It is with great enthusiasm that I have returned to school after my surgery and recovery time. I certainly missed the whole school community. I found it very hard to not call or contact the school and get ‘bossy’, avoiding this was made easier by the staff left at school who stepped up in roles of responsibility. I would especially like to thank Mr Pickworth who relieved as Principal in my absence, the Assistant Principals, Mrs Knott, Mrs Reedman, Mrs Sant who supported him and Mr Gentles who relieved as Assistant Principal in the Hearing Support Unit. However a school is a whole group of people who help and support and so my thanks are to all staff, teachers, Support staff and Office staff for ensuring the smooth running of the school. A large heartfelt thanks from me and also on behalf of the whole community for their doing such a good job.

I trust that your family has had a chance to feel refreshed, and ready for the autumn term. Welcome back to the shortest term of the school year, one which ends with mid-year reports being sent home to parents. The term began with teachers learning about the changes to the content and the ways we teach some new curriculum areas, particularly English, in the Australia-wide National Curriculum. From a parent’s perspective, the main changes are the separation of the strands of HSIE, into separate study of History and Geography, changes to the ways we teach writing – now there are three main “text types” taught, and a stronger concentration on grammar.

Teachers spent time considering the changed learning environment for children, with technology playing a much greater role at school and at home, and affecting the way we learn and store information. One small example of this change is the way we are more likely now to store important phone numbers on our phone, rather than in our memory. The skills needed to use technology for learning are built into the new Curriculum.

This will be a very busy term as there is lots planned and it’s only a relatively short term. This term we commence with PSSA sport, NAPLAN testing in Week 3 and many events like the Zoo coming to our school, Active-A-Thon fundraiser, Choir and Dance group performances, University tests, debating competition and one of the important ones Mothers Day, stall and then celebrations this weekend. Please make sure you check your child’s bag on a regular
basis to ensure you receive all notes that are sent home.

Shortly we will be holding our Cross Country carnival and to provide a route with some challenges we will again be utilising the Community garden area, supervision will be provided again by teachers and an executive member of staff. I will be sending home a note for parents to sign for this. Please bear in mind that it will also cover other excursions into the local area for curriculum, celebration events or to access the Community garden for lessons on the environment.

P&C Meeting
A reminder that tonight is a P&C meeting at the school starting at 7pm, I look forward to catching up with many of you then.

OPPORTUNITY CLASS PLACEMENT
Any interested Year 4 students will receive information concerning applications for OC placement in 2014 for Years 5 and 6. There are two methods of application; online as outlined in the letter www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement. or via a paper application (available from May 6th). Parents must not apply by both methods. If you require a paper application please contact the school and one will be sent home via your child. All applications must be received before the closing date of 17th May.

NAPLAN TESTING
The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It has been an annual event for schools since 2008. On Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 May, students will take the 2013 NAPLAN tests.

NAPLAN assesses skills in literacy and numeracy that are developed over time, through the school curriculum. NAPLAN is not a pass or fail type test, but rather shows how students are progressing in numeracy and literacy skills against national standards for all Australian children. It also provides valuable information that allows schools and governments to better target effort and support to help all students achieve their potential and acquire the basic skills to help them build successful and happy lives.

All students are expected to participate in the tests.

Some students with very specific circumstances may be exempted from participating in the tests.

For information about participation in NAPLAN, you can go to: http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/parentcarer-support.html

There is also an information for parent brochure available at:

The NAPLAN tests fundamental skills rather than specific content, and as such is not a test for which students can study or drill. The best way you can help your child prepare for NAPLAN is to let them know that NAPLAN is just one part of their school program, and to urge them to simply do the best they can on the day. The use of services by coaching providers is not recommended. An individual student NAPLAN report will be issued by the school later this year. Parents can use this information to monitor how their child is progressing and to identify any areas of concern.

Parents may also wish to use their child’s results to discuss progress with teachers. More information is available at www.nap.edu.au.

