Dear Parents, Carers and Grandparents

Unfortunately this week I need to write about a big concern at our school.

Attendance is a big focus at Gray School for two main reasons. Firstly many of our students come to school without excellent Literacy and Numeracy skills. This often means that students start Preschool already behind academically. Therefore these students need to attend school every day in order to catch up on this learning. Other students have attended many schools by the time they are in Year 3 and due to disrupted learning they are behind academically. Other students spend their time engaged in inappropriate behaviour rather than learning and this means they are behind academically. For all these reasons students need to attend school every day so they have the best opportunity to achieve success in Literacy and Numeracy and to learn appropriate social skills.

The second reason why attendance is a big focus at Gray School is that our staffing is based on our student attendance. The expected attendance for every student is 90% which means students attend school 9 days out of 10 in a fortnight. When our whole school attendance falls below this magic number of 90% we lose teachers. If you look at the attendance figures to the left of this column it shows our attendance for last week. As you can see five grades were 90% or above and 3 grades were below that 90% which meant our whole school attendance fell below the magic number of 90% - only just - 89.79% - but still below. When this happens most weeks of the term the result is that we lose teachers for the next semester.

Unfortunately as a result of our low student attendance we will lose two teachers next semester. The teachers are Mrs Sarah Cox and Mr Leon Syme. This is not something any of us are happy about and therefore all staff will be involved in an attendance blitz throughout next semester. This means parents must ring the school if your child is absent. We will be involving the attendance team to support families that have chronic low attendance.

Have a wonderful week—Sue Beynon, Principal and Sharon Chin, AP

WHAT’S HAPPENING
Public Holiday (May Day) - Mon 10th
Twilight Sports - Thurs 20th June
Pupil free day - Friday 21st June

EXCURSIONS
Territory Wildlife Park
Pre Casey Rm 3 - Tues 4th June
Reader’s/Writers Picnic @ PSC
3/Waters - Thurs 6th June
Leanyer Water Park
Year 3/4 Classes - Wed 12th June
Marlows Lagoon
T/B, T/F, T/1B - Mon 17th June

Gray Gazette
Learning with Respect, Pride and Teamwork

”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, 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.”

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).

Every Child, Every Day - improving student enrolment, attendance and participation is everybody’s responsibility and everyone’s business.
A big thanks to Lia Finnochiarro, MLA for Goyder for organizing for the US Marines to work with our students at Gray Primary School. This term they are working in Year 5 Rummery doing fitness activities, reading and mentoring. The students loved their time with the US Marines last Friday. This battalion is from Hawaii.

It was great fun, they are so polite and we are lucky to have them in the school. Shakira

We had an awesome time, they wore us out with the fitness but it was good fun.—Brandon
Good Beginnings Australia is a National charity, building better outcomes for children in vulnerable communities through a range of early intervention programs for families.

These programs include: **Play2 Learn, Family Support, Community Connections and Toy Library**

**Play2Learn**

Play2Learn is a supported play session where play based learning is designed around what the children are interested in, to help their development. The sessions are facilitated by an Early Childhood worker and Family support worker.

At Play2Learn we believe that by providing children with a secure and happy environment, where they are supported to develop their intellectual, social, emotional and physical skills, they will become confident and competent individuals.

Children and parents can participate in experiences together, strengthening relationships between children, parents and caregivers.

Good Beginnings will support you to build on your existing knowledge, skills and the resources that are available to you. Create connections and relationships in the community, both with other parent and community supports and services.

**Monday:** 9am – 11am Moulden Primary School (OSHC Building)

**Play2Learn Birth—4yrs** (Please bring a piece of fruit to share)

**Tuesday:** 9am — 11am Gray Primary School (Good Beginnings Demountable)

**Play2Learn Birth—4yrs** (Please bring a piece of fruit to share)

**Wednesday:** 9am — 11am Gray Primary School (Good Beginnings Demountable)

Baby Play2Learn which is run in conjunction with Maternal Health Nurse, who will answer any questions you may have in regards to your Childs health and development Birth—12 months.

