Dear Parents and Students,

We held our second prep orientation day yesterday. Part of this event was a parent’s meeting which was really well attended. Thankyou to Sharon Webster for her wonderful information session and to all our staff and school council members for their assistance.

‘TASTE OF DARNUM’:
Again, thankyou for your donations and help with the ‘Taste’ last Sunday. Over $200.00 was raised from the stall - a terrific effort!

WORKING BEE
Yes, it’s this Sunday, 2nd December from 10am. We have already had soil and mulch delivered ready to spread. We hope to see you there!

TOMORROW:
Our grade sixers are heading off for their special day at the Summit Camp near Trafalgar. I am sure they will enjoy this popular event.

PREP - 3 EXCURSION - FRIDAY 7TH DECEMBER:
This is now all fully planned and all venues, buses etc are confirmed. Please see your child’s note from Kris Smithett about the trip.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS AND TICKETS:
With December now nearly upon us, we will send home the Christmas raffle tickets with the eldest child in your family. More tickets available at the office. Please make a donation to our raffle at your convenience thankyou!

2013 CLASS STRUCTURES:
I am pleased to provide you with details about the classes for 2013. Please read the details carefully and contact us if you have any enquiries. Note that, as in past years, you will receive information about which class your child will be placed in on December 11th. (The statewide orientation day.)

HEADLICE:
We have had some outbreaks of headlice recently, so please check your child’s hair and treat accordingly. It is important to be vigilant about these checks to ensure re-infestation doesn’t occur.

MARC/LIBRARY BOOKS:
The MARC library service closes for stocktaking soon. Could all parents check their children’s room and bookshelves for any MARC or school library books. This especially applies to grade six students who might be having a big clean up in preparation for secondary school. We’d love to get any of these books back please!

Regards Chris & Staff
**Students of the Week**

MELISSA KENNEDY (BACK)
MATHEW STRAATMAN
JOANNA SCHREURS
CHRISTINE LAWRY
ETHAN MOUNSEY
MIA ANCILLERI
ZAC MILLER (Front)
ABBY SOMERVILLE

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**DIARY DATES**

**DECEMBER**

- **Sunday 2nd**    Working Bee 10am
- **Tuesday 11th**   Prep & Gr 6 Orientation & School Council Dinner
- **MONDAY 17th**    Raffle Tickets Due Back
- **Thursday 20th**  Christmas Party
- **Friday 21st**    Last Day term 4.

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**WORKING BEE**

Sunday 2nd December
10am - 12pm
This is our big ‘Spring Clean’ working bee. Please bring items such as
- Pressure washers/ hoses and connections
- Gardening tools, especially rakes, shovels and pruning shears
- Trailers for rubbish
- Chainsaw and safety gear
- Brooms

We hope to see you there!

Darnum School Council
Howdy Folks,
This Friday the grade 6 students will be going to the Summit camp for one day. Last Friday some kids from Regional came and talked to the grade 4, 5, 6 about bullying and we had a sausage sizzle. On Wednesday the 2013 preps came again and had a great time. We have already had a lot of great presents and make sure you put something in the box. Don’t forget to place your colouring entry into the box with your name on it.
We have decided to introduce “Stuck on You” labels, to try and reduce the lost property problem for students, parents and staff.

Name stickers are waterproof, microwave and dishwasher safe. Clothing labels are iron on and laundry proof.

Samples are available for viewing at the office with Sharyn.

Attached is a brochure.

Or Stuck On you Australia
P.O. Box 3068
Geelong, Vic 3220
The name of the fundraiser is Darnum Primary School.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
Could we have some volunteers to water the vegetable garden during the first three weeks of the Christmas holidays.
Please see Mrs Carlin in Grade 3 if you can help.

FOR SALE WANTED TO BUY
Pure bred silky rooster to give away.
Wanted cheap caravan to buy.
Please contact the office
Classes for 2013

Information for parents.

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to inform you about the classes and structures for Darnum Primary School in 2013. With an expected enrolment of approx. 120 in 2013, we will continue to run six homerooms and keep our numbers in each room/class as small as possible.

In summary, these are:

- Continuing the six classroom model from 2012.
- Continuing the success of the ‘senior school’ concept following the success of the junior school policy. This means that all students in grades 4 to 6 will operate together from the Mod5 classroom at the rear of the courtyard.
- All students from Prep to Grade 3 will continue to operate from the main building.

Most classes will operate as composites to allow small grade numbers, however, we will continue to structure the timetable to allow students to work together in many circumstances, eg, all grade ones together for music, Japanese etc…

The following questions and answers may assist parents understanding of the grade make up process.

1. In 2013, how many grades will there be?

   For 2013, there will be 6 classes. We have decided to continue this to allow for smaller class sizes across the whole school.

2. What will the classes be?

   Prep: 16 students
   Prep/One: 18 students
   One/Two: 19 students
   Two/Three: 19 students
   Four: 17 students
   Five/Six: 26 students

   Our specialists will be in the areas of Music, Science, MARC, Japanese and ICT. Art will be taken by classroom teachers. School council will work towards providing a new art facility in coming years.

