From Principal’s Desk

Great to be back

It’s truly wonderful to be back at Woody Point. The five weeks I spent in the role of school reviewer was very rewarding and it was a privilege to be able to visit so many other special schools across the state, but it’s great to be back. While there were lots of great things happening in all the schools I visited it did also serve as a reminder what a terrific school community we have here. Next year it’s our turn to be reviewed and I look forward to the opportunity to get this terrific feedback.

I did also unexpectedly extend my leave away from the school to take time to support a family member in ill health. I’m very appreciative of the terrific work done by Sheldon, Kirsten and Madonna in my absence. As Principal I’m very fortunate to be surrounded by such a terrific team of leaders.

Facilities update

Our new building is up and running and looking terrific. Junior 1 have moved in already and are trying it out. We still have a little bit of new furniture to arrive but overall we are very happy with the final outcome. At this stage we are expecting the other hire building and a storage container to be removed over the Christmas holiday period which will further open up the area. We are also working closely with regional facilities staff to complete some upgrades to the junior play area.

Class groups next year

It’s at about this time of year that parents start asking me questions about class groups for next year. The short answer to “when will we know” is probably in the last week of school. The long answer is in the article below. It’s a general outline of the thorough process we go through to establish class placements. Those of you who have been part of our school for some time will recognise these steps from previous years.

Class Groupings for 2017

At the end of each year one of the most challenging tasks we face is putting together class groupings for the following school year. Some might say it’s like a difficult jigsaw puzzle. I believe it’s more like a difficult jigsaw puzzle that’s missing 4 pieces and has 8 pieces from an entirely different puzzle that you somehow have to fit in.

Below is a brief description of the process we use to develop class groupings and school structures. I hope it provides some insight into the complex nature of this task.

Stage 1: Confirming the total student population

Each year we have a graduating class that finishes year 12 and a group of students who move to Redcliffe Special School. We also have some students whose families may or may not request an extension and these may or may not be granted. We also have some additional students who move for family reasons.

Balancing that we have new students enrolling in Prep and the early years as well as other students who might enrol as their family has moved into the area. These changes occur often very late in the year and again in the New Year as families often move over Christmas.
Stage 2: Number of classes and school structure

Once we have a clearer picture of how many students we have the leadership team then identifies how many classes we will need in total and how many in each sector of the school. The total number of teachers allocated is based on a complex formula that counts the number of students and the number of verified disabilities across the school. Given the nature of our school this is never an even spread. Our numbers in the junior school are always much higher than our senior school student numbers.

Stage 3: Students in sectors and classes

The leadership team will look at the age and educational needs of each student and assign them to a ‘sector’. Teachers then meet in teams and construct a draft of class groups based on educational needs and program focus. Typically this process takes some time as we draft and redraft trying to achieve a good balance. At this point each class is drafted based on students’ needs (staff are not matched to classes at this point). We do however start to look at the most appropriate room for each class, considering the physical and educational needs of each class as well as striving to keep sectors together in the same area as much as possible. Therapists provide valued input through this stage also.

Stage 4: Assigning Teachers, and Teacher Aides

From term 3, through to the end of the school year teachers and teacher aides may receive transfers out of the school while other teachers transfer in. We also have teachers who relocate, retire, take family leave and some who are on contract whose contract simply comes to an end. Although it would be great to know early it is often very late in the year (and sometimes even the following year) before we know exactly our full workforce. We are currently experiencing a high staff turnover due to maternity leave with as many as 7 of our teachers currently or soon to be on maternity leave.

Once we have a reasonably good idea of our staff we ask each staff member to submit an expression of preference as to which area of the school they feel is the best match to their skills and experience. Not all staff get their preference of course but we try to ensure we create the best fit for each class group. We consider all staffs’ skills, experience, training and background in making these decisions.

How can parents and families help?

Firstly, prepare for change. I know that change can cause disruption and anxiety but there are also many benefits.

New teachers, new staff and new classmates each year is an important part of the school journey as our young people build resilience, learning to work with a wide variety of people (as they will in other areas of their life), build their network of familiar adults and learn to make new friends. Special schools are often smaller and at times you may end up with some familiar class mates, teachers, teacher aides and staff. That’s nice too, but can’t be guaranteed for any length of time.

As you can see there are a great many variables, most of which cannot be controlled. We ask for your patience and support. We will endeavour to get all this in place to be able to distribute class groups in the last week of school but I can never guarantee there will not be changes in the New Year.

Once school starts we have a final staffing confirmation after the eighth day of school. At that time we review all our decisions and structures and sometimes, if need be, we will make adjustments.

