Dear Parents,

A very big welcome to the 2015 school year.

I know I say this every year, (and I mean it!), but thank you and congratulations everyone on the excellent standard of uniform. We really are the envy of many schools in this regard. The kids look great. I know this can only happen with the support of both parents and students. Let’s work to keep it that way.

NO TUCKSHOP FOR THE NEXT MONDAY.

NO SAUSAGE SIZZLE ON FRIDAYS UNTIL A ROSTER IS ORGANISED.

Our wonderful volunteer sausage sizzle coordinator, Kaz Field, is unable to continue in her role this year due to work commitments. A huge thank you to Kaz for the time and effort she’s put into Sausage Sizzle. Kaz has done more than her share – coordinating our sausage sizzle since 2008!

We use the bulk of our sausage sizzle funds to subsidise the cost of our camps and excursions. I know for a fact that quite a few children would not have attended school camp at all were it not for the assistance of sausage sizzle funds. Kaz is happy to talk to anyone interested to show them the ropes and explain how she’s gone about things.

We’re also looking for a willing team of volunteer Friday “cooks”. Without them, there is no sausage sizzle.

BELL TIMES. WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

8:55 am Move into your classroom to start work.

10:00 am Approximate time to allow students to have their fruit break.

11:00 am Teachers can allow students to start playtime.

11:30 am 5 minutes left to play. Students can leave to start eating time now if they wish.

11:35 am End of playtime. Start eating time. Refill water bottles. Go to the toilet.

11:55 am End of eating time. Move into classroom to start work.

1:30 pm Start of Afternoon Tea. Refill water bottles. Go to the toilet.

1:47 pm End of Afternoon Tea. Move into classroom to start work.

2:55 pm 5 minute warning bell.

3:00 pm End of school day.

COLLECTOR CARDS, TOYS AND OTHER JUNK

Collector cards, toys, novelty rulers/rubbers/brandname caps, etc are NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL.

A good rule of thumb is that, if an item is important to you, (or your child), and we haven’t asked for it to be brought to school,” keep it at home!” After all, if the item stays at home, nothing can happen to it at school.

Please understand that teaching time is lost if this rule is ignored. On top of that, the outcome is nearly always negative in some form.

At Sharon we expect teachers to teach and students to learn. We don’t want them spending time involved in a drawn out investigation tracking down items that shouldn’t have been here in the first place.

Experience has shown that the best solution is to confiscate valuables until the end of term when this rule is ignored. We don’t particularly like doing this, but it has proven to be the best way to stop the valuables coming which, in turn, protects our learning time.

If you bring valuable items to school, expect them to be confiscated until the end of term.

HOT DIGGITY DOGS TOMORROW!

Tomorrow, Thursday, 29 January will be a hot dog day for those students who wish to have one. Orders will take place in the same way as last year. Orders must be placed before school. Students from the Maccs classroom will set up a desk for orders in each of the classrooms from 8:30 am until the bell rings at 8:55 am. The students from the Maccs classroom need to be back in their classroom by 8:55 to begin lessons. $2 per hot dog. No ice-block deals.

ABSENCE NOTES

Student absences must be entered into the school database and downloaded directly to Education Qld as part of our enrolment census a few times per year.

Any absence from school including late arrivals or early departures must be explained by a note from the parents or a verbal explanation by the parents.

If there is no explanation received, an “unexplained” absence must be recorded on the rolls and in the school database. If left unexplained it then becomes an “unauthorised absence”. The Principal is obliged to follow up these unauthorised absences and report them to District Office.

We’re simply not allowed to take the word of a child or sibling. We must hear it, (or read it), directly from Mum or Dad.

STUDENT INFORMATION UPDATE

If you have changed phone numbers, emergency contacts, email addresses or work details in the past year, please send a note along to school with the new details so that we can update our emergency contact files.
STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

We have 129 students enrolled at our school. We have another whose family has advised us that they are returning next week. This leaves us with an enrolment of 130 – fantastic! Education Queensland waits until they have Day 8, (Thursday, 5 February), enrolment figures before they make firm decisions on staffing. 124 students means 5 classroom teachers, (including myself). 125 students results in the school picking up an extra teacher for 5 days a fortnight to allow release time for me to keep up with administrative tasks. 128 students not only allows us the benefits of this “1/2 load” teacher but also earns us a 6th classroom teacher. If we hold our numbers of 130 up until Thursday, 5 February, we will be staffed with 6.5 classroom teachers for 2015. Assuming this is the case, our staffing arrangements will be as follows:

Classroom
“Salt & Preppers” – Mrs Michelle Lester (Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday) & Mrs Tarnia Boving (Thursday & Friday).
“PSs” - Mrs Janette Puie & Mrs Wendy Searle.
“Lewis’s Learners” – Mrs Shontelle Lewis.
“Macs” - Mr Tony McGovern & Mrs Catriona James-
McGovern
0.5 teacher for administration time release – to be advised.

