



We're excitedly getting ready to welcome you back!

IBIS FLYER

Balnarring Primary School

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October 8th, 2020

Acting Principal and Acting Assistant Principal's Report

Welcome to term 4!

As the weather slowly, slowly begins to improve, the new COVID-19 case numbers remain low and our students return to face to face teaching we are all feeling more optimistic about the next 10 weeks.

It has been a year like no other!

As on-site schooling resumes, it is essential that we have in place strong measures to protect the health and safety of all our students, our staff and our families.

These measures will include restricting parent access onto our grounds, a continued emphasis on hand hygiene and physical distancing where possible.

We would like to thank you for your patience as we stagger the *transition back to on-site learning* next week.

We believe that giving our younger students two days "*without the big kids*" to re-establish drop off and pick up routines at the gates and venture '*outdoors*' without 200 older children running around will be most supportive. We are very aware that our Foundation students have only had 4 full weeks at school.

Classroom routines including the rigid use of hand sanitisers will undoubtedly be re-established over the next couple of weeks whilst children enjoy the face to face contact with their teachers and peers. Many co-operative activities are currently being planned, enabling the children to reform as a classroom community.

The activities implemented in all classrooms will align with the Department of Education and Training's (DET) number one priority - student mental health and wellbeing; we are mindful of providing a program that provides opportunities for our students to re-connect in a nurturing, positive environment. We acknowledge that for some a full day back in the classroom will be a challenge and we will need to include frequent outdoor, active learning tasks.

We will also have a strong focus on explicit literacy and numeracy sessions to ensure our children head to their next class feeling confident that they have the necessary skills.

There is much to discuss about the impact of the remote and flexible learning period; there will undoubtedly be many children who have made significant gains in regards both their learning and mental health and some who may have lost their learning confidence.

Some parents may be feeling worried that their child may have to repeat a year due to the disruption of coronavirus. There is little evidence to support the benefits of repeating a year to catch up. The best option for almost every child is to stay with their peer group, whether that is moving from pre-school to Foundation, moving from Grade 6 into Year 7 at secondary school or moving up at any level in between.

Instead of recommending repeating we will use teaching strategies that draw on the best evidence available to help students meet their learning needs.

Our school, working with you, has shown it can be flexible and adaptable in responding to the challenges of Covid-19 and we will continue to meet those individual student needs on-site in term 4 and when planning for 2021.

Our goal then is to '*meet our kids where they are at and nurture them to move forward*'.

We are currently planning the 2021 grade structure. If your circumstances have changed and you are not intending to send your child to Balnarring Primary next year we would appreciate you calling the office to let us know. Thank you for your assistance.

Whole school activities are important to rebuild the bond across our whole student body. We will hold our *belated* footy day on Thursday 22nd October – just before the grand final public holiday. Children will be invited to wear their footy colours proudly to school on that day (AFL/NRL/A-League) Mr Shannon and our House Captains will plan a number of activities that will reflect the restrictions in place at the time.

The Principal position will be advertised on the 16th October. The selection panel will meet at various times in the weeks following to consider the applications and appoint a principal to start at the beginning of the 2021 school year.

In the meantime we will continue to proudly lead the Balnarring Primary School Learning Community.

See you at the gate,

Sandy and Fi.



Sandy



Fiona