Dear Parents/Carers and Grandparents,

Last week was a very busy week—Year 5/6 Camp, Music workshops, Families Activity Day, National Simultaneous Story Time and Reading workshops for parents.

The Year 5/6 Camp was held at Batchelor and although I did not get down there this year, I did hear that the students were well behaved and enjoyed the camp. They all came back extremely tired, so I hope they rested well over the weekend. Thanks to the three teachers—Mr Brunton, Ms Stewart and Ms Rummery and our dad Gary Wrenn who accompanied the students.

On Monday last week John Morrison and his partner Jacki Cooper ran some drumming and singing workshops with our students. The students learnt a lot about music and the joy it can bring into your life. Thanks to The Smith Family who provide these workshops for our students.

On Wednesday last week Marg Ridel facilitated a workshop for our parents showing them how they can teach their child to read at home and how they can support their child with reading once they start school. This was attended by about 15 parents with their children and I know the parents learnt lots of useful ways to teach their children about the love of reading. This workshop will be held each Wednesday in the Gray Family Centre so contact Kylie if you are interested.

We all loved the National Simultaneous Story Time on Wednesday where Lia Finocchiaro read the story and the staff acted out the story on stage. What great fun.

On Friday last week we had our Family Activity Day as part of Families Week. We were very fortunate to have the US Marines here helping us with all the fun activities and enjoying the experience as much as we did.

What a wonderful week it was—lots of learning and lots of fun.

Sayonara—Sue Beynon, Principal and Sharon Chin, Assistant Principal

PLEASE NOTE THE SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED ON FRIDAY 20TH JUNE

FREE DRESS DAY & DISCO
FUNDRAISING FOR BAMZI
FRIDAY 6TH JUNE
GOLD COIN DONATION

SCHOOL SPORT WRIST BANDS FOR SALE
FRONT OFFICE @ $2 EACH

Every Child, Every Day - improving student enrolment, attendance and participation is everybody’s responsibility and everyone’s business.
PARENTS/CARERS

If there is an evacuation alarm before school please walk your child immediately to the soccer oval where teachers will meet their class. If it is raining then walk your child immediately to the assembly hall.

If there is an evacuation alarm at the end of the day all teachers will walk the class to the soccer oval and parents must also go to the oval. Once at the oval, parents may take your child after informing the class teacher. However, to leave you must not re-enter the school grounds. No-one is to remain on the school grounds until the all clear is given by the fire brigade.

If your child is a Preschooler then walk them to the car park besides the Preschool.

Thank you for your cooperation in these safety procedures.

CANTEEN ORDERS

Please ensure these orders are written out at home or by the parent in the classroom. Tutors need to be listening to reading first thing in the morning and cannot be writing out lunch or recess orders.

Thank you for supporting us in this matter.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Black shorts are now part of Gray School’s compulsory uniform. Please ensure that your student/s comply with our uniform policy, per the Parent Handbook (below).

“School Uniform is mandatory for all NT schools. Uniforms support self-esteem, promote school team spirit and are designed for economy and convenience. Uniform items are sold at the Front Office. When representing the school, and on excursions, uniforms must be worn. If this presents difficulties, they can be borrowed from the school for the day under special circumstances. The uniform consists of a royal blue polo knit and crew neck shirt and black skirt or shorts. Covered shoes must be worn."

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Somerville
the courage to be…

National Families Week
15-21 May

National Families Week
Friends at FAST
Tea Towel order are due **Friday 13th June**.

The unique souvenir tea towels contain pictures drawn by all the students and staff at our school.
This is a wonderful memento and meaningful gift for parents, relatives and special friends.

**Tea Towel $12**
It's not okay to be away ... nor to be late to school

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem.

One of the most important things you can do to ensure your child has a bright future is to make sure he or she goes to school everyday—and gets there on time.

It sounds simple, but it's true.

The correlation between school attendance and children's achievement levels is well-established. The more time kids spend at school, the more likely they are to experience school success.

Conversely, according to a report from the Victorian Auditor General, students who are regularly absent from school are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school early, and of experiencing long-term unemployment.

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem. Also, many teachers tell me, it's often the kids who can least afford to take time off school who are most likely to be serial absentees.

Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools—and much of it is parent-condoned.

It's hard to get an accurate picture across the country but it would appear that Australian students miss an average of between 12 and 15 days per school year, with parent-condoned absenteeism highest among young primary-aged children.

That adds up to a year's lost schooling over the school-life of a child.

In today's highly competitive world, this rate of absenteeism is alarming, putting our kids at a distinct disadvantage.

That's not a reason to be away!

It's now commonplace for children to stay away from school for reasons that would have been unheard of just twenty years ago. These include staying away to celebrate their own or a sibling's birthday, being absent because they stayed up too late watching television, going shopping for clothes, an extended long weekend and kids not wanting to take part in a sports day or special school event.

This type of absenteeism sends a strong message to kids that parents don't really value learning or their children's school experiences.

Australian kids only spend 15% of their total time at school. They spend more time asleep than they do at school. So we need to maximise every day to get full value. That means turning up to school every day, on time.

Being late is not okay either

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late.

Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day, with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do, valuable learning time is lost.

It takes strong parenting...

As a parent myself I know how persuasive children of all ages can be when it comes to taking a day off school. It takes a strong will to resist the persistent pressure that kids can bring to bear, particularly if they play the guilt card with comments such as "It's not fair that I have to go to school today because aunty is coming to visit!"

Nicely try. But the answer should be "No!"

As parents we need to make a commitment that our kids make the most of their precious time at school. That means that we send them to school every day, on time and ready to make the most of the school day.

Of course, there will be times, such as illness or genuinely-extenuating family circumstances, when kids should be away. But these need to be a rarity rather than the norm.

It's reassuring to know that you increase their chances of future success just by making sure they turn up to school every day. And of course regular school attendance also helps kids prepare for the workforce, where it will be expected that they turn up each day work-ready. The real world is unforgiving of those who stay away with NO EXCUSE.