Attendance
We have been taking note of the attendance levels over term one. Generally, we have supportive families who ensure their children gain as much access to learning as is possible. We also understand that there are those particular circumstances that crop that cause a break in school and learning. Please phone or send a note to explain each of your child’s absences.

We do appreciate that certain medical conditions present ongoing needs. Please liaise with us here in developing management plan for health issues so we can best support your child. If you do have ongoing issues that are affecting your child’s attendance please contact your child’s teacher.

Lateness
I have also noticed a small number of students arriving at school after the bell, this is not a good habit for their future at school; missing the important first few minutes of instruction or being absent for activities starting. A simple saying I have used in the past for absence and lateness is;

Be on time
Be at school
That’s the rule.
PBL News

We are extremely pleased with the progress we are making with our PBL process. At this stage we have begun to concentrate on our classroom behaviour as most students are making correct behaviour choices in the playground.

As part of the process we have decided to change the qualification standards allowing students to attend the Fun Day celebrations each term. To qualify for Fun Day students must have:

- No more than one (1) detention
- No suspensions
- Displayed no acts of violence to others
- Have no more than three (3) yellow slips during the term.

We feel that all our students are capable of meeting these requirements and are looking forward to the fun day this term. I know our teachers are devising some excellent activities for the next fun day.

3-6 School sport

This term, year 3-6 students participating in school sport (student’s not participating in P.S.S.A) will be playing in a school soccer competition. The students will compete against each other at school, with a grand final to be played between the top two teams at the end of the term. During school sport, k-6 students can earn points for their sports house team (Cuthbert, Newcombe, Fraser) simply by wearing a polo shirt in their house colours for school sport. These shirts can be purchased at Big W for $5.

P.S.S.A

Congratulations to all the students who have been selected to play winter P.S.S.A for Toongabbie West Public School. The first round of winter P.S.S.A will commence this Friday 10th May 2013. Winter P.S.S.A matches will be played in the afternoon starting at 1pm. Both netball and soccer will play their first 3 matches at Binalong oval.

The Primary School Sports Association and the school welcome parents to all games to support their children and school.

• Remember that students play organised sport for their own enjoyment. They are not there to entertain you, and they are NOT miniature professional athletes
• Respect the officials’ decisions
• Be on your best behaviour. Do not indulge in physical or verbal abuse of players, coaches, officials or other spectators
• Applaud good play by your own team and the opposing team
• Show respect for your opponents. Without them there would be no game
• Never ridicule a player for making a mistake or losing a competition
• Encourage players always to play according to the rules.

Mr Warren

Active-A-Thon

With a great success of last years' Olympic - A Thon, we as a school have decided to hold an Active-a-thon for this years' Pre-School to Year 6 students. This will be held on the school oval on Wednesday 5th June 2013. With your support and encouragement we hope to raise even more money than last year. The Active-A-Thon is being conducted to raise much needed funds to support many of our school projects, including the purchase of such items as sporting equipment, teaching aids, library books and general improvements to the school environment.

Mind Quest 2013

A Gifted & Talented program for students in Years 1—6 will be held at Glenwood HS on Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th June 2013.

Information about the courses and cost are available at our schools website. Application forms can be collected from our school’s office.

If you need further information, please contact Mrs Sant.

Mother’s Day Stall

Our Mother’s Day stall will be held this Thursday 9th May 2013. Gifts will be available to purchase for $5.00 each. Please send $5.00 with your child on this day. Mums will love their gifts but, kids, keep it a secret until Sunday!

Mother’s Day Raffle

5 fantastic prizes are to be won. Please return money and raffle stubs by Thursday 9th May 2013. the raffle will be drawn at the assembly on Thursday 9th May 2013. Assembly starts at 2.15 pm.

P&C Meeting

There is a P&C meeting tonight at 7.00 pm. All are welcome to attend. It is an opportunity to meet other parents and take part in actively supporting the students of this school.