Welcome back to Narooma PS

As mentioned in my note home last Friday, I would like to welcome back all the families and children and I hope everyone had an excellent break over the Christmas holiday period.

I would also like to welcome all of the new families to our school and hope that everyone settles in well.

Welcome Kindergarten! It is wonderful to witness 64 new kindergartener students start school today all dressed in their school uniform and looking fantastic. They went into K-Possums with Mrs Murphy, K-Dolphins with Mrs Russack or K-Stingrays with Miss Russell.

From all reports, they have settled in well, with all children getting stuck into the tasks set by the teachers.

Classes and Teachers for 2015

Firstly, I would like to thank the Narooma community for its understanding and acceptance of the position our school took by forming last year’s groups for the first week. We are currently on 415 students, which is only 2-3 children away from forming another class.

After applying the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) formula, we have been instructed to form 16 classes based on enrolments. These classes are:

K Possums - Mrs Murphy
K Dolphins - Mrs Russack and Mrs Constable
K Stingrays - Miss Russell
1 Kookaburras - Mrs Ogood
1 Whales - Mr Roberts
1/2 Wallabies - Mrs Kenna
2 Pelicans - Mrs Millar
3 Kangaroos - Mrs Mairs
3 Kingfishers - Mr Thackray
3/4 Echidnas - Miss Rees and Mrs Constable
4 Koalas - Mrs Hextell
4 Turtles - Ms Thrurtell
5 Sharks - Mr Russack
5 Seahorses Mrs Gillett
(Assistant Principal)
6 Penguins - Mrs Hodge
6 Eagles - Mr George
RFF Science/Computers - Mr Millar

Last - Mrs Phelps
Reading Recovery - Mrs Short
Teacher/Librarian - Mrs Lynne Constable
Curriculum Co-ordinator - Mrs Stebbing
(Principal Assistant)

Mrs Jackson has taken 12 months leave commencing at the beginning of the year. Miss Harding has taken an opportunity at Narooma High School and has commenced this role last week. We wish them both well for the year ahead.

We have a Canteen!

Let me officially welcome Mrs Gail Ohlsen to the staff of the school. Mrs Ohlsen was successful in receiving the tender for the canteen. Congratulations Gail!

I’m sure by now your child has told you about the canteen and has brought home a canteen list. Please support the canteen as I’m sure everyone wants it to succeed.

Some Changes to the Way We Do Things

The staff, late last year, reviewed some of our structures looking for ways to improve learning times at the school. A couple of changes to be aware of are as follows:

• Morning Assemblies – We will conduct morning assemblies on Mondays and Fridays only. This will increase the morning session time and still allow for important messages, programs and announcements to be made throughout the week.
• Whole School Assemblies – These have been moved to the afternoon session every second Thursday. Assemblies will commence immediately after lunch and will conclude at the end of the school day;
• Science Room – We are in the process of constructing a dedicated Science room. This will be in the old ‘Small Hall’. Mr Millar will be the dedicated Science teacher and will take every class on a weekly basis during the class teacher’s RFF. We anticipate that this room will be operational in two or three weeks;
• Clubs – Our school will be commencing clubs to run on alternate weeks to the whole school assembly. Teachers will conduct extra curricula activities during this dedicated time slot and students can select an activity to participate in. Examples of possible club’s activities are choir, public speaking, chess club etc.

School Leaders Induction Assembly.

On Thursday at 2:00pm, we will be holding our School Leaders’ Induction Assembly where the School Captains and the Sports Captains and Vice Captains will be presented with their badges and make a pledge to the school.

This assembly will take place in our school hall and it will be wonderful to witness all the children’s parents/carers pinning the badge on their respective child. This will certainly make the assembly that little bit more memorable for the children.

The School Captains are already performing their duties, for example raising the flags.

The Sports Captains and Vice Captains will perform their first role by leading their respective house group at next week's swimming carnival with children participating on Wednesday and Thursday at Narooma Pool.

Our School Leaders are:
School Captains: Piper Smith, Makayla Morris, Thomas Hodge & Jack Westoll.
Corunna Sports Vice Captains – Madison Burns & Cooper Ives.

