Dear Parents,

CONGRATULATIONS SAM CHAPMAN
Huge congratulations to Sam Chapman who has been appointed to Castlemaine North to commence in a new role from the start of 2014. I am sure everyone will agree with me when I congratulate Sam on 13 years of outstanding service to the Winters Flat Primary Schools students and families. We wish her well as she embarks on the next phase of her teaching career.

We have advertised for a replacement for Sam and hope to have the process finished before the end of the year.

BUS TRAVELLERS
An important letter has been sent home with all school bus travellers today. In case someone is absent, or hasn’t passed the letter on to their parents, I am including the information in today’s newsletter.

Recently, in preparation for bushfire season, an audit of our bus rolls was undertaken to ensure that we knew which bus each of our bus-travelling children were on and to ensure we also had accurate home contact information for each child. Through this process, it was revealed that some of our bus rolls were slightly out of date and in the interests of safety, all children in the Castlemaine area who utilise the school bus network have recently been issued with an ‘Application for Permission to Travel – Eligible Students’ form. It appears that this has resulted in some concern and confusion amongst the community regarding changes to the bus policy and eligibility criteria.
Firstly, I would like to assure you that there have been no changes to the policy, nor are there any proposed changes to the policy regarding the administration of, or eligibility for, the school bus network. Secondly, as a result of this widespread concern, we are hosting a parents’ information night at 7:00pm at the Music Centre of the Eddy Street Campus, Castlemaine Secondary College on Wednesday 11 December 2013.

Fiona Forster from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Student Transport Unit will be attending this meeting to outline certain aspects of the policy and introduce a new shuttle service that has recently been approved by Public Transport Victoria and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for use by Castlemaine Secondary College students. She will also be on hand to answer any questions you have about how the policy applies to your specific family situation.

I strongly encourage all parents to attend this meeting.

PART-TIME ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL
From time to time parents inquire about the possibility of sending their child to school part-time. I have sought advice from the VRQA regarding this as there appears to be some confusion in the community about part-time enrolment in school.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) have advised that:
• Under section 2.1.1 of the Education & Training Reform Act 2006, parents are required to either enrol their child full-time at a registered school, or to register their child for home-schooling with VRQA.
• A parent applying to VRQA to register a child for Home-schooling is required to declare that the parent will ensure that the child receives regular and efficient instruction that, taken as a whole, will substantially address the eight key learning areas. The Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provides the option of “Partial enrolment” at the Principal’s discretion, to enable a child who is registered for full-time home-schooling to access special subjects/programs at the school that the parent is unable to provide through home-schooling e.g. half a day a week for a specialist program such as the Language Other Than English, Music, Sport or an opportunity for social interaction with other children. It is up to the Principal whether or not to enter a written agreement regarding this “partial enrolment”.

Further information is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/homeschooling-partialenrolment_1.doc

Have a good week,
Mary-anne Rooney,
Principal.

HOUSE SPORTS DAY - THIS FRIDAY - DECEMBER 6
Please wear your house colours this Friday, and sports shoes, along with your broadbrimmed hat and sunscreen, for some fun activities!
Grades 4/5F, 5/6C/O and 3/4B will be having their activities between 9.15am and 11.00am.
Grades Prep/1, 2/3 and 1/2 will be having their activities between 11.30am and 1.00pm.

What’s cooking this week in the kitchen?
• Peach & Rhubarb Betties with Ice Cream.
• Silverbeet and Potato Torte.
• Olive Oil Pastry.
• Pasta with Broad Beans and Dill.
• Fresh Fettucini Pasta.

Volunteers Needed to Water and Feed Chooks Over School Holidays
Hi Everyone,
The well-deserved Christmas break is not far away. But some things at school never stop. The plants still need to grow and the chooks need to be fed. If you are interested in helping out over the break – there’s free eggs!! Even if you can only do it once it would still be a great help. Please leave your name and contact number at the office.
Cheers Terry.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE
Raffle books have been sent home with each family today. Your support of our Christmas Fundraising raffle would be greatly appreciated. First prize is for an overnight stay at Madison Spa, Moama for 2 people, plus extras. Second Prize is a Christmas Hamper. Please return books and money to the school by Wednesday 18th December. If you are unable to sell any tickets, could you please return the books to the school as soon as possible.
STUDENTS OF THE WEEK       Week Ending – 29/11/2013

R02 (4/5F)  Koby S – caring for self by being responsible for his own learning.
R03 (5/6C)  Luca T – caring for self by focussing on his work and thinking about his behaviour.
R14 (2/3W)  Grade 2/3W – caring for others by for organising Assembly at the last minute!
R16 (P/1A)  Robbie M – caring for self by for working really hard on his writing.
R17 (1/2TB) Betsy L – caring for self by always listening carefully, using her manners and giving her best.
R18 (P/1M)  Salina C – caring for self by always trying her best and working really hard at her writing. Well done!

CHEF OF THE WEEK:
Grade 2/3W – Aramis R.
Grade 2/3W – Olivia C-O, Maisie T, Remy S, Theo M-C (twice) and Alice C.
Grade 3/4B – Bailey M.