(Morning tea provided)

**Toy Library**

**Thursday:** 9am – 11am

The Toy Library aims to provide a service to families and children in the Palmerston area, by providing a mobile and outreach support service/s. Parents will be able to borrow toys from a mobile toy library that operates from at least 2 locations, including but not limited to, parks and the Gray Op Shop with the flexibility to adapt locations depending on the needs of families.

**Friday:** 9am – 11am (Dream Time Kids) A Play2learn group for Indigenous families with children Birth—4yrs

Venue: Gray Primary School Good Beginnings Demountable.

(Morning tea provided)

*All Good Beginnings programs are provided free of charge*

For more information please contact the office on 0889327022 Mobile 0417200170
SPORT HOUSE BADGES/WRISTBANDS

Preschool will be selling sport house badges for $2 each. They can be purchased at recess, lunch & after school from the Preschool. Also sport wristbands can be purchased from the office for $2 each.

FRUITY GLOW FOODS - LUNCHBOX IDEAS.

Did you know…?
One serve of fruit = 1 medium fruit or 2 small fruits.

Kids aged 5-12 years need 1-2 serves of fruit every day for growth and good health. Fruit is a great snack to fuel active bodies for fun and learning at school.

You don’t need to rely on expensive pre-packaged foods for kids. Try these simple lunchbox ideas and serve up fruit as a snack every day:
> Fresh fruit cut into bite-sized pieces which are easy to eat before the playtime bell!
> Small bunch of grapes.
> ½ - 1 cup of tinned fruit salad served in a small container with a spoon.

For pre-schoolers, just grate, steam or cook hard crunchy foods like apple, carrot and celery to prevent choking.

HEALTHY GLOW FOODS - YUMMY LUNCHBOX IDEAS.

Did you know…?
One serve of vegies = ½ cup cooked veg, 1 medium potato or 1 cup of salad.

Primary school aged kids need up to 5 serves of veg every day for good health. Vegies and salad are a great snack to fuel kids’ bodies and minds at school.

You don’t need to rely on expensive pre-packaged foods for kids. Try these lunchbox ideas and serve up veg and salad as a snack every day:
> Finger salad with bite sized pieces of veg such as raw mushroom, cherry tomatoes, crunchy lettuce leaves, cucumber and carrot.
> Veggie sticks like capsicum, celery, carrot and cucumber are all popular with reduced-fat dips such as hommus, tzatiki and...

LOST PROPERTY

We have a collection of jumpers, water bottles, hats, bags and left over items from school camp. If you have misplaced something please come in and check our Lost Property basket as any items not claimed by the end of term will be donated to the Red Cross.

115TH PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Filipino Australian Association of the NT invites you to come along for the 115th Philippine Independence Day Dinner Dance- featuring dinner, cultural performances and dancing!

Saturday 8th June 7pm
Filipino Community Centre
Batten Road, Marrara

For tickets contact:
Oscar - 0414964768 or Judith - 0448886701

Ticket Prices:
Members $40
Non-members $45
Senior members $30
Senior non-members $35
Children 12 and under $15
Peer groups are groups of friends of about the same age, often with similar interests. We all belong to a range of peer groups at different times throughout life. Peer pressure is the influence a group has on its members to fit into a particular way of thinking and acting. The influence of peer groups increases as children move into adolescence. They can have a very positive influence, and they may also influence young people in ways you don’t like.

Many parents worry about peer pressure, but peer pressure is not about a group forcing someone to do something against their will. It is more about a person choosing to do something because they want to belong and feel valued. It helps for parents to understand the importance of peer groups. Encouraging their positive aspects and learning how to reduce negative ones can help you provide the best support. It can reduce worries for you too!

**Benefits of peer groups**

For young people, a peer group is a major source of security where they form their own identity and learn to become independent from parents. In peer groups, they learn to take positive risks and form their own ideas and opinions. It is where they practice how to get on in the world and gradually become adults who are able to make their own decisions.

