



From The Principals' Desk

Dear Families,

Prep Swimming!

This week we see our Prep students heading off to the warm water swimming program at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, a centre selected a few years back for its highly regarded and efficient program structure and group size.

Living where we do, so close to the water, we value the importance of our kids knowing how to safely engage in and around aquatic environments so that they may get the most out of the beautiful, local environment in which we live. The program aims to build our students' confidence in the water through a range of activities aimed at not only improving swimming competencies but importantly, developing safety awareness as well. With a program like this, the first few days can be a little frantic as the swimming tutors sort out groups and individuals before settling into their daily half hour lesson. Of course, the learning of swimming skills is only one part of it. Importantly we need to remember that the program is as much about building independence and resilience as it is about swimming itself. To this end, we send out our enormous thanks to our band of wonderful parents who have volunteered their time to help our staff at the pool. The swimming program at Willy has always been well supported which is gratefully appreciated as you can imagine that changing up to 80 kids at any given time can be quite tricky. Nevertheless, we'll be on the lookout for great growth in every child's sense of responsibility and independence. We wish all of the kids, teachers and parents the best time and happy swimming!

School Council discussions - Our four-legged friends

Willy Primary is a great school to walk to every day and we encourage this habit in everyone. Many of our families also use this time to walk their family dog. We encourage this, although there are a few important things we'd ask that you consider when doing so.

Whilst Williamstown is rather a dog-friendly community, we have a significant number of children who are fearful and anxious about dogs. Despite our annual positive messaging and education sessions around Pet Ownership in the junior school, children react differently to dogs.

Recently, we have noticed more and more dogs coming to school. Unfortunately, we have also experienced a number of significant incidences, from distressed, barking dogs, to forgotten or on-the-loose dogs. Sadly, we have encountered fearful students and indeed students who have been bitten. As a school, we need to fulfil an exceptional duty of care for all students and ensure that harm minimisation strategies are employed to reduce any risk that may arise.

As you know, dogs are not permitted onto the school grounds at any time, whether on a lead or not, or in their owner's arms or not. The only dogs that may enter the grounds are those supporting visually impaired individuals or being trained for similar work, and permission from the Principals must firstly be sought.

Additionally, subject to the circumstances of each class and the approval by the leadership team, puppies or other pets *may* visit the classroom for a special show 'n' tell session.

In recent times, we have noticed a growing prevalence of dogs being tethered to the school boundary fence, very often on the footpath, and often close to the school gates. For any child or person who is 'animal shy', this can create difficulties for them as they access the school. Whilst many dogs are friendly and playful, occasionally they may be ill or become stressed and fearful themselves, leading them to express their feelings through unfriendly barks or snaps. This can be very upsetting for our children (and the dogs) and can lead to some very difficult and unnecessary situations, a high level of stress for all.

In the interest of helping us create a safe learning environment for all children, we ask families to ensure no dog is left unattended. Ever. Even the friendliest dog can have 'off' days and it's just not worth the risk of

injury or distress. Additionally, we also ask that dogs are kept well away from the school gates, enabling easy access. Fortunately, Willy families are sensible and considerate of others and the parents of children (and dogs!) always work through difficult issues thoughtfully. Dogs on leads, away from gates, *with their responsible owners*, can ensure every child can pass by a dog safely, even those friendly, exuberant ones, ready to say hello with a jump and a lick!

We also ask **all parents** (not only dog-owners) to have discussions with their children to reinforce the message of always seeking the owners' permission **before approaching an animal**. This way, our dogs get a say as well! Finally, we share with you [The Hobson's Bay Community Local Law 2015](#) – apparently significant fines can be received for dogs being left unattended.

We thank our School Councilors for their robust and considered discussion around this topic. At the end of every school day, we want everyone happy and safe.

Parent Opinion Survey extended!

Every year at this time, we invite families to provide us with feedback about our school via a DET generated survey which explores a wide range of issues and key performance areas of a school. The annual *Parent Opinion Survey* also provides an opportunity for families to contribute comments on what they like, or what they might like to change at the school. A sample of about 85 families, computer generated, will receive an email link to the survey and we strongly encourage, (plead, coax, cajole, and badger) each family to **complete the online survey by SUNDAY September 2nd**.

The use of opinion data to monitor school performance and guide future directions is a very important step towards making our school the best it can possibly be. For many years we have conducted annual and anonymous opinion surveys for staff, children and parents and we use the information to drive school improvements. The results from all surveys are analysed and discussed at school council and considered by the leadership team, staff and the DET.

So, yes, absolutely, the results of these surveys do have an impact. We thank you in anticipation for your assistance!

Of course you don't have to wait to be invited to offer your feedback. If ever you'd like to share your thoughts, ideas or opinions with us, we encourage you to [contact the school](#).

Reminders:

- This week we welcome Jordan Harvey to Williamstown. Jordan is working with Bec's class, 5/6 D and will be with us until the end of the year. Welcome Jordan.
- We also welcome Kate Macleod who will be working with Helen Thomaidis in 2B while Liz is away on a Principal Internship. It is great to have Kate slip into the team so easily.
- The VCAA has recently confirmed that 2018 NAPLAN results will be available this week. We expect the delivery of Individual Student Reports (ISRs) to schools will commence from Wednesday 29 August and school results will be available from Thursday 30 August.
- Parents must contact the school to inform us of their child's absence ASAP. An automated text message will now be sent to families on the same day their child is absent, via the Compass app.

Enjoy the week! We hope all our Willy Dads have a wonderful day on Sunday!

Mat and Andrea

Dates to Remember

Dates to remember: Term 3-

Week 7- 27.08.18

- Mon-Fri: **Prep Swimming** Program
Tues: Year 1 excursion to **Ceres**
Wed District Athletics
Thurs.: **Father's Day** stall
Fri: Prep Father's Day morning / afternoon tea

Week 8- 03.09.18 National eSmart Week!

- Mon-Fri: **Prep Swimming** Program
Tues: Yr. 1 Celebration Picnic
Wed: Yr. 3 / 4 Community Environmental Excursion
Fri: Junior School Council (JSC) Pyjama Day Dress-Up fundraiser
Gold Coin donation goes to Kids Help Line

Week 9- 10.09.18

- Mon-Fri: Year 3/4 **Zoo Snoozes (Camp program)**
Tues & Wed: Prep – Don't Move Puppet theatre incursion
Wed: **Kids Share Open Afternoon (3:30-4:00pm)** – come along and see what your child has been learning this term.

Week 10- 17.09.18

- Mon-Wed Year 3 / 4 Zoo Snoozes
Tues: **School council meeting** 6:30pm
Wed: Year 2 Sleepover at school!
Thur: Senior Music Concert (Years 3 – 6)
Fri: **Footy Day!** – Wear your team's colours!
End of Term 3, early dismissal @ 2:30pm