Dear Parents,

WELCOME BACK
Welcome to 2014! It seems that students enjoyed a relaxing holiday and everyone was excited to come back and see their friends. We have had a very smooth start to the school year, welcoming 27 Preps and 20 other children throughout the school. We hope that families new to our school enjoy their time as part of the Winters Flat community. We encourage everyone to be involved in our school and its varied programs.

NEW STAFF
Welcome to Denton Arthur taking (Grade 5/6) and Simone Healy (Grade 2/3). We would also like to welcome Heather Carroll (replacing Jeanette McMahon) and “welcome back” to Cheryl Bottomley (replacing Mel Taylor). We wish Jeanette and Mel speedy recoveries and look forward to seeing them at school soon.

WEATHER
Whilst we have had a few very hot days, with more to come no doubt, we have been very pleased with the way everyone has coped. Please remember to send lots of cool water to school with your child and make sure that they have a wide brimmed hat at all times. We do not provide sunscreen to children, but you are welcome to send some along with your child. We encourage children to be independent with the application of sunscreen.

Winters Flat is a designated school for closure on Code Red days – those of catastrophic fire risk. I have added information about procedures for Code Red days later in this edition of Flat Chat.

Have a great week

Mary-anne Rooney
Principal
STUDENTS OF THE WEEK       Week Ending – 31/01/2014

R02 (4/5F)    Jake H – caring for the environment by putting all chairs down in the morning.
R03 (5/6A)    Elsie H – caring for self by working very hard and staying on task always.
R5A (5/6O)    Stefan M – caring for self by putting in an outstanding effort socially, emotionally and academically. A fantastic start to the year. Well done!
Amy – caring for self by making a fantastic start to the school year. You have helped others and set a great standard to others. Well done!
R13 (3/4B)    Grade 3/4B – caring for self by having a ‘fantastic’ start to the new school year. What a great co-operative, caring class we have.
R14 (2/3W)    All 2/3W – caring for self by settling into the class well and making a great start to the school year.
R15 (P/1J)    All Grade 1’s in P/1J – caring for others by showing kindness and care for our new Prep buddies. Well done to you all!
R16 (P/1A)    All Grade 1’s in P/1A – caring for others by helping their Prep buddies feel welcome, happy and safe at their new school.
R17 (2/3TH)   All Grade 2/3TH – caring for self by settling in well to the class and having a great week. Excellent!
R18 (P/1M)    All Grade P/1M – caring for others by being great buddies to our Preps. Well done!

ACCOUNT STATEMENTS

Initial charges have been processed to all families of the school. Other charges will be added as the term progresses, as there will be swimming, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program (specific grade levels), Religious Education and any other Excursions that will be taking place throughout the year.

The initial charges on accounts are as follows:

- Stationery - $65
- Curriculum - $65
- Grounds Levy - $40 per family (this is voluntary) which goes towards grounds upkeep.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Parents/guardians who hold a current Commonwealth Health Care card on the first day of Term 1 and Term 3 are eligible to apply for the Education Maintenance allowance.

Application forms for parents/caregivers eligible to claim Education Maintenance Allowance, need to be submitted to the office by Thursday 28th February, 2013. **No late applications can be accepted.**

Even if you completed an Education Maintenance Allowance form last year, you are still required to submit a new application form this school year, if you are still eligible.

**EMA application forms are available from the school office.** Please note that we will need to photocopy your card when you submit your application.

Parents who are eligible to apply for EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance), have the option of having their payment made to the school, or have a cheque forwarded to the school (which can be signed over to the school), to assist with payment of excursions and levies.

CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE

To be eligible for the Conveyance Allowance, students must be of school age (between 5 and 18 years) and

- reside 4.8 kms or more by the shortest practicable route from the school attended
- attend a school in the conveyance allowance area
- be 4.8 from the nearest bus
- be enrolled at the nearest appropriate primary, secondary or specialist school

Please call at the office for more information and an enrolment form.
School Procedures for the Bushfire Season

The way schools in Victoria respond to bushfires is being constantly revised.

