Dear Parents, Carers and Grandparents,

Welcome back to Merimbula Public School! Students were excited to return to school yesterday to meet up with their friends and meet their new class. Kindergarten students commenced today, having a lovely start to their schooling. Thank you to all of the staff who came into school over the past few weeks to get ready for the new year. I look forward to another great year at our innovative and fun school. Welcome to all of the new students, parents and caregivers who have joined us at our wonderful school!

Student Representative Council (SRC) Induction Assembly: Next Monday our SRC and School Leader Induction Ceremony will be held in the Jackson Hall between 2.10 and 2.55pm. Children who will be inducted, receiving leadership badges, are listed on the enclosed flyer. Congratulations to those students!

Principal’s Awards: Congratulations to the following students who are receiving Principal’s Awards at next Monday’s Assembly: Phoebe, Harrison, Khai, Phoebe, Charlee, Ryan, Holly and Luke. The assembly will be held in the Jackson Hall at 2.10pm

PBS Awards: PBS tokens, awards and arm bands will continue to be presented to students for demonstrating the school values of ‘Care’, ‘Respect’, ‘Responsibility’ and ‘Fairness’. Students receiving awards at the assembly next Monday afternoon include: Jayda and Rachel, who are receiving an arm band for consistently demonstrating ‘Responsibility’; Holly, Guy, Joel and Joanne who will all be receiving large PBS awards for completing the 4 areas of their award matrix.

No Hat, Play In The Shade: In the hot summer months remember to encourage your child to protect themselves from the sun by: Always applying sunscreen before they go outside; Always wearing a hat and long sleeve/collar top when playing outside; Trying to stay in the shade during peak UV forecasts; Always bringing a bottle of water to school to keep hydrated. Our school supports the Department’s ‘No Hat, Play In The Shade Policy’. For more information visit: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-z/sunsense.php

P&C Meeting: Our school P&C consists of a great group of parents and caregivers, men and women, who work together to develop new programs, organise fundraising initiatives, work on school improvement and support staff when advertising school positions. Our next P&C Meeting will be held on Tuesday night (February 5) at 7pm in the Staffroom. Familiar faces and newcomers are welcome. We will be discussing: school uniforms and availability, canteen organisation, the P&C and Department’s Code of Conduct, school fundraisers, awards and award ceremonies, the school’s Complaints Handling Policy, the School Plan and Annual School Report.

On March 6 at 7.00pm in the school staffroom, the P&C will be holding its Annual General Meeting to nominate position holders for 2013. The AGM will be followed by our monthly meeting. If you have any ideas or want to get involved with the school out of working hours, please come along.

Parent Teacher Information Evenings: Parents and caregivers are encouraged to attend our Parent Information Evenings in the coming weeks to find out more about 2013 programs, initiatives and events. Information evenings will be held on the following days:

Kindergarten Welcome BBQ and Information Evening: Thursday, February 21 – 5.30pm – 7.00pm.
Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2) Information Evening: Tuesday, February 12 – 5.30pm – 7.00pm.
Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4) Information Evening: Tuesday, February 19 – 5.30pm – 7.00pm.
Stage 3 (Year 5 and 6) Information Evening: Thursday, February 14 – 5.30pm-7.30pm.

I hope that you enjoy reading more about our wonderful school within this newsletter.

Michelle Hulme - Principal

School News
School Newsletters: School Newsletters are distributed each Wednesday to the youngest child in the family. Please remember to check your child’s bag for important school information and details about coming events. Our newsletter, past newsletters and permission notes can be downloaded from our web site: www.merimbula-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/

Do You Have a Question, Feedback, Concern or Complaint?
Merimbula Public School loves feedback, suggestions and is always finding ways to improve programs and processes to support students and their families. If you have a question, concern or complaint about the school, suggestions or feedback for the school please let your child’s class teacher know. If you feel that the concern / suggestion has not been addressed, or the concern is about your child’s teacher, please let your child’s Stage Leader / Assistant Principal know.

Stage Leaders for 2013 are:

Kindergarten / Stage 1: Lisa Freedman and Jayne Wilson (Jayne will be working with Lisa during Terms 1 and 2 while Lisa continues to support local schools as the regional Targeting Early Numeracy (TEN) Coordinator
Stage 2: Fiona Hosken
Stage 3: Vanessa Nawiesniak

If you still feel that your concern / suggestion has not been addressed, or your concern is about your child’s Stage / Stage Leader, please contact the Principal, Michelle Hulme on 6495 1266 who will support you or assist you in getting in contact with the correct District Office support personell (Ph: 131536).

Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Diabetes and Allergies: It is very important that all students who have asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, allergies or other specific medical needs have an up to date medical Action Plan at school. Children who already have plans at school will receive a form to update their child’s plan in the coming week. If your child has recently been recognised as having a specific medical need, allergy or has a new Action Plan, please contact the school on (02) 6495 1266 so that the Principal / First Aid Officer can meet with you and organise the appropriate support for your child.

The Department of Education and Communities has recently announced that all government schools will receive a general use adrenaline autoinjector (an EpiPen) for their first aid kit. Our school received one at the end of last term. It is very important that all students who have asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, allergies or other specific medical needs have an up to date medical Action Plan at school. Children who already have plans at school will receive a form to update their child’s plan in the coming week. If your child has recently been recognised as having a specific medical need, allergy or has a new Action Plan, please contact the school on (02) 6495 1266 so that the Principal / First Aid Officer can meet with you and organise the appropriate support for your child.

Medications: Medications that students are to take at school must be administered by a parent. Alternately they can be administered by school staff only if the parent brings the medication to the school, labelled with the child’s name and accompanied by a letter from their doctor which details times and quantity to be administered.

Yellow Emergency Forms: In the case of an emergency we need to have CURRENT contact information including work and mobile phone numbers. Please send back to school ASAP. Only one card required per family.

Please remember to update this information throughout the year if any of your contact details should change.

Family Arrangements and Court Orders: If your family has informal or formal custody arrangements in place, please let the school know. If formal arrangements / orders are in place, please bring them to the school so that they can be photocopied, filed and adhered to. Please keep the school informed of any updates or changes to arrangements.

Please inform the school if at any time your child has minor changes to family arrangements (eg: a new baby is on the way, they are staying with the grandparents for a week or going on a holiday etc). This will allow the school to better support your child in times of change.

Swimming Carnival: The 2013 Merimbula Public School Swimming Carnival will be held on Friday, February 8, 2013. All children in Years 3-6 will participate. Children in Year 2 who turn 8 in 2013 and are competitive swimmers may also attend. Information and permission notes were sent home with this newsletter.

Library and Technology Program: As communicated at the end of 2012, during teacher planning time (release from face to face teaching) students will be attending a 1 hour library lesson and 1 hour technology lesson each week. Please see your child’s Stage News for details regarding days and times. Mr Craig Morris will be teaching Technology, Mrs Francine Dessai will be teaching Library to Years 1 to 6 students and Mrs Gillian Ross to Kindergarten.

The library and technology rooms will also be open during the second half of lunch (1.50 - 2.10pm) from Tuesday to Friday each week.

Canteen News: Welcome to Kerryn Howker our new Canteen Supervisor. Kerryn commenced working in the canteen at the end of Term 4 - and her gingerbread people were a hit with the students! If you would like to meet Kerryn, have suggestions for the canteen or would like to offer your assistance (even if only for a few hours a week / month), please contact the school on (02) 64951266.

A new Term 1 Canteen Menu and price list will be sent home this week.

Kinder News

Welcome to 2013: Kindergarten staff (Early Stage 1 teachers) would like to welcome all students, parents, caregivers and new families to Merimbula Public School. For many of you this will be your first newsletter. Newsletters are sent home with the youngest child in the family every Wednesday. Please check your child’s bag each week and read all items, particularly the ‘School News’ and ‘Early Stage 1 News’ sections.

Kindergarten Staff:
The kindergarten teachers Peter Bootes (KB), Jayne Wilson (KW), Jennie Smith and Gillian Ross (KS) have been working hard so set up classrooms and prepare for a happy, welcoming and fun start to the year for students. Carole Skillcorn (KB), Kelly McCormack (KW) and Jo Miller (KS) will also be joining our kindergarten team in the first few weeks of Term 1. They are School Learning Support officers who will be working with classroom teachers to support your children in having a smooth transition to school.

Lunch box Reminders: Thank you to all of the parents and caregivers for getting prepared by purchasing great
lunches, lunch boxes and drink bottles ready for school. If you haven’t already done so, please remember to label each container (lids and bottoms where possible).