Support Staff
Learning Support Teacher - Mrs Jane Gray
Teacher Aides - Mrs Sue Arkell, Mrs Margaret Pippia and Ms Sarah-Jane Hicks
Administrative Officer - Mrs Sharon Stapleton
Cleaners – Mrs Cheryl Pearce and Mr Bruce Lavender (replacing Mrs Helen Wendt who is on leave)
Groundsman - Mr Athol Keys.
Gardener – Mr Bruce Lavender
Visiting Physical Education Teacher – Miss Kellie Orreal
Visiting Guidance Officer – Mr Alan Bowmaker
Visiting Technology Teacher – Mrs Kerry Rayner
Visiting Support Teacher Special Needs – Mrs Liz Smith.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE TIMES

Please understand that teachers at Sharon School arrive much earlier than they are compelled to, industrially. However, they do this in order to complete administrative tasks and prepare lessons and activities. Please do not interpret early arrival of teachers as a message that your children will be supervised before school.

THERE IS NO ROSTERED PLAYGROUND DUTY AT SHARON BEFORE SCHOOL. Our bus usually arrives at 8:15am and this is considered a reasonable time for children to start arriving. ASSUME CLASSROOM DOORS WILL REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL 8:00 am.

We also have at least one teacher on duty after school until 3:15 pm. Children who have not been collected by 3:15pm will be taken to the Macs classroom towards the back of the school where they will be supervised until collected by their parents. Please let us know if you will be held up in anyway. We can pass this message straight onto your child which usually puts his/her mind at rest.

UNIFORM

As I mentioned earlier, our standard of uniform on the first two days has been wonderful. A big thanks to all of you (parents and students) for your efforts in this area. As a parent, I’m well aware that this is only possible when both parents and students make a commitment to turning up in uniform.

Sharon enjoys an excellent reputation amongst the education and the wider communities for our standard of dress and we frequently receive positive comments from visitors and “outsiders”. This has not been achieved through any special strategies or tricks, but simply because our community takes pride in their school. Once again, thanks everyone!!

While on the subject of uniform, I wish to make it VERY CLEAR that “Bucket Hats” ARE NOT CONSIDERED TO BE BROAD BRIM HATS AT SHARON STATE SCHOOL. Broad brimmed school hats with either soft or hard brims are sold at the office for $8.

Some children experience “problems” getting a newsletter from school to home. Our website, http://www.sharonss.eq.edu.au, has a link to our latest newsletter if delivery is an issue for you. If you’re really desperate for reading material, you can also download earlier newsletters from the year. However, my preferred method of getting the newsletter out is to email it.

Why?
1/. It saves enormous amounts of time.
   • We have had waits of up to 20 minutes for the newsletter to make it out of the photocopier from the time I’ve pushed “print” on my computer.
   • Paper jams, (at the worst possible time), take time to unravel and that wait time can be even longer.
2/. Students don’t need to wait back, because of the above-mentioned printing delays, to collect newsletters. If needed, I can send the newsletter out after school.
3/. It saves enormous amounts of paper, (pretty obvious really), which, in turn, saves the school money & looks after the environment.
4/. We know it gets home to you.

If you’d like our newsletter emailed to you, please email me at theprincipal@sharonss.eq.edu.au with “newsletter email” in the subject heading. Please keep in mind that, if I email a newsletter to you, I won’t be handing a newsletter out to your child at school.

CALLS/VISITS TO TEACHERS DURING CLASS TIME

Being a small school promotes comfortable interaction between staff and parents. While I certainly want to encourage this relationship, I have an even greater desire to see classroom lessons go through uninterrupted. Even a one minute call or personal visit can disrupt the “flow” of a lesson. This impacts not only on your child but on everyone else in the room.

Thus I’m asking that teachers be left undisturbed during teaching time (9:00 TO 3:00). If the matter is urgent, we will put you through to the classroom. However, if possible, I’d ask that you leave a message with Sharon who will then
pass the message on to the teacher during one of their many extended breaks through the day (Ha!). Alternatively you can call before (preferably after 8:00) or after school. Basically we are endeavouring to keep teaching/learning time sacred. Thanks for your support and understanding here.

**EARLY DEPARTURE/ LATE ARRIVAL BOOK**

We’re required to keep a book showing evidence that parents or carers are aware if students arrive late for school or leave school early. The best way to do this is to ask parents to fill in a sheet showing the time of arrival or departure. Most schools do this at the school office. However, we believe this will only slow down the arrival or departure even further. Thus, the “Late Arrival/Early Departure” Books will be found in each of the classrooms. One for “Salt ‘n’ Preppers” (Mrs Lester & Mrs Boving), one for “PSs”, (Mrs Puie & Mrs Searle), one for “LLs”, (Mrs Lewis, and one for “Macs” (Mrs Mac & Mr Mac).

The students have been shown the location of the books in each room.

![Early Departure/Late Arrival Book](image)

Although it may seem strange at first, please just fill in the information, without seeing the teacher so that the lesson is not interrupted.

**3:00 PM DISMISSAL**

One of the most worrying times of the day for any school is after 3:00 pm. We have children riding home, getting on the bus and walking out to cars. We do have two teachers on duty at this time but children are usually feeling very happy and “bullet proof” at this time of day. We have a bus turn-around area at the front of the school. To allow the buses turning space, cars cannot park in this area.

