PRINCIPAL’S COMMENTS

I’d like to extend a warm welcome to all students, families and staff to the 2016 school year and in particular, to those who have joined the Withcott State School community today. I hope that you have had an enjoyable festive and holiday season. Today the students arrived enthusiastically displaying happy dispositions, eager to start the year. It was lovely to see them reconnecting with the staff and their friends and the first day has progressed smoothly.

Our Prep students were particularly excited (as were their parents!) as they embark on their educational journey. Please remember that we are all here to work together with you, as a team, to support the learning and well-being of your child. Positive relationships based on mutual respect and open communication are important to a successful school experience.

Thank you for ensuring that the students have all they need; both in terms of their uniforms and their learning materials. These early days are about establishing routines, communicating expectations for behaviour and setting goals for learning. It was wonderful to meet up with families last Friday, with many taking up the opportunity to come in and meet the teacher and bring in requisites. Hopefully this made for a more relaxed start today.

The staff spent the student free days engaged in professional development, in creating well-organised classrooms and in spending time reviewing information and achievement data about the students so that we are ready to progress their learning journey.

We have an exciting year ahead with many events already listed on the calendar over the page. There are also a number of important messages throughout this newsletter regarding arrival, departure and road crossing. It would be appreciated if all family members could be aware of these to ensure the safety of all our children. You might also like to review our updated School Handbook available on the school website.

The Withcott State School Parents’ and Citizens Association will host a welcome BBQ at the school on Friday 5 February for both new and current families. It would be lovely to catch up with many of you there.

See over the page for further details.

Tania Angus, Principal

CLASS COMPOSITION

We have just engaged in a rigorous process to determine class composition. Fluctuating enrolment right up until 11:30am on Friday has seen two changes in class structure before we were able to publish lists for Friday afternoon. This process takes into account requirements around class size, a balance of learning needs and gender, as well as social dynamics. For privacy reasons, class lists are not to be photographed and/or published in any environment outside the school.

2016 STAFF

We are extremely fortunate to maintain consistency of most of our wonderful staff within the school. I’d like to welcome back Mrs Helen Saint who will be teaching part-time on class on a contractual basis. Welcome also to Miss Kylee Judd who has also joined our staff on a contractual basis. Our enrolment is such, that we are no longer entitled to a Head of Curriculum position. A change in the way that these positions are calculated in 2017 should hopefully see it gained again. Our staff and classes for 2016 are as follows:

Principal – Mrs Tania Angus
Administrative Officers – Mrs Gail Dinsey, Mrs Helen Tennant
Classroom Teachers: Year PL – Ms Julianne Luxton, Year 1/2H – Ms Helen Harch, Miss Kylee Judd, Year 1/2B – Mrs Sue Sigley, Year 2/3P – Mrs Melissa Pappin, Mrs Roslyn Stemmler, Year 3/4A – Margot Armstrong, Mrs Helen Saint, Year 4/5C – Mrs Traci Cash, Year 5/6J – Mr Jon Denman, Year 5/6D – Mrs Sharon Denman
Specialist Staff: Teacher Librarian (0.4FTE) – Mrs Roslyn Stemmier, Physical Education – Mr Barry Donaldson, Music – Mr Brett Gredig, Instrumental Music – Ms Vanessa Bartley, Languages (Japanese) – Mrs Vanessa English, Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy – Mrs Anita Pauli, Special Education Teacher – Mrs Anita Pauli, Guidance Officer – Mrs Lisa Holt, Speech Pathologist – Miss Tegan Bowen, Teacher Aides: Mrs Donna Quade, Mrs Lorna Weir, Mrs Cheryl Russell, Mrs Glenda Askin, Ms Amanda Parle, Mrs Sonia Debortoli, Groundsmen – Mr Des Askin
Cleaners – Mrs Debbie Mogg, Mrs Joanne Warren, Mrs Sharon Chalmers
Crossing Supervisors: Ms Tammy Dickens, Mrs Sharon Chalmers

CURRICULUM 2016

In 2016, English, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History will continue to be based on the Australian Curriculum. Health and Physical Education, Music and Languages will also now be based on the Australian Curriculum. The other learning areas of Technology and the Arts (Art and Drama) will continue to be based on the Essential Learnings. We will be becoming familiar with the new learning area of Digital Technologies and undertaking appropriated professional development in this area.