It’s good for parents to understand the importance of peer groups. There can be a great benefit because they help young people to:

- Meet new people and learn to make friends
- Feel they belong and are valued and accepted for who they are
- Get to know their limits and what they’re willing to accept
- Improve their ability to make their own choices
- Feel secure and increase their self-confidence
- Feel understood by others who are going through the same things
- Have a safe place to take positive risks and test out values and ideas
- Increase skills in becoming independent
- Be involved in new and positive things such as music, activities and other interests

**Things parents worry about**

There are lots of things parents worry about during this period of their young person’s development. Things can be very different as a child begins to need to express themselves more independently.

- The amount of time young people spend with friends: Young people often spend all day with their friends at school or doing activities and then come home and spend hours on the phone or internet with them. It’s normal for young people to spend more time with peers than with their families at this stage.
- Losing your influence: Even though the information they get isn’t always correct, young people will often see the values and advice of their peers more than from parents. This is particularly so for things that are trendy or embarrassing, or which they think parents won’t approve of. It could be things like smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs, or having sex. If you are used to coming to your advice it can feel like your views are not important to them anymore.

**Helping parents be their best**

- Practice getting along with others and learning to give and take
- Learn about dating

**Avoiding problems**

**Phone and internet use**

In our technologically driven world, mobile phones and internet social networking sites have replaced the old way of keeping in touch with friends. You may need to work out a way to manage the use of phone and internet that works for the whole family. For phones, this may include setting time limits for calls, having certain times when long calls are OK, using “call waiting”, and agreeing on times when mobile phones are turned off. For the internet, it is very important that young people know how to use the internet and social networking sites safely.

When young people hang out at your house

There are advantages when your son or daughter’s friends hang out at your place that you don’t want your house invaded. Some parents have found it helpful to:

- Arrange rooms to provide space and privacy for young people, as well as other house members
- Keep plenty of low-cost healthy food available such as bread, cereal, cheese and fruit
- Set some “house rules” with their input. Discuss what to do when the rules are broken
- Be clear about:
  - what rules are not OK in your house
  - the family rules for using the phone and computer
  - the use of alcohol. Look alcohol away if necessary
  - sexless behaviour in the house. Remember, in South Australia the legal age of consent for sex is 17 years.
When you are worried about a peer group

You may not be comfortable with your young person's choice of peer group. This may be because a peer group is into risky things such as using alcohol or drugs, skipping school, shoplifting or stealing property. Some parents try to entice kids and monitor activities to stop their young person hanging out with the "wrong" groups. If you do this, you could risk them avoiding you, tuning you out or becoming more determined to be part of the group. Changing peer groups is like crossing them and it is likely you will lose some of your influence on them.

Here are some suggestions:

> Keep the communication open. Be willing to listen. Get to know the friends and groups who are important to him.
> Think about whether your concerns about his friends are really important. Don't get caught up in minor things such as how they dress.
> If you believe your concerns are serious, talk to him about the behaviour in the group that worries you rather than criticising the friends.
> Talk with him about potential consequences of the behaviour. Look at both the short-term risks and consequences and also how this might affect his future, e.g. getting into trouble with police.
> Show him you trust him; if he breaks your trust ask him to suggest ways to earn it again. We all make mistakes and need the chance to learn from them.
> Talk to someone who can help if you feel unable to change a tense situation.

Reminders

> Keep communicating. Listen to your young person's point of view and ask them to listen to yours.
> Let them know you are there to support, whatever happens.
> Understand the benefits of peer groups, how to encourage positive involvement and how to reduce any negatives.
> Support your young person in understanding the values that are important for them when making choices.
> Just be aware that friends and more often than not welcome into your home.
> Have clear house rules for when friends are hanging out at your house.
> Agree on a way that works for the whole family for phones and the internet.
> Remember, we are all in peer groups; it can be hard to go against a peer group, even for adults who have much more confidence.

Contacts

Youth Healthline: tel 1300 131 719
Kids Helpline: Tel 1800 555 800

Websites

www.yh.com
For parenting and child health information
www.parenting.sa.gov.au
For other Parent Easy Guides
www.kidshelp.com.au
Kids Helpline

For more information
Parent Helpline 1800 364 100
Parenting SA
Children, Youth and Women's Health Service
Telephone (free) 8301 1660
Internet: www.parenting.sa.gov.au
Revised 04/10
Parent Easy Guides are free in South Australia
Department of Health, Government of South Australia
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