Welcome to Walkerston!

I’d like to thank everyone for the warm welcome I’ve received since starting as Principal this year. For the last 18 years collecting ideas from Japan, France and England about how to make good schools even better. I’ve worked for the Greater London Authority (Boris Johnson’s office) sharing these ideas with schools across London and the South East of England, and helping all kinds of schools (some great, others just beginning their improvement journey) to provide a better education for their children. One thing I’ve learned through doing this work is that no matter how good a school is, new ideas can always be used to make things even better.

Thanks to the strengths of all the staff and families at Walkerston, academic achievement for the children has been improving over the last few years, and we’ll be looking at ways to make sure that continues.

You Said...

I was pleased to see where, through last year’s opinion surveys, you have told us that we’re doing a good job. It’s nice to see that our community recognises that we are always looking for better ways to do things, that you feel comfortable talking to the teachers about your concerns, that children are making good progress and that they feel safe.

You’ve also said that we could perhaps be a little more environmentally friendly, encourage your involvement in school activities, and give you a bit more information about how we teach your children, including how we use technology. The survey indicates that we could also work on how we use technology to communicate with you, through the website for example. Over the coming weeks, I hope to give you some more information about our plans in these areas.

Working Together

It is important that we work together to give your child the best possible education, so, I would like to invite you to let me know, by email, appointment, or just mentioning it when you see me on the playground, if you have any concerns or questions about what we’re doing, or suggestions you might have.

All schools can benefit from different points of view, and Walkerston is certainly no different in that regard.

Attendance

One of the best things that you can do to help us on the journey is to make sure your children attend school. At Walkerston, we follow the Department’s “Every Day Counts” agenda, partly because schooling at Primary is compulsory, but mainly because if children don’t come here, we can’t teach them. We want to provide the best possible education for your children, and them being here is obviously an important part of that.

Morning Routine

Our routines in the mornings have changed. To avoid the heat and improve supervision, children can now enter their classrooms from 8:30, and must be in class by 8:50. Teachers will be supervising, and there will be activities for the children to do. If at all possible, please don’t send or bring your children to school before 8:30. If this is likely to be a problem for you, let us know as soon as possible so arrangements can be made, such as our Chappy’s free Breakfast Club.
Visitors at school

To comply with various regulations, including Health and Safety and Student Protection, all visitors to school, including parents, visiting teachers and other workers, need to sign in at the office if they arrive between the hours of 9:00 and 2:45. For this reason, all school gates apart from the Admin entrance on McColl street will be closed at these times. These measures are in place to enable us to look after you, our visitors, in the event of an emergency, and to help us keep the children safe, so your cooperation in this is appreciated.

Smoking

Another recent change has been Education Queensland’s policy on smoking. From this year, there is a smoking ban at state schools which covers the school grounds themselves, and extends to 5 metres beyond the boundary. Again, this is done for the protection of your children and our staff, so we appreciate your understanding here.

Introducing Our Chaplain

Hi Everyone.

For those of you who don’t know, I have had a long association with the school as a parent volunteer helping with reading programmes, Breakfast Club and the P & C committee. Last year I was honoured to become the School Chaplain. There are many opinions about what the School Chaplain does, so I thought I would tell you why I am here as your School Chaplain.

During my life, (as with many other people), I have faced many challenges, both large and small – being teased at school, feeling like I didn’t fit in, bereavement. Through times like these, there was always somebody who valued me and kept me on the right path. Sometimes it was a colleague, a teacher or a friend that I could turn to – a person who would listen and support me. I want to be that support person for the school community should anyone need it, whether student, staff member or parent. In the next few weeks, I hope to catch up with as many people in the school community as I can, so please come and say hello if you see me in the school grounds. I am the old girl in blue with grey hair and a big smile.

The chaplaincy consent form is attached to this newsletter. Please complete and return these to your child’s class teacher or the office. This is a permission slip for your child to come and see me, if they need to, in an initial one on one meeting.