Fact sheets are available for parents and carers on the Australian Curriculum website at http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources-and-support/parent-information/introduction Withcott State School Curriculum priorities include Reading Comprehension, Writing and Numeracy.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance at school is expected and is essential to resilient work habits and to ensure maximum access to the education program. Education Queensland policy and procedures require schools to document student absences and the reasons for such. If a child is to be absent from school, please telephone the office directly on the day of the absence (or prior if aware) on 4614 9300 or on the 24 hour Absence Line on 4614 9360. If we do not receive a call or a note explaining a child’s absence, administrative assistants may follow up with a phone call to enquire as to the reason for the absence. After arriving at school, children may not leave the grounds during the school day without the permission of the principal. Parents need to sign a register in the office foyer if a child is late or is being picked up early. Parents also need to complete a slip for late arrival/early departure of a child.

ABSENCES MORE THAN TEN CONSEQUENTIAL DAYS

To comply with legislation, when a student is absent, or plans to be absent, for more than ten consecutive school days for any reason, the parent must comply with their obligations in respect to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation by either: seeking an exemption from their obligation, or by negotiating with the principal to make an alteration to a student’s educational program; or by seeking to arrange a flexible arrangement for the student. Parents will be asked to complete an Exemption Form to be authorised by the Principal where approval is granted.

PARENT INFORMATION EVENING

We will be holding Parent Information Sessions on Tuesday 9 February commencing at 6:30pm. Each class teacher will present a 30-minute overview of how their classroom operates, expectations for students and the curriculum focus for the term. The session will be repeated to enable parents to attend a number of class presentations. The night will run as follows:

5:30 pm  Session 1
7:00 pm  Changeover break
7:10 pm  Session 2 (Repeat of Session 1)
7:40 pm  Conclude

ASSEMBLY 2016

Whole school assemblies will take place in the auditorium each Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. Important messages are shared and achievements are celebrated. All welcome.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING (PBL)

Withcott State School is Positive Behaviour for Learning School (PBL). PBL is a process of implementing a framework that provides us with an opportunity to review and build up our current behaviour management program. The goal of PBL is to improve and maximise academic and social outcomes for all students. Part of the PBL process is to define and explicitly teach expected school behaviour, develop systems for acknowledging positive student behaviour and employ consistent procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Withcott State School is now in its third year of PBL. For a more detailed explanation of how PBL looks in our school, please read the Responsible Behaviour Plan available on the school website under Support and Resources.
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE
With the exception of students arriving/departing by bus, students are not permitted onsite until 8:00 am. Parents are welcome to drop-off students from 8:00 am onwards when playground duty commences. Similarly, in the afternoon, students are expected to be picked-up or on their way home by 3:15 pm. Before and after school care can be accessed at the Witchoth Early Childhood Care Centre adjacent to the school (places are limited).

STAFF CAR PARK
Pedestrians must not enter or use the staff car park as a thoroughfare. Similarly, the staff car park is not to be used for dropping off and picking up children or delivering messages.

SCHOOL CROSSING
Please ensure that all students and families use the designated crossing at the front of the school and follow the instructions of the Crossing Supervisors at all times. Please, always drive with great care in front of the school.

PARKING OUT FRONT OF SCHOOL
The conclusion of the school day is extremely busy with a high volume of traffic out front of the school. Please take note of the legal areas for parking as drivers frequently park illegally in front of the school gate on the white painted area. Please also note the 2 minute parking limit in the turnaround area. This is not an area for extended parking. Staff and crossing supervisors do not enjoy asking motorists to move but will do so to ensure the safety of the area.

STUDENT INFORMATION
Please ensure you keep the office informed of any changes to your child’s information, e.g. change of address, emergency contact numbers etc. It is vital that our student information is kept up to date.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC
We are excited to be commencing another year of the Instrumental Music Program at Witchooth State School. Ms Bartley is once again our Instrumental Music Teacher and will be here on Tuesdays. The commencement of lessons and Concert Band rehearsals are detailed as follows:

Week 1 - 2 Feb Continuing students commence lessons. Senior Concert Band Rehearsal – arrive 8.00am for 8.15am start.

