Dear Parents and Caregivers

Every day seems to bring new enrolments at the moment and changes are still being made to classes due to changing numbers in grades. Hopefully by Friday this will become less of a problem and classes can become permanent. For all students at the school, they have been placed in a class where they can achieve to their highest level.

It is one of the principles of the NSW Education Curriculum that children learn over a two year cycle in stages. No child will miss out on any learning through this process and for large and small schools, stage or multi age classes are the norm in our educational system.

I have noticed a very definite atmosphere in the school. Students seem to be happy and concentrating, teachers are very positive and parents are smiling and asking questions which demonstrate their desire for their children to succeed. A good start for the year.

Term 1 is always a very busy term with swim carnivals and swim school, setting targets for classes and watching changes happen to students as they grow and develop in skills and knowledge.

I am continuing this week with a series of articles on children and how success happens at school and in life. This week I am talking about self-worth and self-image. If any parents/carers would like to discuss anything with me please make an appointment and I will be happy to talk to them about individual or general cases.

**WHO TO SEE**

In 2014, Toongabbie West’s executive structure includes myself the Principal and three Assistant Principals. Each of the Assistant Principals has direct responsibility for supporting and supervising our classes and student learning achievement. Mrs Sant will have direct supervision for Kindergarten and Stage 1, Mr Warren (rel Assistant Principal) will have direct supervision of Stage 2 and Stage 3, Mr Pickworth will have direct supervision of our Hearing Support Classes.

If you need to discuss issues concerning your child, please speak with your child’s class teacher in the first instance and then to the Stage Assistant Principal followed by myself.

**CORE VALUES**

Throughout 2014, the PBL team and teachers will discuss the nine core values of public education each
term. At the start of each term, the core value for the month will also be included in the school's newsletter. These values will become the focus point for discussion in the classroom and it is hoped that it may also become a discussion point at home. At the end of each month, each class teacher will hand out a blue award to a child in their class who epitomises that value. The awards will be given out at grade assemblies.

There are nine core values that will be discussed each month. They are:

- **INTEGRITY**
- **EXCELLENCE**
- **RESPECT**
- **RESPONSIBILITY**
- **COOPERATION**
- **PARTICIPATION**
- **CARE**
- **FAIRNESS**
- **DEMOCRACY**

Starting in week 3 and continuing to week 6, we will be looking at "Integrity" and its impact on learning, social skills and the school environment.

**MEET THE TEACHER** INFORMATION SESSIONS

We would love you to join us for our 'Meet the Teacher' information sessions on Wednesday 19th February 2014.

A variety of general topics will be covered in the sessions, as well as information specific to each class. These sessions are not for interviews with individual students and their parents.

Parent/Teacher interviews have been scheduled for a later date this term for this purpose. If you wish to discuss issues relating to your child, you can book an interview time with your child's teacher before or after school or on the allocated interview day.

The details of the sessions are as follows:

- **K/1B; KS; HUJ:** ..........................5:00 p.m.
- **1/2Z; 1/2M; HUM:** ..........................5:00 p.m.
- **2/3H; 3/4K:** ..........................6:00 p.m.
- **4/5S; 5/6W; HUS:** ..........................6:30 p.m.

**PARENT HELPERS**

Parent Helpers are a vital way in which Toongabbie West Public School and parents can build strong partnerships between home and school. Parents and carers have many valuable skills and contribute to a more successful learning environment for our children. We strongly encourage you to consider how you can contribute to our great school.

Parents are required on a yearly basis to complete a prohibited person's declaration and undertake our new school based training that looks at a number of important issues that volunteers in our school may encounter. Once trained you will be issued with an identification badge that must be worn at all times when you are working with us. It is also a safety requirement that you sign in and out at the front office when working in the school.

Please let your child's class teacher know if you are interested in being a parent helper this year. We look forward to as many of you as possible contributing to our school's success!!!

**CHILDREN AND THEIR SELF WORTH**

Children react in many different ways to situations depending on their confidence. It is the single most important factor which affects all behaviour and perhaps more than anything else, determines how successful the experience of school will be.

What we do at any moment is influenced by the way we see ourselves. When children answer the questions:
Who am I?
What weaknesses do I have?
What am I worth as a person?
They are in fact trying to understand and answer questions about their own self-concept or self-worth.