A quick reminder that Breakfast Club is on every morning from 8.15am and we stop serving at 8.40am so the students are ready to start the school day on time. We serve cereal, toast, fruit and juice. I would like to thank Walkerston Bakery, Woolworths Walkerston and Kellogg’s for supplying all of our breakfast needs. Also to the Walkerston Rotary Club who recently donated funds for the purchase of a conveyor toaster. If anyone has a plentiful supply of fruit we would be ecstatic to complement our menu with your fruit donations. Just bring them to the hall in the mornings or leave them at the office. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who help at Breakfast Club. Remember all are welcome at Breakfast Club and parents and teachers are invited to pop in and say hello. We are always looking for helpers, so if you have a spare few minutes, please come and give us a hand.

Should you wish to support the chaplaincy programme financially, you can drop donations in the tin at the office or contact me if you would like to donate on a more regular basis.

Remember, I am available every Monday and Wednesday from 8am until 3pm. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday you will find me at the hall between 8 and 9. If you can’t find me, please ask at the office and they will assist you. I am trying to organise some activities and would like input from students and parents. If you or your child has any ideas, please come and see me or leave a message at the office. Some suggestions are coffee and catch-up sessions, sibling social sessions as well as student lunchtime activities. I will have a meeting in the next few weeks to discuss some options.

Hope we all have a splendid year working together to make our school even better.

Thanks for the support!

Finally from me, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those in the local community who have already provided support for Walkerston SS. Firstly, thanks to those parents who have already been roped in to help out with classroom admin tasks. Woolworths and Walkerston Bakery donate food which allows Chappy A to provide a free breakfast club for our children. The Walkerston Rotary Club’s support has enabled us to buy a toaster for the breakfast club. The club provides an excellent start to the day for those children who need to come to school early, so thanks very much to those agencies. Attached to this newsletter are some other local organisations who offer services which you may be interested in.

From the P&C

The P&C committee would like to welcome everyone to the 2015 school year, and invite you to join us. This year we will be arranging shade for the playground and purchasing resources and equipment for the school. Our Annual General Meeting is on the 20th of February at 1pm in the hall after
School Bus Assistance for Lower Income Families

The Safety Net Scheme was developed by the State Government to assist students who do not receive other forms of School Transport Assistance and are members of the lower income families.

Who May Be Eligible?

To be eligible for assistance under the Safety Net Scheme, students must be in one of the following categories:

- Students of families eligible for a Health Care Card;
- Students eligible for a Health Care Card;
- Students of families eligible for a Pensioner Concession Card;
- Students of families receiving Veterans Affairs Pension; or
- Students placed under a Care and Protection Order.

Application forms with further details are available by calling into the Translink Division of the Department of Transport and Main Roads in Nelson St, Mackay or by telephoning 4951 8673.

Conveyance Allowance Assistance

Conveyance Allowance is an assistance provided by the Department Transport and Main Roads to eligible parents/guardians who drive their students to school or to the route of a school bus.

There are several types of Conveyance Allowance available. These are determined by the type of school attended, distance driven to school or bus route and the type of school bus services (if any) provided in your area.

Application forms with further details are available by calling into the Translink Division of the Department of Transport and Main Roads in Nelson St, Mackay or by telephoning 4951 8673.

New Prep enjoying the play ground
Dear Parents,

The School Dental Service is now offering services to students enrolled at your school. Medical/Consent forms will be sent home and need to be fully completed and returned to the school office by: 13th February, 2015

The van will be visiting the school to do check ups and treatment will be completed at the Walkerston Primary School in Van 12B

Further enquiries please phone  0412 680 635     Van 12B

For further information on this service, please visit our website: http://www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/services/school.asp

Is it your New Year’s Resolution to take better care of yourself???

One way is for women aged 40 years or older to book a FREE breast screen. No GP referral is needed.

Breast Screen Queensland Mackay Service has appointments available now—including early morning, late afternoon & Saturday mornings at our Wellington Street service.

We encourage all eligible women to make a New Year’s Resolution to have their first or next breast screen. Early Detection is your best protection.

Book now on 13 20 50 or 4968 3813 for your FREE appointment. No GP referral required.