GARDENER OF THE WEEK:
Grade 2/3W – Nardoo W and Theo M-C.

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:
P/1A – for keeping their area of the school clean and tidy.

SOCIAL SKILL:
Last Week’s Social Skill was:  I care for Others by considering others feelings.
The Winners are:  Kianne H, Maisie M-C and Blossom S. D.
This Week’s Social Skill is:  I care for Others by considering others feelings.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB
Parents/caregivers are welcome to have orders for the current Scholastic Book Club left at the office, if they are a special gift for someone.

FOOTSTEPS PROGRAM
There are still a number of families who have not paid for the Footsteps program that was run at the school throughout two terms. Could these amounts please be settled before the end of term.

LIBRARY – Book Club/Book Fair
A big thank you to the School Community for supporting our Book Fair over the last two weeks. We were able to choose over $400 worth of new books for our library. We have also been able to access over $1,000.00 worth of new books during the year through Scholastic Book Club. We see both the Fair and Book Club as a fabulous win/win situation for home and school. Children get to have reasonably priced literature at home and we can restock some library shelves without putting too much stress on the school budget! A huge thank you to Jenny Curtis for co-ordinating the Book Club this year – a very time-consuming job very well done!

RETURNING LIBRARY BOOKS
All books are due back in the Library NOW. Stocktake is beginning this week.
If a student has a missing book, you will receive a notice at the beginning of the last week of school. This will mean that the book has not been found in the library or the classroom during stocktake. The cost of the book will be on the notice.

20c BOOK SALE
Tuesday the 10th and 17th of December, there will be a 20c sale of books that have been weeded from our library during the year. This will be at lunchtime (1.40pm to 2.15pm) in the library. Great bargains to be had!

DISCO & DRESS-UP DAY – Thursday 19th December
On the second last day of term will be having our special End of Year Celebration Assembly, with a whole school disco after lunch. Students are invited to dress in “festive gear”.

Thank you for participating in this years 1Day event!
COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Judy Laycock - Teacher
I think it is so important for people to feel at home.....to feel that this is their home...that here they will be cared for, can care for. It is important for you as well as me, for me as well as you. It is important not only for education...for the land which we are a part of, for we who must care...for more than ourselves. It is so good to listen. So good to learn. I was glad to be part of this big beginning embrace.

Julie McHale - Descendent of the Trawlwoolway people of Devonport area in Tasmania and an adopted elder on Dja Dja Wurrung country
I was very nervous that this event may not be greeted well by all.
The audience of children were amazing.
The dancers made my heart swell to breaking point.
Grace and Alice confidently explaining the leaves, I felt so proud.
The children speaking about what the day meant to them was so beautiful.
I know this will be the start of an amazing journey together. Winters Flat, under your guidance, has taken a giant step!!! It was great to see other local Principals there for the event. Kath’s singing brought tears to my eyes and many others in the room - so powerful.
All I can say is this was one of those events that I will remember forever. The day has made a huge impact on many!!!
The wind picking up just as the flags were raised, showed me that Bunjil was smiling as well.

Vic Say – Local Community Member
It was a wonderfully child centred series of presentations and commitments which I thought spoke highly of a thoughtful, thorough and ‘sticky’ process - sticky in the sense that it was so pleasantly public and open as to offer the possibility of the school ‘sticking’ to it beyond the tenure of present movers and shakers. So well done and all the best for your journey ahead.

Sam Chapman - Teacher
A BEAUTIFUL ceremony. I am going to talk to my kids about the difference between Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country!

Kathryn Coff – Parent
I cried when my girls did the ‘Welcome Dance’ and raised the Koorie Flag. A very special moment in time...

Nicole – Parent
I was really moved by the morning and enjoyed the 3 flags raising and connecting to cultures. The ritual of storytelling, song and sharing of Aboriginal Culture was for me about connecting, opening and coming together, acknowledging and healing, and belonging. The children’s family flags were symbolic of belonging, connecting and being part of family, community and culture. Thanks to Winters Flat Primary School.

Jeanette McMahon – Teacher
When Rick Nelson performed ‘Welcome to Country’ it felt so good to have him here at our school welcoming us to ‘Country’. Having the ‘Meeting Place’ students involved and perform a traditional ‘Welcome Dance’ was also really special. When the 3 flags were raised by the students it was a very emotional and moving moment. I feel extremely blessed and honoured as a teacher to have experienced such an event in my teaching career. The Family Flags movie was also special, as telling stories and listening to each other, is where true understanding begins.

Anne Neath - Teacher
I find all ceremonies of this nature moving, but this was particularly so! The personal commitment and sincerity of all involved was so powerful.

Aleshia Ng - Parent
It was such a pleasure to be present for the Community Celebration Day. I felt very proud to be part of a school that celebrates diversity of culture, and particularly on this day acknowledged and celebrated the culture of the Koorie students of our school community.
It’s wonderful to see Winter’s Flat Primary School support our children and their families in recognizing Australia’s rich indigenous cultural history.
The Family Flags project was also a lovely way for families to reflect upon their own history, and what identifies each of us as individuals and as part of each family group, and it was a great opportunity to consider what is meaningful to each of us in our lives.