The most important thing that our families can do is make a positive connection with new teachers and teacher aides each year. While we have processes to share information it is your unique knowledge of your child that we cannot replicate. Please take the time to get to know your child’s new teacher, pass on any information you see as most important and start to build that positive partnership that will support your son or daughter to have the best year they possibly can.

WPSS Facebook Page Update

In previous newsletter articles I have informed parents of the development of our school Facebook page. I’d like to thank the school P&C for their support and input into this project. Last week you would all have received a letter and permission form for your child to be part of this project. I’d like to clarify for parents a couple of questions about Facebook.

Q What if I don’t want my child’s image or work to be published?

You have two options. Either do not complete the form OR return the signed form with your wishes clearly expressed in section 3 “limitations on consent”. I want to assure parents that we make every effort to respect the wishes of all our families. There is no pressure to participate.

Q What if I change my mind?

You of course have the right to change your mind at any time. Simply contact the school and we will reissue you with another consent form. You may add, withdraw or limit your consent. However due to the nature of social media, consent cannot be fully revoked as it may not be possible to ensure that all copies of the material are deleted or cease to be used. Changes of permission therefore only take effect from that moment forward.

Q If I don’t give permission can I still use the Facebook page?

Yes of course. Once the page goes public we will let all families know and we hope that it will be a useful source of information for families and the broader community.

Ric Day
Principal
Q How do we give feedback or have input in the future?

The school P&C will continue to be consulted through the development and rollout. If you can’t attend those meetings you’re welcome to contact the school any time and I’m happy to put forward your views.

Q Didn’t I give permission at the beginning of the school year or at enrolment?

Yes many of you will have already addressed the permission to publish your child’s image in various forums. However given the introduction of the new Facebook page and the updating of the department forms we felt it best to clarify with each family to ensure we are clear of each students’ permissions.

Q When will the page be launched?

Very soon. We are just finalising permissions and will let all families know through SMS and newsletter when it is able to be accessed.

If you have any further questions as always please don’t hesitate to contact the school.

Ric Day
Principal

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)

Hi Everyone

My name is Pel and I am the Woody Point Special SWPBS mascot. My job is to help students with the 3 whole school expectations of

I can be a Learner
I can be Safe
I can be Respectful

Each fortnight on Parade I help Ric hand out the awards for the fortnight. I also choose one student from each sector of the school who have been displaying the whole school expectations of

Wk1-2 - I can be Safe – I use equipment safely as instructed

These three students receive the prestigious Golden Pelican Award, have their photo taken with me and also go up on the board in the foyer of the Office.

Last fortnight’s Golden Pelican Award winners were

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years</td>
<td>Cooper L</td>
<td>For using cutting instruments safely in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Lachlan L</td>
<td>For using fishing equipment safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid / Sen</td>
<td>Oscar N</td>
<td>For using gardening equipment safely</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Fortnightly on parade, one class will be drawn out for me to come and visit their classroom to see them being a Learner, Respectful and Safe.

I look forward to visiting the following classrooms in the next couple of weeks. EY3 – Deb L, EY4 Amy.

Focus for next Fortnight - Wk3-4 – I can be Safe - I wear my hat in the playground
Early Years 4 and 5 Collaborative Learning

In Early Years 4, we have been working together with Early Years 5 to enhance our social and academic learning. This has opened up so many wonderful learning experiences for our students, as we have shared ideas, resources, and lots of fun!

We are reading “Wombat Stew”. We have told the story with a sensory walk, made characters from the book, talked about Australian animals and cooked a delicious vegetable stew! We have explored concepts about print, letters and words through our fun activities.

We have done yoga together, planted and cared for a vegetable garden and engaged with a range of fun role-play activities including a hairdressing salon, a bus and a hospital! It has been so wonderful to see the children developing friendships through play and trying new experiences.
Senior Schooling

During Semester 2, as part of our Gardening Program, senior school students are in the process of creating a Senior gardening area. We have planted vegetable seeds and bulbs and have successfully grown carrots and potatoes. Onions and broccoli are also in the process of growing.

We care for our garden daily by watering the plants and pulling out weeds. We are very excited in the next couple of weeks to be making a scarecrow and are planting succulents in our old boots or coffee mugs!!!
Dear parents,

Every day our school transport assistance scheme helps thousands of students with disability travel to and from school.

As you would be aware, the former state government made a decision to transition the school transport assistance scheme to the federal government’s National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

I have listened to parents and transport operators who are telling me they are concerned about the uncertainty as to who will deliver transport services under the NDIS and what it will mean for our most vulnerable students and their families.

