Dear Parents and Carers,

It was great to see so many families take the opportunity to visit the school and meet the teachers last week. A positive and collaborative relationship between the home and the school has a very engaging effect on student learning. The fact that so many parents at Fairy Meadow Dem place a high importance on education is wonderful.

**Staff Changes**

The school has had three staff changes in the first three weeks of 2015. The first of these was expected and planned for, when Jessica Harris, began her maternity leave. Jessica has been replaced by Pip Fenwick who has taken charge of the Year 4 class and will be the permanent teacher there until the end of the year. I’m sure the entire Fairy Meadow School community will join me and wish Jessica and her husband all the best as they prepare for the birth of their first child in April.

The second staff change was not expected. Tim Cartwright, School Counsellor, had worked at Fairy Meadow for only two weeks when he was offered a permanent appointment in another area. The school wishes Tim all the best. Our new School Counsellor is Mr Phil McKenzie who will be at the school on Mondays, Tuesday afternoons and Wednesdays. Phil has many years of experience in the role and is already a valuable contributor to the learning of students.

The third change is an addition of three days per fortnight to the school’s Learning and Support allocation. This position has been taken by Janet Pezzutto. Janet currently works at Dapto and West Wollongong Public Schools and we will continue to share her with them.

**Student Peer Groups**

Peer groups will begin this Friday. The focus for the beginning of 2015 is ‘Say No to Bullying’. All students at Fairy Meadow Dem are allocated to a peer group. Each group includes students from every year level from Kindergarten to Year 6. Each group is supported by a teacher and Year 6 leaders, who work in collaboration, to get this very important message across to all students. Within the sessions students work through strategies that will assist them to know what to do if they are being bullied, if they themselves are being a bully or if students see bullying happening.
Last week, I referred to *bullying* in the newsletter and stated my opinion that I thought the word to be overused. Feedback from a school community member suggested that this was inappropriate. I will continue to say, based on my experience over 35 years working continuously for the DEC, that, on occasions, playground conflicts and arguments are seen as bullying when they shouldn’t be.

So that there can be no misunderstanding of my stance on bullying, and that of the school, and its alignment with that of the DEC, I have posted Fairy Meadow Demonstration School’s Anti-Bullying Plan on the school’s website which you may access and read at your leisure. Below I quote from the Plan:

**Bullying**
- Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.
- Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.
- Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender.
- Bullying for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.
- Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

**CHANGES TO GUIDELINES REGARDING EXEMPTIONS FOR HOLIDAYS**

“As part of the implementation of the National Standards, holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be included as absences. A Certificate of Exemption can no longer be granted for this purpose.

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel outside of school vacation periods is necessary, the following considerations apply:

- If the principal accepts the reason for absence, the absence will be marked as “L” and a Certificate of Extended Leave – Holiday issued.
- If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence will be recorded as “A”. A Certificate of Extended Leave – Holiday will not be issued.”

**Classroom Helpers Needed**

Some teachers have expressed to me that they would love to have more helpers in the classrooms during the morning sessions to listen to students read. If you have some time and don’t necessarily need to be in your child’s classroom would you add your name to a register of parent helpers being drawn-up at the Admin Office.

Time spent as a helper is up to you and if you have the time we’d love to hear from you. At the present time I’m aware of helpers being needed in LT8 (K/1) and LT19 (Y4). I’m sure there are also other classes in need of this tremendous generosity of time.

On the left is a flyer advertising the fete of one of our neighbouring schools. You may like to attend.

Have a great week.

John Thorne
Principal

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Phone: 4284 2009
Email: fairymeado-p.schools@det.nsw.edu.au

Delivering excellence, success and opportunity
**PBS Positive Behaviours for Success**

This week's focus: Safety in the Playground.

Our PBS focus for this fortnight is related to our SAFETY value. Students are reminded about what safe play in the playground looks like. Staying in bounds, walking on hard surfaces, sitting down for eating time, playing in stage areas and lining up at the canteen during play time. Teachers are always on the lookout for students following our PBS values and ready to reward them with ‘Bees’.

Thank you for supporting PBS at our school.

**UNIFORM SHOP NEWS**

Thank you to all the people who have been donating second hand uniforms! Most of the second hand boxes are now nice and full. The size 12 second hand box is completely empty, though. If your child has grown out of their size 12 uniform, please consider donating it to the Uniform Shop. We have a lot of requests for the larger sizes so it would be great to see more 10s, 12s and 14s available. And smaller sizes are always very gratefully received, even when we have lots - they go quickly.