Please remember that we have a ‘Crunch and Sip’ break each morning, so pack a water bottle and piece of fruit or vegetable for your child. In kindergarten cut up apple, carrot, celery or a few strawberries is appropriate. Please do not pack huge apples or juicy oranges for this break time. As shared at the Parent Information session, please do not pack ring-pull tins of fruit or other packaging that is hard for children to open. While there are teachers on duty to assist students, they will soon like to demonstrate their independence but may get upset if they spill yogurt all over themselves! If you would like to pack diced fruit / yogurt you may put it in a small plastic reusable container (and keep it chilled with a frozen popper or small ice pack). Unlike at preschool, we do not have fridges for food storage and cannot heat food. Fresh / hot lunches are available for order from the canteen though. A Term 1 menu will be sent home in the coming week. If you have any questions about the canteen, please contact our Canteen Supervisor Kerryn Howker on (02) 64951266 during school hours.

Library Lessons and Borrowing: Children are welcome to attend the school library before school and at lunchtime each Tuesday to Friday. A flag is hung on the library railing to let children know that a teacher is on duty. Kindergarten students will be able to borrow in a few weeks time. In the meantime they will be attending library lessons to support them in learning how to borrow. Mrs Gillian Ross, who team teaches KS with Mrs Smith, will be teaching all kindergarten classes library.

Stage 1 News

Welcome to 2013: Stage 1 staff would like to welcome all students, parents, caregivers and new families to Merimbula Public School. We hope that you had a wonderful summer break with your children.

Stage 1 Staff:

Teachers: Mrs Lorraine Dykes (1D), Mrs Lisa Freedman (1F - Mon, Tue, Wed) and Ms Julie Baker (Thu, Fri), Mrs Megan Young (1Y), Mrs Beth Smith (2S), Ms Terri Kimpton (2S Wednesdays) and Ms Jodi Vaughan (2V). Ms Kim Peters will also be working with each class throughout Term 1 to support the implementation of a phonics program to support reading improvement.

Support officers: Mrs Kelly McCormack and Mrs Kay Purcell, Learning Support Officers, will be supporting teachers to implement reading programs such as MiniLit into each classroom.

Swimming Carnival: Competitive Year 2 Swimmers turning 8 in 2013 are able to participate in the School Swimming Carnival. If your child is a competitive swimmer (eg: is in a squad or participates in Swimming Club) please let your child’s class teacher know so that they can be given a permission note.

Stage 2 News

Welcome to Stage 2: Stage 2 staff would like to welcome all students, parents, caregivers and new families to Merimbula Public School. We will be having a Parent Information Evening in the coming weeks to inform you of programs and activities that will take place this year.

Stage 2 Staff:

Teachers: Mr Peter Claxton (3C), Ms Fiona Hosken (3H), Mr Adam Hughes (4H), Mrs Lisa Kellaway (4K) and Mrs Ann Cooper (4K) on Wednesdays.

Mathematics: In the coming weeks Stage 2 teachers will be trained in implementing the Targeting Early Numeracy Program (TEN) that has been successfully implemented in Kindergarten to Year 2. Classroom teachers will be teaching their own students mathematics so students will not be changing classes for maths, as communicated last year. More information about the TEN program will be shared at a parent workshop in the coming weeks. Please check the newsletter for times / dates.

Stage 3 News

Welcome to 2013: Welcome to all students, parents, caregivers and new families. Stage 3 teachers hope that you had a great summer break with your children. We are looking forward to a great year with them!

Stage 3 Staff:

Teachers: Ms Manda Hensman (6H), Ms Janelle Hodsdon (5H), Mrs Vanessa Nawiesniak (6N) and Mr Wes Unicomb (5U).

Support Staff: Mrs Kelly McCormack, Mrs Carole Skillcorn and Mrs Helen Taylor.

Year 6 2013 Excursion Feedback: Thank you to the parents and caregivers who provided feedback about possible Year 6 excursion venues. The majority of families would like to see the Sydney excursion continue. At this stage it looks like the excursion will take place at the end of Term 3. More information about the excursion, dates and payment instalments will be provided in coming newsletters.

Year 5 Camp: A Year 5 Camp excursion is currently being investigated and may take place towards the end of this term. More information will be sent home about the Year 5 camp in the next two weeks. Please read the newsletter for updates.