Fire danger ratings and warnings are used in Victoria to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Schools – and children’s services – identified as being at highest bushfire risk have been included on the Bushfire-At Risk Register (BARR) and will be closed on days determined by fire authorities to be Code Red. Our school has been identified as a school at highest bushfire risk and is listed on the BARR.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days’ notice of a planned closure following the issue of a Code Red warning by the CFA. We will contact you directly by email or letter sent home with your child and SMS message with advice on planned closures and will confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child.

- No staff will be on site on days when the school is closed by the risk of fire.
- Out-of-school care will be cancelled on these days.
- School camps will be cancelled if the area where the camp is taking place is at risk.
- There may also be changes to school bus routes. Depending on routes, this may also occur on days when the school is not closed.

On these Code Red days families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan – **on such days, children should never be left at home unattended or in the care of older children.**

For those of us living in a bushfire-prone area, the safest option when a Code Red day is declared may be to leave the night before, or early in the morning of the Code Red day.

As part of preparing our school for the threat of fire we have updated our emergency management plan; reprioritised any maintenance works that may assist in preparing for the threat of fire and cleared our school grounds.

**What can parents do?**

- Make sure your family’s Bushfire Survival Plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements for your children in the event that our school is closed.
- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, by checking our website [http://www.winters-flat-ps.vic.edu.au], and by talking to your child’s teacher or any other member of the teaching staff about our emergency plans.
- Most importantly at this time of year, if you’re planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay.
- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family’s Bushfire Survival Plan.

For up-to-date information on this year’s fire season and Bushfire Survival Planning, visit the CFA website at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.
SCHOOL NURSING PROGRAM 2014
Prep Health Check forms have been sent home with all Prep students. Please fill in these forms and return to your child’s classroom teacher by Friday 14th February.

School Banking is every TUESDAY. Forms are available from the school office if you would like to open an account for your child. This year the Dollarmites treasure is hidden in the Deep Sea so be on the lookout for your School Banking pack which will be sent home soon. The new rewards are fantastic, so don’t forget to keep your rewards card in a safe place, ready to order when you have saved 10 tokens.

Happy Saving Everyone!

LIBRARY
Any missing Library books that were found at home during the school holidays can be returned to the office during school hours.

MUSIC SPECIALISTS
Music lessons are available during school hours for Keyboard, Woodwind, Guitar and Drums.
Forms and further information is available from the office.

A CELEBRATION DAY FOR GIRLS/MOTHERS
This activity is for girls aged 10-12 years old with their mother or female carer, and discusses fun activities, women’s stories and gentle celebration of the magical threshold of puberty and menarche.
When: Sunday 16th February, 2014 – 10.00am to 4.00pm.
Cost: $125.00 per girl.
Where: Castlemaine.

Mothers Session
When: Wednesday 12th February – 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

Please contact Pam Barnes on 0417 588 288 for enquiries and registration, or email barneslibrio@aapt.net.au
For more information about A Celebration Day for Girls, go to www.celebrationdayforgirls.com

PIANO LESSONS
Piano lessons for beginners through to experienced pianists, in private studio.
Please contact Christopher Whitehead on 5470 6668.

CASTLEMAINE BLUE LIGHT – Pool Day Party
When: Friday 7th February, 2014 – 4.00pm to 6.30pm.
Where: Chewton Swimming Pool.
Cost: $5.00.
POOL RULES APPLY - CHILDREN UNDER 13 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT
POOL INFLATABLE, BBQ, MUSIC AND PRIZES.
WWW.BLUELIGHT.ORG.AU
**HEALTHY EATING**

- "Caring for Self at Winters Flat"

**Snack and Lunch**

The W.F. School community is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle and to this end we encourage active physical participation and healthy choice foods. Please discuss with your child the importance of including foods in his/her lunch/snack box that will sustain energy for the school working day. Thanks for your co-operation.

