Dear Parents,

CONDOLENCES – WRIGHT FAMILY
On behalf of the staff, parents and wider Sharon School Community, I wish to pass on our deepest sympathies to the Wright family after the sudden & devastating passing of Dean. Words feel empty at times like this, but please be assured that you are not alone and are at the forefront of our thoughts.

CONDOLENCES – McDonnell Family
The staff received more sad news on the passing of past Sharon teacher & friend, Mrs Wendy McDonnell, on Thursday evening. Wendy taught at Sharon from 2001 through to 2013. Our sincere condolences to Wendy’s family and friends.

WELCOME Back
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.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS
The most common question I get asked at this time of year is “How many students do we have?”. The only honest answer is, “I don’t know.” Some students haven’t returned today. Perhaps they’re not coming back at all. Some students, who we don’t yet know about, could turn up in the next few weeks.

The Department of Education and Training waits until they have Day 8, (which this year is Friday, 5 February), enrolment figures before they make firm decisions on staffing.

Up until then, we will be staffed on the 142 students we had with us last year. This means 6 classroom teachers, (including myself) as well as a 0.5 allocation, (which means a teacher working 5 days a fortnight), to allow release time for me to keep up with administrative tasks.

Sounds simple! However, if we should reach the magical number of 153, we will be allocated a 7th classroom teacher. This is good in that it will reduce our class sizes. However, it can also prove to be a problem because I’ll have to shift kids out of the classes they’re currently in, in order to create the new class.

However, it’s not Friday, 5 February just yet. People can arrive or leave without warning. At this stage, all we can do is operate on our current set up until we’re told to change.

At present, our staffing arrangements will be as follows:

Classroom
“Salt & Preppers” – Mrs Michelle Lester (Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday) & Mrs Tarnia Boving (Thursday & Friday).
“Proud Scholars” - Mrs Janette Pulie & Mrs Wendy Searle.
“Lively Learners” – Mrs Alexandra Irwin
“Macs” - Mr Tony McGovern & Mrs Catriona James-McGovern
Curriculum Co-ordination – Mrs Shontelle Lewis

Support Staff
Learning Support Teacher - Mrs Jane Gray
Teacher Aides - Mrs Sue Arkell, Mrs Margaret Pippia, Mrs Janet McDonnell and Mrs Natalie Calder
Administrative Officer - Mrs Sharon Stapleton
Cleaners – Mrs Cheryl Pearce and Mr Ian Stapleton (replacing Mrs Helen Wendt who is on leave)
Groundsman – Mr Bruce Lavender.
Visiting Physical Education Teacher – Miss Kellie Orreal
Visiting Guidance Officer – Mr Geoff Strube
Visiting Technology Teacher – Mrs Kerry Rayner
Visiting Support Teacher Special Needs – Ms Shelley Cope

TERM 2 CHANGES
Term 2 will also see the arrival of a new principal to Sharon State School. After 21+ years, I will be finishing my time at our school at the end of this term.
Am I sad to be leaving? You bet! At the end of the day, however, Sharon is just getting too big for me. I’ve never been a “career” principal and since my arrival in 1994, (good grief!), I’ve been surrounded by a high quality, dedicated staff, terrific students and a wonderful community who have allowed me to work primarily as a teacher who might have to do a bit of “principaling” now and then.
Despite the loss of a year level last year, and falling enrolments in other schools, Sharon has just kept growing! As a result, the role has evolved to the point where I now believe our school & community is best served by someone who works primarily as a principal who might have to do a bit of teaching. I know I’m not that person.

HOT DIGGITY DOGS TOMORROW!
Tomorrow, Thursday, 28 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 Macs 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. Please understand that the students, from the Macs classroom who are taking orders, need to be back in their classroom by 8:55 to begin lessons.

$2 per hot dog. No ice-block deals.

Macs’ Parent Information Session – Wednesday 10 Feb 5:30 to 6:30

NO TUCKSHOP FOR THIS COMING TUESDAY
Tuckshop will recommence on Tuesday, 16 February. Look for Sharon State School Tuckshop on Facebook.
SAUSAGE SIZZLE THIS FRIDAY.

SAUSAGE SIZZLE IS ON EVERY FRIDAY
with sausages and Home Ice Cream.
Sausage and bread $1.20
Ice block $1.00
Sausage and Ice Block deal $2.00

Roster – Term 1
January 29 – Chappy Lyn

We are looking for other parents who would like to add their name to the roster for this year. 10:45am until 12:00pm to cook sausages and help serve to students. Please contact Sharon via email admin@sharonss.eq.edu.au or phone the office 4130 9222 if you can spare a Friday morning.

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.

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.

11:35 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.

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.

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. Macs’ classroom will be closing at 3:30pm when children will wait in Macs’ pergola. 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

Our standard of uniform on the first day 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 school for $8.

Some children experience “problems” getting a newsletter from school to home. Our website,

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS
After today, we email our school newsletters to school families.

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.

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.

I will also leave a few paper copies of the newsletter up in the office for those that need to see a paper copy

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 endeavoung 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.

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 old principal’s residence. If car travellers can use these gates, 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 don’t use the bus gate, (i.e. the single gate at the front of the school), unless you are using the bus.

Complaints!
Car gate duty is not a particularly pleasant duty for teachers. I also know parents get upset about 3 areas that are difficult for me to address.

1. People are using the “2 minute drop & go zone” as a parking spot. Yes, I share your frustration. However, I have as much authority here as you do – none! Refer the matter to the police - I have. However, I’d love to think common sense and courtesy negates any need for enforcement.
   We’ve already noticed that some parents have learnt that it’s usually quicker to use the “normal” parks. It’s not your fault if your child is running late. However, if they are, you’re meant to leave the drop and go zone. You can then loop around and come back or simply use a normal park.
2. Teachers are letting the children out the gate too quickly! Please understand that we can have over 100 children on our hands. If they ask us to go and tell us they can see you – or we can see you – we let them go. Thank you so much to parents who come up to the gate. We also have a problem addressing the 3rd complaint.
3. Teachers are taking too long to let the children go!
We do get the children to ask before they go. Yes, this does create a “bottleneck” which slows down dismissal. This is frustrating when you’re in a hurry but it makes dismissal safer. I can assure you that we don’t like it when you’re angry with us. However, we’ll take that over an accident every day of the week.

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 DISMISSEALSS
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 children.

DURING WET DAY DISMISSEALS, 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.

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.

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.

QSchools Smartphone App
Queensland school communities can interact with their favourite state schools using the QSchools smartphone app.

The QSchools app is a convenient way to receive up-to-the-minute information from and about schools.

While all schools are searchable using the app, the full app features are designed to integrate with the department’s preferred school website platform, to allow users to see when news, events and newsletters are posted to their selected school website. Users can also see other useful information provided by the school, such as tuckshop menus, uniform shop information, class times and the school's and the department's social media feeds.

The school community can also receive emergency announcements such as natural disasters and school closures through the app.

The QSchools app is particularly useful to parents who have students in different schools, as the app manages updates from multiple schools.

Kind regards,