What do we know about self-concept?
- It's the way we see ourselves - the wonderful, the good, the bad and the ugly things which make us an individual
- It is created for us by the significant people in our lives - parents, teachers, brothers, sisters and friends
- We also play a part in developing our own self-concept. We do this in a very positive way when we exercise our own various talents
- We develop our self-concept when we compare ourselves to others. If significant people in our lives compare us to others, this can have very large implications on the development of our self-worth especially in school.
- We are all individuals and we both need to see and be seen as an individual
- Our self-concept and self-worth improves when people express love, affection and approval to us. We then begin to determine what is good and what is bad. Sometimes we can become confused and see any attention as good. People need to be careful and not confuse issues when we might get confused
- We know people with strong self-concepts and self-worth are more likely to cope with new learning situations and master challenges because they are secure enough to extend themselves and take risks in a confident way
- They also find it easier to deal with social situations
- Our self-concept and worth changes as a result of our experiences.

One of the products of our self-concept is the confidence we display in approaching challenges and new situations. A fragile self-concept is often revealed in a child who holds back, doubting their ability to cope. We might say, "Come on, you can do it." Often the response is a hanging of the head, a refusal to take a chance for fear we will fail and be judged. In school this can often be one of the great barriers to successful learning. Every attempt to help a child must be grounded in a conviction, right from the start, that we establish and maintain the confidence of the child in themselves.

Children who lack confidence have yet to learn that:
- Making mistakes is an essential part of learning
- Important people in our lives love us for what we are, not what we can do
- We all have many skills that we haven't yet discovered
- Being successful means being the best you can, not being better that other people.

Caring adults can help children to be more confident individuals, more successful learners and ultimately happier people by:
- Providing a climate of safety both at home and at school. The child must learn that it is okay to make mistakes, that trying and not succeeding straight away is a part of learning
- Focussing on whatever achievement there is and praise it. Don't be reluctant to express encouragement and delight
- Taking the children's interests and activities seriously. Talk to them, share your own childhood stories. Let the youngsters see that their experiences are valuable, in that way they will see themselves as valuable
- Making sure that the challenges you offer are realistic. Nothing succeeds like success and the more success children have, the more confidence they bring to any new tasks
- Being on the look out for any special strengths, an ability to draw, a good voice, story telling or being able to remember something. Build on these with praise and encouragement
- Thinking seriously about the place of competition in the life of your child. Is their success being constantly being compared with other people? For the winners this is okay, but for the others it can be most destructive.

Despite what many people think, about success in life, it is not the case that being faster, stronger or smarter is what counts. It is being happy and being the best person you can be.

Sports House Elections
Last week, Toongabbie West held the Sport House Captain and Vice-Captain elections. Congratulations to the following students:
Newcombe Captains and Vice-Captains: Jarrod, Chloe, Ahmad, Sarah.
Cuthbert Captains and Vice-Captains: Jeremy, Olivia, Nathan, Alysha.
Fraser Captains and Vice-Captains: Bill, Jade, Owen, Esperance.
These students will be officially sworn in and receive their badges at next week’s whole school assembly.

Swim School
We will be running the School Swimming Scheme from Monday 17th March 2014 to Friday the 28th March 2014. Classes will run from 11:45am to 12:30pm every school day and will take place at Blacktown Aquatic Centre.

In addition to all other requirements, students with known seizure conditions (e.g. epilepsy, diabetic) will have an adult supervisor (spotter). The spotter will provide continuous and exclusive supervision of the child and is additional to all other staffing requirements.

Travel will be by bus. Students may wear earplugs and swimming cap if necessary.

This program has been approved by the Principal. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to see Mr Gareth Warren or Mr Brian Firth.

Canteen News
Thank you to the two mothers who have put their name down to help at the canteen on a Monday. We are now able to open for lunch orders on Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays. Remember to place your orders into the office drop box by 9.30 am or take them to the canteen after that time.

Price change: We have had to increase the price of a few of our snack items. Popcorn, JJ corn chips, Jumpies and Shapes Crackers are now all $1.00 each. Please make note of this on your canteen price list.

Scripture News
Scripture will start this week, Thursday 13th of February. K-2 Scripture will commence at 12:45 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. and 3-6 Scripture at 1:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

So far, we have only two scripture groups on offer; Anglican/Protestant and Catholic Scripture. We would like to offer Islam and Hindu as scripture groups. This would require volunteers from these faiths. If you know someone who is qualified to teach scripture for either faith, please see Mrs Marks or leave your details with the office.

We also welcome two new scripture teachers; Sister Patricia will be teaching 3-4 Catholic Scripture and Ms Sarah who will be teaching 3-4 Protestant. We welcome back Mrs Penna and Mrs Chow, who are continuing their volunteer work as scripture teachers for our school.

On Thursday, please check with your child about the scripture group they attended and let the office know if they are not in the correct group. Children who do not participate in either group will attend Non-Scripture where they will complete activity booklets.

Mrs Marks, Scripture Coordinator