign. Millers Forest students will clean up inside the school grounds on the Friday afternoon. Students should bring a pair of gloves and a plastic bag for the clean-up.

Sports News

Swimming Carnival

Well done to the students who attended the Small Schools Swimming Carnival last Friday at Beresfield pool. The students did their best in the pool and their behaviour was excellent. What a great day! Thanks to the parents who also helped out on the day.





Touch Football

Students have really enjoyed their touch football sessions so far this term. The touch football coach will not be coming this week but will come on Wednesday and Thursday next week. Therefore, students should wear their joggers to school next Wednesday.



Wellbeing Presentation

The Wellbeing Presentation by the game development officers from the Newcastle Knights last Wednesday was fantastic. The interactive presentation focussed on what the students should do (and not do!) to lead a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of regular physical activity. The students learned a lot from the presentation and had lots of fun at the rugby clinic afterwards!

Cross Country

The M.F.P.S. in-school cross country run will be held on **Thursday, 3rd March** after the morning assembly. Students in the Bluebirds and Hawks class will participate in the in-school cross country run as part of their weekly Sport. All students will be practising long-distance running in the weekly fitness sessions leading up to the event. Students who turn 8 this year or older and run the set course within the qualifying times will be selected to represent our school at the Zone Cross Country next term. Parent helpers will be needed to help run the event, so please let Mrs Bray know if you can help out on the day.

Cathy Bray

Hawks Class Teacher and Sports Coordinator

Library / Art News

Welcome back to students and parents and hello to our new students and parents!

You can provide your children with a library bag if they wish to borrow. An old T-shirt/paint shirt is also handy (if they do not already have one). Primary students should also have a glue stick and textas for our activities.

Thank you

Ms Merrilees

Art / Library Teacher

PS. I am in need of some new ice-cream containers (large or small) or 1kg yoghurt tubs. If anyone has any, please leave them at the school office. Thank you.

Important Dates to Remember

Guitar Payment Due (Years 1 to 6)	Tuesday 16th February, 2016
Debating Training Day	Friday 19th February, 2016
P & C Meeting	Tuesday 1st March, 2016
In-School Cross Country	Thursday 3rd March, 2016
Clean-Up Schools Day	Friday 4th March, 2016
Harmony Day	Monday 21st March, 2016
Good Friday Public Holiday	Friday 25th March, 2016
Easter Monday Public Holiday	Monday 28th March, 2016

"Our New School Gardeners Planting Basil and Coriander"



Matilda & Axel

Assembly Awards

Week 2 – Term 1	
Principal's Award	Ally – Outstanding comprehension work.
Citizenship Award	Tayisha & Naomi – Being terrific buddies.
Rainbow Lorikeets Awards	Matilda – Quickly recognising numbers of objects. Kelsey – A fantastic start to the year.
Bluebirds Awards	Oliver – Having a wonderful first day at school. Cooper – Doing a personal best in our first maths lesson.
Hawks Awards	Chloe C – A fantastic start at Millers Forest Public School. Rhiannon – A wonderful start at Millers Forest Public School.
Assembly Award	Cohen M – Listening well in assembly.
Playground Award	Jemima – Being kind to others.

Assembly Awards

Week 3 – Term 1	
Principal's Award	Stephanie – Kindness to others.
Citizenship Award	Livinia – Thinking about others.
Rainbow Lorikeets Awards	Trey – Amazing independent work. Max – Outstanding reading.
Bluebirds Awards	Eddie – Completing his work without a fuss and staying focused. Ally – Having a positive attitude towards all learning tasks.
Hawks Awards	Nic – Quality work. Eleanor – Great editing skills.
Mr Egan's Awards	Axel – Planting basil and coriander and being a great school gardener. Matilda - Planting basil and coriander and being a great school gardener.
Art Award	Chloe C – Outstanding creative patterns.
Playground Award	Tyrone – Including others in games.
Fitness Award	Matilda – Having a go.



Private, In-Home Tutoring

Grades K-6

Reading Skills / Math Skills / Organisational Skills / Help with Projects and Test Preparation

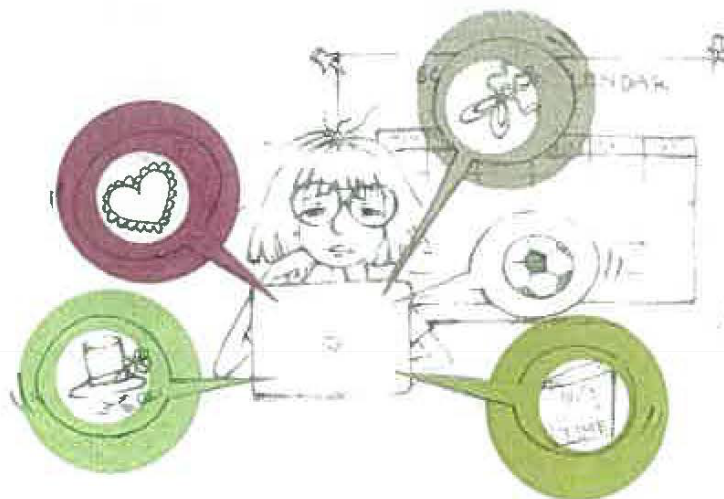
I am a 2015 Higher School Certificate Graduate from All Saints College, Maitland. I charge affordable rates with the first consultation being free. Please contact me and together we can help your child reach their full potential!