Mummaga Sports Vice Captains – Emily Bate & Jack Davis.

Nangudga Sports Vice Captains – Brooke Stubbs & Ben Rogerson.

Wagonga Sports Vice Captains – Karissa Sydenham & Reece Ladmore.
Same but different

These boards have been modified with a white background and they look fantastic! They are much clearer and easier to read. I must acknowledge and thank Mr Ross Griffiths from Warren Newton Signs for having them ready for the school year’s commencement.

Multi-aged classes – Stages not Ages

At the beginning of a new school year, many parents might suddenly find their child in a multi-aged class. Naturally, questions arise: for the older group – ‘will my child be held back? For the younger group – ‘will my child be able to keep up?’

Multi-aged classes have been the source of much controversy over the years, with parents often believing their child is being disadvantaged in some way by being in one. The key to understanding multi-aged classes is realising that growth is determined in stages and not magically by ages.

Multi-aged classes teach children who are at compatible stages – not ages. It doesn’t mean your child is dumb or a genius, it just means that they are going through a stage either sooner or later than others.

It would be ludicrous to presume that all toddlers, once they reach the age of two, are toilet trained and talk in sentences – some will, some won’t but they all will in the end. Stages of all sorts continue throughout childhood and into the teenage years – puberty catches up to everyone at some point.

Although a child might be chronologically older – their maturity, social needs, academic needs and behaviour may be akin to a Year 2/3 balance or a Year 3/4 balance rather than a straight Year 3. All children are exposed to the same outcomes eventually, the path may be different but the destination is the same.

Children have always been in multi-aged classes anyway. The ages of Kindergarten students range from four and six months to six years old, an 18 month difference! Some children start school barely toilet trained where others are quite mature and are already reading at an advanced level. Same class but different stages.

It makes sense then to group children who are going through the similar stages so they can relate, help and experience together. Even within the same class, children will be at different levels. Teachers recognise this and extend the work of those who learn more quickly and give more attention to those who require it. The class then becomes outcomes based rather then competition based – this method of teaching also applies to a straight class as well.

The good thing about multi-aged classes is that it draws attention to individual needs and development and facilitates individual learning.

Older students are not held back in multi-aged classes. Separate programs are used in most curriculum areas, for the different groups of students according to their level of development. There will be some joint activities, such as art and drama etc. Multi-aged classes can provide significant benefits to both the younger and older students in the class. Older students can benefit from helping younger students in co-operative learning situations. The younger students have the opportunity of enhanced learning experiences where they are ready for it.

The Department of Education says that overseas research has shown children in multi-aged classes do no better or worse academically than their peers in a straight grade class, however, socially, their development is enhanced. They are more confident, can operate better as part of a group, are more assertive, become more independent learners and better problem solvers. They also make friends outside of their standard age groups.

Multi-aged classes have always existed. Traditionally smaller schools have had to use multi-aged classes to place all their pupils in classes – this is still relevant in many country schools – and our school!

Multi-aged classes are here to stay. Schools in NSW are very careful in allocating students to these classes, particularly in ensuring the younger students are mature enough to cope. If you have a child in a multi-aged class and are concerned, talk to the teacher. They can explain the programs and levels your child is working at.

The greatest impact on student learning is the quality of the teacher – not the multi-aged class.

Paul Sweeney
Principal

2015 Swimming Carnival
Our swimming carnival is on Wednesday, 11th and Thursday, 12th February at Narooma Pool.

* Parent helpers are valued and needed.
Thank you,
Mrs Hextell and Mr George (Organisers).

School Uniform Shop
Open every day from 9 - 9.30am.

Book Club
Welcome back my lovely bookworms. Issue 1 out today so take a good look and then place your orders and money in an envelope and return to school by Friday, 6th February.
Thank you,
Emma Carr 44 767232.

NEW SCHOOL WEBSITE:
We have a new school website. Find us by Googling Narooma Public School home.
If you wish to make an online payment for any activity, click on Our school in top banner, then Online Payments (bottom item of lefthand menu) and follow the instructions from there.

School Canteen
The canteen is up and running each day. Menus went home last week.
A reminder to place the order in a bag clearly marked with your child’s name and class.
Poppers $1.50 each