3. How do you work out how many grades and how many straight or composite grades there will be for next year?

   There are several factors taken into account including: the number of students exiting at year 6 or at other year levels, the number of incoming students at prep and other year levels, the required average class size for Prep to 2, the number of classroom teachers and specialist teachers at various levels of experience afforded by the staffing budget, the groups of students at different year levels and their needs (e.g. some year levels have significantly more boys or girls, or there may be several students with similar learning needs at the same grade level).

4. Why do we have some composite grades?

   The main factor is the number of students at each year level balanced with the number of classroom teachers afforded by the staffing budget. Other considerations are described in answer 3. One of the main factors is to keep class sizes as small as possible within the yearly budget.

5. How do you decide which kids go into the composite classes and which kids go into a ‘straight’ grade?

   When teachers make up new grades, they consider the number of boys and girls; siblings; students who have particular disabilities; students who have particular learning styles or needs, including those needing behaviour management plans or who have particular social issues. Students are grouped according to these needs, rather than selecting them for a straight or composite class.
6. How do teachers make sure they are teaching to the right level when there are two year levels in the one classroom (a composite class)?

Teaching has developed considerably over the last few years and is very different to what parents may have experienced at school.

Research tells us that students learn best when:
1. the learning environment is supportive & productive
2. the learning environment promotes independence, interdependence, challenge and self-motivation
3. students’ needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program
4. students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
5. assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning
6. learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.

Through research, there is an increasing recognition of the importance and success of classrooms that can be characterised as ‘learning communities’. In these classrooms, there is an emphasis on building rich meanings for ideas rather than completing tasks. Students in these classrooms are intellectually engaged, and they feel a sense of collaborative partnership with their peers and their teachers. Classrooms like these are extremely rewarding places in which to teach and learn.

Our teachers focus the development of their teaching skills based on the above guidelines. The teachers carefully get to know each student (point 3 above), assess their knowledge and skills (point 5) and then plan and deliver a program tailored to meet those needs (points 2, 4, 6). Teachers plan and teach different skills to individuals, small groups and larger groups. The groups vary throughout the day and over the weeks, depending on the subject and teaching focus. Students in the younger year level of a composite may be grouped with students in the next year level, as long as their learning needs at that time are the same (points 1, 2 and 3 and 4). Teachers keep very detailed records of the progress each student makes so that their planning meets those needs very directly (point 5). Both straight and composite classes can have a wide range of abilities and strengths that need to be taken into account by teachers.

7. If my child is placed into a composite class in the younger grade level, does this mean they are a high achieving child, or an underachieving higher grade level student?

No, as described above, the group of students in any class is a combination of factors such as those described in answer 5, not just their achievement levels.

8. In a composite class, my child may be working with students older or younger. Does this matter?

Ages vary in all classes. Abilities, skills and knowledge and learning styles vary across all students depending on their experiences and age.

In addition, the minimum age means that students starting school can vary by around 18 months. A student must be 5 years old by the 30th of April in the year they start school. There are a number of parents who prefer their child to be 5 turning 6, rather than 4 turning 5 the year they start school, especially if their birthday is in the early part of the year. Some children turn 5 in the second half of the year, prior to starting school, so they are already older. This mix of ages continues and in a composite grade, some of the older students in the lower grade level can be older than the younger students in the upper grade level.

9. I was in a composite class when I went to school. Each grade had different work to do. Is it still the same?

No, in the past there was work set for a grade level. These days, teachers constantly monitor and assess learning skills and needs and plan work and activities to challenge each individual child, not a class level. Children are grouped and taught according to their individual needs, as described in the answer to question 6. The teachers assess each child, plan for each child (Individual Education Plans are an example of this) and coach or guide each child to the next level of achievement. Sometimes this does involve giving instructions to the whole class, however the teacher will then do focussed work with small groups or individuals.

10. Who is my child’s teacher next year?

This information will be sent home on the state-wide year 7 ORIENTATION DAY, December 11th 2012

Finally, I believe that these changes to our structures for 2013 will provide some excellent opportunities for our students and staff to continue to provide educational excellence in a rural school setting. I am particularly excited about the chance for the staff to work together in teams and for the reduced class sizes enabling the best uses of our building spaces.

One of the highlights of our school is that all teachers work closely together in teams and take responsibility for all children, not just those in their own classroom, and many of the daily activities and lessons are undertaken with combined classes working together!

Chris Eeles
Principal
VIP SALE
20% OFF
STORE WIDE

SALE DATES:
Friday 30 November 9am - 6pm
Saturday 1 December 9am - 1pm

PAKENHAM STORE
2/56 John Street
Phone: (03) 5941 4989

WARRAGUL STORE
Shop 5-6 William Square
Phone: (03) 5622 2930

TRARALGON STORE
6B Seymour Street
Phone: (03) 5176 5077

MOE STORE
26B George Street
Phone: (03) 5126 2165

NO LAYBYS AVAILABLE DURING VIP SALE DATES
CASH & CARD ONLY
Some Exclusions apply - see in store for details

Website: http://beleza.com.au