These children who travel to school every day need the reassurance of certainty and routine.

That’s why the Queensland Government will continue to operate transport assistance for students with disability under the current model until 31 December 2019 – a full six months after the transition to NDIS is completed.

We negotiated this arrangement with the federal government to help ensure there is no disruption to school transport for children with disability during the NDIS transition.

However, I understand uncertainty remains for families and for transport operators beyond 2019.

I am writing to inform you I have called on the Federal Minister for Social Services to ensure no child is disadvantaged during the transition to the NDIS. I have asked the Federal Government to allow Queensland to continue to provide school transport assistance for students with disability under the current model beyond 2019.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

KATE JONES MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Tourism and Major Events
Redcliffe Carers Café Club
Meets 4th Wednesday of each month

Are you currently providing additional care for a family member, friend or neighbour who has a disability, mental illness, chronic illness or for someone who is frail aged?

26th October 2016
Meet at 10am
Bikini Beach Cafe
77 Redcliffe Pde, Redcliffe
RSVP: 3624 1700
(Carers Queensland Stafford)

Brisbane North Region ASD Carer Support Group

Are you a parent/carer caring for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder who would like some time out and a chance to meet other parents?

If so, please come along to our new Support Group at Rothwell on the first Wednesday of each month. There will be discussions and helpful information to assist in your caring role.

Please bring along a plate of food to share and tea and coffee will be provided.

NO CHILDCARE PROVIDED.

Free information session on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Details

When & Where

What else do we offer?

How to Register

"Pave the Way was fresh and new with a completely different flavour and I felt inspired at the end of it. It really ticked the boxes and I have asked my son to attend the next presentation as I want him to see the possibilities that are available to him and open up his way of thinking about his life and career."

-Michelle, 2016

An NDIS Participant Readiness activity funded by the Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services.

Are you a family carer or former carer seeking a job but can’t afford training?

Carers Queensland Inc. is planning to offer a CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support in early October 2016 in the Caboolture and Deception Bay areas.

The course is designed with carers’ needs in mind, flexible learning options and supportive trainers and the full cost of this course is funded by the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Program for eligible carers.

The course will run for approximately 12 months and has 7 core modules and 6 elective modules, one of which is Provide First Aid. The HETA0013 Provide First Aid elective is outsourced to another Registered training organisation.

There is also a work placement requirement of 120 hours, so you will need to arrange some intake options for that period and may also be required to pay for the cost of a Blue Card or Police Check application.

Interested? Talk with one of our friendly staff today about your eligibility. Act now and you could have a nationally recognised accredited qualification by mid-2017.

If you are under 15 years of age and not attending school, an Australian citizen or permanent resident and have a Unique Student Identification number, you may be eligible. You can apply for further information on the Unique Student Identification number by going to the website www.usi.gov.au. Successful applicants will need to become a financial member of Carers Queensland for a $10 fee.

Are you eligible?
Call your local office or phone 1800 242 636 or email rtoenquiries@carersqld.asn.au
SMS Service for Student Absences

Thank you to all parents and carers for utilising our SMS system for Student Absences. We all seem to have found our groove (school staff included) and the School has had a couple of days where there have been no unexplained absences!

Contact details

There are times when we may need to contact parents and carers. Do we have your most up to date contact details? If not, please contact the school on 3480 4333 so we can update our records. These details include parent/carers’ name, address, phone numbers, email address and emergency contact details. Please remember to contact the school if any of these details change.

Absence notification process

Please remember to call the school on 3480 4333 or text on 0429 662 447 early in the morning if your child is going to be away or late for school so your child’s absence can be recorded correctly.

Same day notification

Our school will contact parents as soon as practicable on the day if a student is not at school and we don’t know why. If you are advised by the school that your child is away without a reason, please contact us as soon as possible by texting 0429 662 447, calling 3480 4333 or emailing admin@woodpoinspecs.eq.edu.au to let us know where your child is. We will follow-up with parents if no response is received.

Fundraising for Canteen

In term 4 the Senior School are selling bandannas to raise money for Canteen. The 28th of October is Bandanna Day. We will be selling bandannas all month. At the start of term 4 we will send home order forms so all the family can be involved. Please support this cause.

Thanks Chance, Jothom, and Gene - Senior 4

Dates to Remember

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 17th October 2016</td>
<td>Student Free Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 24th October 2016</td>
<td>P &amp; C Meeting</td>
<td>9.30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 28th October 2016</td>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>2.20pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 28th October 2016</td>
<td>Free Dress Day for Canteen (gold coin donation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 29th October 2016</td>
<td>Proposed working bee 7.00am - 11.00am</td>
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