At the P&C meeting last week, there was a suggestion that the Uniform Shop should stock gold hats - the black ones can get quite hot in the weather we've been having recently. If you have any comments to make on this suggestion - either for or against - we would be interested in hearing them. You can email fmdsuniforms@gmail.com or leave a note at the office.

The Uniform Shop is running low on almost all sizes of polo shirts at the moment. More have been ordered, but I don’t yet have a date for when they will be ready. If you need polo shirts, please email or fill in an order form so that I can get them to you as soon as new stock arrives.

Cath Chisholm
Uniform Shop Co-ordinator

**P&C NEWS**

Invitations to the Welcome BBQ have been handed out and were due back this Wednesday. If you are a new family to the school (or a FMDS veteran with a child in kindergarten) and haven't received an invitation, please get in touch through the canteen, the school office, or email fmdspandc@gmail.com. The Welcome BBQ will be held on Wednesday 25 February, from 5.30pm, at the western end of the playground (near the canteen). There will be a free sausage sizzle, fun games, and a chance to mingle with other new families and some of our wonderful teachers. The BBQ will go ahead rain, hail or shine.

The P&C will be running an Entertainment Book fundraiser again this year. It's a few months until the new books are available, but it's never too soon to start thinking about which coupons you'll use first!

We will also be holding a Hot Cross Bun and Easter Egg fundraiser before the end of term. If you'll be buying these anyway, please consider buying them here and putting your money towards the kids. More details will follow soon. We will also be running an Easter raffle towards the end of term.

The state election will be held next month on Saturday 28 March. Our school is always used as a polling place, so we are planning to hold a fundraising bbq. Please vote at our school and buy something to eat or drink while you are here! We will need helpers to run the bbq. Doors open at 8am, so we will be running 2 hour shifts from 7am until 3pm, with 7am-8am being for setting up, and 2pm-3pm being for packing up. If you can spare a couple of hours to help, please leave your name and phone number, your child's name and class, and the time you would prefer to volunteer, at the school office or canteen.
Finally, the P&C plans to focus much (though not all) of our fundraising efforts for the foreseeable future on reinvigorating our playground. The sensory playground at the highway end of the school will be the first stage, but we would like to develop a masterplan for the whole playground, staged so that we can improve the school’s play areas one step at a time. We are putting together a Playground Sub-committee to get started, and ultimately hope to have input from kids, parents, teachers, community members and businesses, and people with a landscaping and/or design background. If you would be interested in contributing in any way please get in touch. One important job we will need to fill is Grant Writer. If you have experience in writing successful community grants, we would love your help! But please join the sub-committee even if you think writing a grant is the worst thing that could ever happen to you - nobody will make you do it! We need as wide a range of skills and ideas as we can get. The P&C will be funding the improvements, but we hope the whole school community will be involved in the plans and implementation.

Election Day BBQ Helpers - please return slip to school office or canteen, or email details to fmdspandc@gmail.com

Name:________________________________________________   Phone Number:_______________________
Child’s Name:________________________________________________  Child’s Class:___________________

Preferred Time to Volunteer:           7am-9am        9am-11am        11am-1pm        1pm-3pm

Canteen News

Pancake Day was such success on Tuesday that we have decided to do it again in winter. A big thank you goes out to the amazing team of Sandy Tupou and Kate Callinan who produced and sold our yummy pancakes. Thanks also to everyone who bought one. We hope you enjoyed this special treat.
Parents/carers please remind your children (especially littlies) to pick their recess orders up from the canteen. Also for the benefit of new parents/carers: Sometimes lunch orders go missing or get put into the wrong class basket. If this happens, tell your child to speak to the teacher on duty who will hopefully track it down. If not, they must then come to the canteen where we will provide them with a replacement lunch.
If a student comes to school without lunch they can come to the canteen and we will provide them with a sandwich or chicken wedges. A bill will then be sent home with the student.
Please remember that we don’t keep much change at the canteen therefore it would be appreciated if you could send the correct money or as near as possible with lunch and recess orders. Please, please no $50 notes.
For those who don’t know, we sell reusable lunch bags at the canteen for $15. They are made from sturdy waterproof material that needs only wiping out, can be used again and again – good for the environment and is large enough to hold the biggest lunch and not fall apart like paper bags.

Our handy helpers this week are;

| Mon 16/2 | Kirsten Gray | Mon 23/2 |  |
| Tue 17/2 | Sandy Tupou  | Tue 24/2 | Sandy Tupou  |
| Wed 18/2 | Rachel Melville | Wed 25/2 |  |
| Thur 19/2 | Simone Warburton | Thur 26/2 | Kaylene Roach |
| Frid 20/2 | Donna Butterworth | Frid 27/2 | Lisa Springett |

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