

Newsletter

Coburg Special Developmental School

29 January to 4 February 2019

Principal's Report

Dear Parents and Friends,

Happy New Year to all of our families and welcome back to another exciting year. I hope everybody has had a relaxing holiday and are recharged and ready to go for 2019. It was great seeing the students arriving Wednesday morning and it didn't take long for them to get used to their new rooms and spaces (although we have had the occasional bag left in the wrong room). They have been very happy and started getting straight into their work.

You would have received a postcard advertising our "Meet the Teacher" evening that is to be held next Tuesday, 5th February from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. This will be a great opportunity to meet your child's teacher and section teams as well as learn about the programs in which your children will be involved. We will also have presentations on Child Centred Learning, School Wide Positive Behaviours Supports Framework and Child Safe Standards. At the end of the presentations, we will share a light meal, giving us all a chance to mingle and chat. We are hoping to have representatives from all of our families at this evening get together.

School Council information is included in this newsletter. There will be a meeting of the current School Council this month, and then the Annual General Meeting will be held in March. At that time, we will form a new School Council, so we will be calling for nominations for members to replace those who have completed their two-year period. More information will come out later about this process. It is great to be involved in the School Council in order to help drive the vision for our school into the future.

You will also find in this newsletter, a copy of our Child Safety Policy for you to review. All of our Child Safe policies and documents are on our website and can be downloaded for your information. Other information to support our culture of Child Safety, and zero tolerance to child abuse, will be presented in each newsletter and updated on our website throughout the year; so please make use of the resources as they are highlighted.

Coburg SDS

29 January to 4 February 2019

Volume 8 Issue 1



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IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Tuesday 5th February

Meet the Teacher
Evening

6.00 - 8.00 pm

Principal's Report Cont...

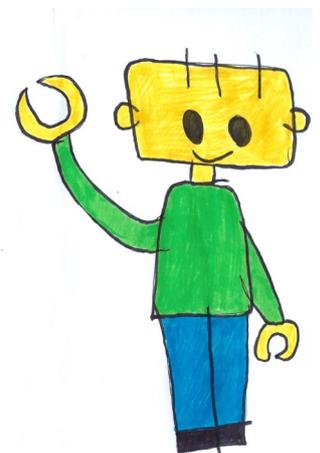
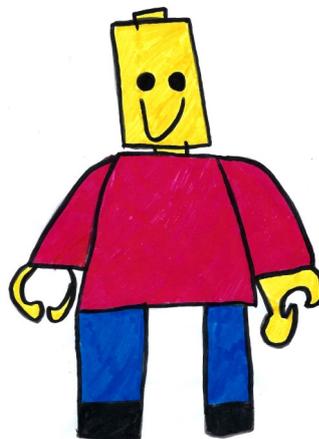
We welcome some new staff members this year. Alex Morgan joins the team as one of the Middle School teachers. We were lucky enough to have Alex working with us in the last four weeks of term last year, so she is very familiar with our staff and students. Cicely Alderson-Hughes is a new speech pathologist filling in for Yvette whilst she is on leave for the year. She has begun the year really well and is excited to be part of the team. We also welcome back Sarah Bradley, who is teaching in the Early Years team, and Annie Seccull, our OT, who had time at a different school last year. It's great to have both of these wonderful staff members back with us. Charlotte Young, who filled in for Annie last year, also returns to us for two days per week.

Please make sure you pop into school occasionally to say hello and I again look forward to seeing as many parents as possible at the Meet the Teacher evening next Tuesday.

Regards
Warren Tofts

Dates to Remember

Tuesday 29th January	Staff Start Back
Wednesday 30 th	School Started
Thursday 31 st	Preps Started
Tuesday 5 th February	Meet the Teacher Evening 6.00 - 8.00 pm



School Council Elections - Information for Parents

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNCIL AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within statewide guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

WHO IS ON THE SCHOOL COUNCIL?

For most school councils, there are three possible categories of membership:

- A mandated elected Parent category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Training (DET) employees can be Parent members at their child's school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school.
- A mandated elected DET employee category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.
- An optional Community member category – members are coopted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. Department employees are not eligible to be Community members.

Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

WHY IS PARENT MEMBERSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

DO I NEED SPECIAL EXPERIENCE TO BE ON SCHOOL COUNCIL?

Each member brings their own valuable life skills and knowledge to the role. Councilors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them. What you do need is an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in Term one each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might consider

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO STAND FOR ELECTION?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term one each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent category.

Department employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work are eligible to nominate for parent membership of the school council at that school.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination.

Generally, if there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.



Child Safety

5D.3 Policy

Child Safe

Implementation:

Coburg SDS will:

- Advise widely, and in a variety of ways, its Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the expectation that we are all working toward zero tolerance of child abuse
- Develop slogans and messages that can be visible on the website, Newsletter, on posters etc in regard to the school's (and its community's) commitment to child safety
- Assign specific roles within its staff Roles and Responsibilities structure to ensure continued compliance with the Standards
- Align all relevant school policies, in regard to student welfare and wellbeing, with the Child Safety Policy, which include:
 - Student Engagement Policy
 - Student Anti Bullying Policy
 - Visitors to School Policy
 - Volunteers and Privacy in the School Community Policy
 - Volunteers Policy
 - On-site Supervision Policy
 - Publication of Student Work and Photographs Policy
 - Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Review risk management procedures to ensure safety of all children in any activity provided by the school
- Align recruitment and HR practices to ensure all jobs involving child-connected work clearly state the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and informing all applicants of these
- Tighten procedures in terms of the use of volunteers and contractors; ensuring they are aware of the school's culture of child safety, outlining their responsibilities in this regard, whilst ascertaining their commitment toward this goal
- Follow all protocols and procedures in regard to mandatory reporting as outlined in The Lakes Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Build a culture of support and encouragement when discussing child safety matters and have a clear process for working through these issues

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards

Reviewed at staff meeting:

This policy was last ratified by school Council on: 19th September, 2018

Rationale:

- Ministerial Order No. 870 – "Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools" outlines a set of minimum child safety standards which Coburg Special Developmental School (Coburg SDS) adopts in its commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. Child abuse, in its broadest form, includes:
 - any act committed against a child involving
 - a sexual offence; or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming) and
 - the infliction, on a child, of
 - physical violence; or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
 - serious neglect of a child
- This policy applies to all school environments provided by Coburg SDS for a child's use including online and external locations and upholds the edict that all children have a right to be safe and free from abuse.

Aims:

- Coburg SDS embeds and engenders a culture of child safety and the fact that it is everyone's responsibility to keep all children safe and free from abuse. The school's governing authority will lead this commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse and mandate all staff (including contractors and volunteers), visitors and children to proactively ensure the safety of children at all times.
- Coburg SDS is committed to the safety of all children including those with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Coburg SDS community has shared values of Respect, Teamwork, Learning and Leadership underpinning our Safety Code of Conduct.
- Coburg SDS has aligned its practices with the Child Safety Standards as written in Ministerial Order No. 870, and has developed:
 1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
 2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
 3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
 4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
 5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
 6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
 7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children