Week 2 - 9 Feb No lessons for continuing students. Senior Concert Band Rehearsal - arrive 8.00am for 8.15am start. Beginning students commence lessons.

Week 4 - 16 Feb All students attend lessons. Senior Concert Band rehearsal - arrive 8.00am for 8.15am start. Junior Concert Band Rehearsal - arrive 1.15pm after eating lunch.

Vanessa Bartley, Instrumental Music Teacher

BOOKLISTS
All items on the booklist are required for teaching and learning. Certain ‘brands’ are specified to ensure that the students use quality items. Cheaper alternatives often don’t perform to the same level of quality. Please ensure that all items are purchased now and brought into classrooms. Photocopy paper and tissues may be kept directly to the office.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS
Teachers are the first point of contact for issues concerning your child so please introduce yourselves when you can. If you wish to discuss something at length, it is appreciated if you phone to make a mutually convenient time. Please note that on a Tuesday afternoon, teachers are required to attend a teaching staff meeting at 3:15 pm and will generally not be available after this time. Should you require an appointment with the Principal, please phone to make a mutually convenient time.

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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
Religious instruction classes for students in years 1 – 6 will be conducted each Tuesday (commencing next week) from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm. Students are allocated to these classes according to the information provided on the Parent Notice for Religious Instruction/Enrolment Form, unless the school is advised otherwise in writing. Classes are held for: Roman Catholic faith (co-ordinated by Father McClure) using the authorised programs Step by Step, Sunday Scriptures Alive, and The Complete Children’s Liturgy Book for the Years A, B, C; and a Combined group (co-ordinated by Mrs Jenny Hanson) representing the Church of Christ, Anglican, Uniting Church, Lutheran, and Baptist faiths and using the authorised program Connect.

Students who are not participating in religious instruction undertake supervised school work.

P&C NEWS
Welcome back from the P&C. We have an exciting year ahead of us. Please check out the Facebook page supported by the P&C – ‘Wonthaggi State School Community’. Please like and share the page so that we can grow the community interest. This page is for sharing positive things about our great school. The P&C will use it for communicating events, meetings etc and the school will also be posting important items. Please note that this is not a forum for complaints and grievances. Any posts that are negative and/or inappropriate will be immediately deleted. No photos or names of staff and/or students are to be posted for privacy reasons and the page cannot be used for local business advertising.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment has clear guidelines around the use of social media.

The State Government Election is on Saturday 19 March. The school is again being used as a local polling booth and as such, the P&C will be putting up a Bake Sale and Sausage Sizzle. We are using this event to raise additional funds for our school students. We would love to get some help on the day if you have an hour to spare. More information to come.

COMMUNITY NOTICES
Community Notices are published in good faith, though not necessarily endorsed by the school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2016 - TERM 1
5 Feb P&C Welcome BBQ (Date to be confirmed)
9 Feb Parent Information Sessions 6:30pm
16 Feb P&C Meeting (AGM) 7pm in staff room.
17 Feb Leadership Assembly
19 Feb Zone Swimming Carnival (Details to follow)
2 Mar Regional Swimming Carnival
10 Mar School Photos
18 Mar Zone Cricket, Kangaroo, Softball Carnival
19 Mar Polling Booth Bake Sale & Sausage Sizzle
24 Mar Final Day Term 1

2016 - TERM 2
11 Apr School Resumes
25 Apr Anzac Day
2 May Labour Day
10-12 May NAPLAN (Year 3 & 5)
20-23 Jun Life Education
24 Jun Final Day Term 2

WELCOME BBQ RSVP - FRIDAY 5 FEB 5:30PM - JUNIOR UNDERCOVER AREA FREE SAUSAGE SIZZLE & SOFT DRINK, ALL WELCOME!

Yes, I / we will be attending.

adults ______________
children ______________

FAMILY NAME ______________________________