Parent car parking is in the area in front of the tennis court.

Unfortunately, we can’t possibly eliminate the chance of an accident occurring. However, you can help reduce the chance of accidents occurring by:

1. Parking in front of the tennis court when picking your children up.
2. Walking with your child across Sharon School Road if you need to park on the other side.
3. Backing into your park (if you arrive before 3:00pm). This allows for improved vision when you’re driving away among our fearless, but much-loved, children.
4. Using the "drop and go" area in the front of the old residence only as a quick stop and drop off/pick up area – not park and wait.

Please don’t encourage your children to leave by either the single (bus gate), or double gate on the Bundaberg side of the old residence.

**For Children being Picked Up by Car**

The **ONLY** gate to be used (even if walking with parents) is the double gate in front of the tennis court. If car travellers can use the gates in front of the tennis court, we can have a teacher supervising their departure. It will also reduce the volume of fearless children moving out to cars at any one time. Please do NOT use either of the old residence gates. Please don’t use the **bus gate**, (i.e. the single gate at the front of the school), unless you are using the **bus**.

**For Children Going on the Bus**

Children are to use the single gate at the front of the school.

**Why are we so fussy about gates?**

1. Using one gate for cars allows for a small “bottleneck” at one patrolled gate which, in turn, prevents a situation where children are running to cars from different locations which are not supervised.
2. We are occasionally asked if a particular student was picked up by Dad or if they went home on the bus. Teachers on duty have a much better chance of remembering this if the correct gate is used.

While using alternate gates may feel safe when you are walking your children, please understand that other children feel, (quite understandably), that if it’s good enough for some people to use a different gate, then it must be ok for them to use it as well.

Before long we end up with a situation where teachers are supervising exits being used by only a portion of our students. Why bother?

**WET DAY DISMISSALS**

It is truly amazing the number of times that rain begins to fall at 3:00 p.m. Please be very patient and understanding with us on these days. With impaired vision, excited children, slippery ground and a general feeling of “urgency”, the chances of an accident (which are already bad enough!) increase significantly.

**Children Travelling By Car**

We will gather children under the old building at the front of the school. Yes this does slow down the rate of children leaving – which is exactly what we’re trying to do! We dismiss children when parents come in to the school to walk them out to their car. As the crowd thins over time, we will also look for cars and send children out. Please understand that the delay caused here is intended to make leaving as safe as possible for you and your child(ren).

**DURING WET DAY DISMISSALS, IT IS PREFERABLE TO LEAVE THROUGH THE BUS GATE IF CHILDREN ARE WITH THEIR PARENTS.**

**Children Travelling By Bus**

Once again, we gather these children under the old building at the front of the school. We then walk them in small groups out to the bus. This may mean they get a little wet. However, the only first aid required is a towel and change of clothes when they arrive home.

**Children Travelling By Bicycle/Walking**

Unless I hear otherwise from parents, children are asked to wait until someone collects them or until the rain eases off. We’ve found in the past that these children are usually collected. We’re able to lock bikes up inside classrooms if needed.

Students will NOT be given permission to ride or walk home during electrical storms.
HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH READING

As a parent, you are your child’s first teacher and it is important to encourage your child to read outside of the classroom.

Our school is asking all parents to help their children to improve their reading skills. You can do this by:

- visiting the local library – this is an economical way to provide access to different kinds of books and learning materials and allows children to borrow from a wide range. Your library may also offer a reading program which makes reading an exciting experience and allows them to mix with other children.
- asking ‘why’ questions as you read a book or story together to help your child understand and asking them to think about alternate endings to make much-loved books even more interesting.
- reading to your child(ren) as often as you can and by trying to carry a book with you when away from home.
- letting your child hold the book and turn the pages when you are reading together – this lets your child join in and allows you to talk about the pictures.
- congratulating your child on their reading – this will encourage them to enjoy the reading experience.
- pointing out words as you read them, especially long or interesting words – this will create a word bank or a spelling list which will help your child with their writing.
- making a message board or space at home and encouraging your child to read and leave messages for other family members – this will also give them an important job in the household.

For more tips and online resources about literacy and numeracy visit www.education.qld.gov.au/parents/map/

SMILE AWHILE

Kind regards,

P & C News

Our AGM will be held at 7:00pm on Thursday, 12th February.

All positions will be declared vacant and we will need to fill the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary & Treasurer.

In the past, our P&C has provided funds and equipment for the school as well as providing subsidies for bus trips, funding interactive white boards, air conditioning, adventure playgrounds, Ipads and even a water tank. The P & C also gained a grant to connect electricity to the undercover area and to purchase the large changeable sign for the front of the school. Lunch on break-up day, souvenirs for graduating students as well as organising social functions such as movie nights and discos for our children are all part of what our P & C provide.

This is also a great way to meet other parents and students whilst helping your child's school. We even have a few laughs - often at my expense! Please come along and join us and find out what is happening and what is planned for the coming year.

We welcome all new ideas and suggestions.

The general monthly meeting for February will follow the AGM immediately.