Some excellent **snack** choices to be eaten at recess are: fruit and vegetable pieces, meat and vegetable roll ups, boiled eggs, muffins, cheeses, low fat crackers, yoghurt, nuts, dried fruits and veg pieces

Suggestions for **lunches** are: salad sandwiches, salad platters, wraps, potato salad, pasta salad, boiled eggs, cold meats, fruit, vegetables, sushi, tuna, "leftovers", fruit slice, and low fat/sugar home-made cake/slice. Of course there are many other suitable food choices that you as parents know that your child will eat - the key to healthy eating are promoting a variety of appropriate foods as well as a little experimentation!!!

Consistent with Winters Flat’s Healthy Eating policy, and guidelines from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Chips,(including corn chips) Cheezels, Twisties, Burger Rings, LCM bars, Two minute noodles and confectionery (lollies, chocolate bars and high sugar/fat or salt foods) are not to be brought to school for inclusion as snacks or part of lunches. Most Muesli bars also fall into this category.

Thank you for supporting your children and working with the school to ensure healthy food choices are promoted.

**Water**

Water is the only choice of drink at lunch/recess and at all other school times.

Please remember to provide a water bottle for school use. Drinking water is essential for hydration, especially during hot weather, but also to keep our minds active and alert.

**Healthy Snack/Munch & Crunch**

We are very committed to a Healthy Snack/Munch & Crunch break at 10.00 am each day and encourage parents to include an extra piece of food additional to snack or lunch. This food needs to be a healthy choice and can only take the form of **fruit or vegetables please**. We welcome choices that are **not squishy, nor need to be peeled** as the break is very short and sharp and between learning sessions. (Eg. apple, cucumber, cabbage, snowpeas, cherries etc.). More delicate types of fruit (e.g. mangoes, oranges, and bananas) can be saved for eating on the deck at lunchtime when there is more time.
SWIMMING PROGRAM
Students in Grades P/1M, P/1A, P/1J and 2/3TH will be attending Swimming Lessons on Wednesday February 12th, 19th and 26th and Wednesday March 5th, 12th and 19th.
The program will be $58.00, which covers the cost of the pool and bus.
Notes have been sent home with all students who are in the above grades.
Please return notes and payment to the school as soon as possible.

SECOND-HAND UNIFORMS
The school would be grateful for any donations of second-hand uniform, especially t-shirts/polo shirts.
Please drop off at the office, if you are able to assist with this request.

SHOP LUNCH ORDERS
Prices have increased on Blasta Pasta Spaghetti and Blasta Pasta Lasagna (now both $5.00).
Also juices, milk and pasties are no longer available.
Please refer to the new Price list sent home with students.
Extra copies are available from the office.

ASTHMA AWARENESS

What can parents and carers do to help their child’s asthma at school?
• If your child is self-managing their asthma, or capable of taking their asthma medication independently, ensure that your child is always carrying their reliever medication (e.g. Ventolin, Asmol, Airomir and Bricanyl) as well as a spacer while at school
• Ensure that you have provided your child’s school/preschool with an updated Asthma Action Plan
• Ensure that your child knows how to recognise early symptoms of an asthma attack and check to make sure they are using their reliever medication properly
• Ensure your child will seek help from school/preschool staff if they experience asthma symptoms
• Ensure that your child’s asthma is being well managed and that their medication and management is reviewed annually by your GP (this is a good opportunity to also update the Asthma Action Plan required by your child’s school/preschool)

Reminders
• Honey – 1kg $10.00 ($9.00 Refill) – 500g $5.00 ($4.50 Refill).
• Coffee - $10.00.
• School Banking every Tuesday.
• Lunch orders available on Wednesdays & Fridays only.
• School commences – 8.55am.
• Recess – 10.55am to 11.25am.
• Lunch – 1.35pm to 2.15pm.
• Dismissal – 3.15pm.

For more information, please contact The Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 278 462 or www.asthma.org.au