Bethany Mate 0403 143211

PERMISSION NOTE FATIGUE

FED UP WITH THE ENDLESS EVENTS, VOLUNTEERING 'OPPORTUNITIES', CATCH-UPS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL? DILVIN YASA INVESTIGATES WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND AND BELLOWS, WHY?

ILLUSTRATION: CHERI HUGHES



When I was eight years old, I hopefully asked my mother if she could volunteer for our school canteen. She looked at me in bewilderment, "Why on earth would I want to do that?" she asked. "Will your school be paying me to be there, or will be it taking me away from the job that puts food on your table and a roof over your head?" This was the 80s – a time when an occasional note was the only communication you ever received from the school and when it was okay to opt out of those rare volunteering opportunities. Even as I was filing her response in the section of my brain marked 'bring up with therapist in 25 years time', I had to admit the woman had a point. Here she was working a solid 40 to 50 hour week. Surely it wasn't fair to take on the school-volunteering thing as well, right?

Fast forward 30 years and we're looking at a very different landscape. No longer content with the odd permission request form or quarterly newsletter, many schools today – both public and private – bombard parents through daily emails, newsletters (which, in some cases, appear to be updated hourly) and a barrage of paperwork that comes in the notes pocket every afternoon. There's a 'day' or event for every occasion (one parent I know has 80 annual school events marked on her calendar) and endless requests for volunteers for everything from uniform shops to gluing glitter on backstage props. To top it off, almost everything happens during school hours, while the majority of us are either racing around after psychotic toddlers or at work. It can't just be me struggling...can it?

Eager for confirmation, I sent out an email to a group of friends who each have a child in primary school and asked, "Do you feel your child's school expects too much of you?" I anticipated a couple of emails from the most vocal within my social circle, but was shocked when I was quickly inundated with a torrent of bitter missives complaining their child's school was destroying their lives. "I just don't understand why we're expected to do the jobs of teachers for free," sniffed one mum. My favourite? The mum who said, "Honestly, if I get one more email about an upcoming 'Pies Are Your Friend Day' or 'bring a gold coin donation for National Yak Day', I'm going to march in to the principal's office." I assure you they're all mainstream parents, they're just exhausted, and like me, wondering what this madness is about and what's driving it.

Broadly speaking, parents, families and carers are some of the most important influences on a child's education, say the Australian Government Department of Education and Training (education.gov.au). "When parents, families and carers are positively engaged

in their child's education, children are more likely to attend and perform better at school," they say. "Parent engagement is associated with improvements across a range of indicators, including better education outcomes; enhanced engagement with school work; more regular school attendance; better behaviour; and increased social skills." Engagement, however, means many things, including reading at home together...not just volunteering at the bake sale.

What about the other demands of a parents' time by way of endless events and communications? While the Department of Education and Training says that day-to-day operations in schools are a matter for the schools and state education authorities themselves, child and education psychologist Andrew Greenfield (child-psychologist.com.au) says this recent trend of heavily involving parents comes down to three things: heightened expectation, increased flexibility in the workplace (for some), and ever advancing technology.

"As much as we like to blame schools for the way social activities are conducted these days, it's actually often the parents who are pushing the way forward," he says. "Many of us are parenting under the expectation that we should be doing more for our children and schools know this." The biggest question surrounding this? Are we sending the signal to our children (as well as ourselves) that unless we're available for the school, we're just not that great at parenting? Add to that the major technological advancements that mean updates can ping on your phone in a matter of seconds (hello Skoolbag app) and you've got the perfect '80 events a year to help your child succeed at school/life' storm.

The question is, what do you do if you're unable (or unwilling) to volunteer at the school, or you want to opt out of the countless events and class catch-ups? Firstly, you can help yourself by dropping the guilt. "Effective parent and family engagement in education is more than just participation in school meetings and helping with fundraising," according to the Department of Education and Training. "It's about actively engaging with your child's learning both at home and at school." Greenfield agrees, "No harm will be done to your child if you say no to structured school activities or social events, but only if you're involved in your child's life and learning in plenty of other ways such as assisting with homework or taking them to sporting events."

The key for family harmony? Be clear with your child about your intentions moving forward. "Don't tell your child you hate the school stuff and don't want to be there," advises Greenfield, who is in no way directing

that at my own mother. "This would be devastating to them and suggests you're not interested in what's going on in their life." Rather, explain in a way you're sure your child will understand, for example, why the situation with work just won't allow for it.

If you are in a situation where you would like to be more active at school, it may be a case of speaking to The Powers That Be at your workplace to request more flexibility (what a company says and does, however, are often two different things when it comes to the schoolyard shuffle), so that you may attend the odd school event.

In a world where four emails a day reminding you to return library books gets you down, always, always look for the silver lining. "If you've got 80 events scheduled over the course of a year, just think that regardless of how unavailable or disinterested you are, you're going to be able to make one event sooner or later and your child will be thrilled!" says Greenfield.

If schools could also accept that no kid ever missed out on a uni placement because they didn't attend enough hat parades, reduce their communications and move more events to a working-parent-friendly hour, then that, my friends, would be the icing on the cake.

WANT TO GET (MORE) ENGAGED AT HOME?

The Australian Government's Learning Potential App is a free app that's packed with useful tips and inspiring ways to engage in your child's learning. Suitable for all ages, the app provides useful hints and tips, relevant information tailored to your child's age and fun ways to stimulate learning.