Greetings:

As we begin 2016, it’s important we set targets and identify strategies for the learning and development we would like to see happen this year. That is what our Site Improvement Plan does. Staff, parents and students have now all had an opportunity to contribute to these discussions, and our draft plan is almost ready and will be coming home soon for comment.

Our plan is based on 5 priorities identified in our 2015-2017 strategic plan: Literacy and Numeracy, Student and Staff Wellbeing, ICT, Isolation and Distance and Lifelong Learning.

Priority 5: Life Long Learning includes the development of executive functions; an area of research into how the brain acquires, stores and uses information, and what inner and outside factors can limit us in our learning.

Executive functions are a set of mental skills that help you get things done. These skills are controlled by an area of the brain known as the frontal lobe.

The term ‘executive function’ covers 3 different cognitive abilities:

**Working memory** – The ability to hold several thoughts in one’s mind at the same time and having that information at ready disposal. It is helpful in:
- remembering long email addresses
- finding our place on a page of text
- remembering instructions, directions or a sequence given by the teacher
- remembering what the teacher has asked the class to do, ie, get your hat and drink bottle and gather under the veranda
- adding up a list of numbers in our head.

**Flexibility** – The ability to change tack part way through a train of thought or action. This is about one’s response upon receiving new information or a fresh perspective. While we value persistence, we know that we also need to be receptive and re-think for success. It is helpful:
- when looking for a hat in a hurry and knowing that a substitute, like a cap, will suffice
- being easy going when the usual routine changes
- positively contributing or participating in discussions
- choosing the ‘next best’ resource when the 1 you planned isn’t available
- packing up in a timely way even though you haven’t finished an activity
- transitioning easily from 1 task to another.
**Self-control** – This is about inhibiting one’s impulses; putting a space between a stimulus and one’s response. Sometimes we might refer to this as our filter or tact button, or our ability to ignore distractions while we focus on things, such as studying for an exam. This happens often with young children as they develop their ability to self-regulate their emotions.

Encouraging the development of these executive functions in students will in turn encourage successful learning practices.

Executive function skills are crucial building blocks for the early development of both cognitive and social capacities.

While everyone is born with the potential to develop these abilities, there are factors that influence the extent to which they develop, including how stressful the environment is or how nurturing the relationships with others are.

When educators and children have a good understanding of the role that executive function has in learning, they are together better able to develop supportive routines with children, co-create engaging learning environments and establish positive social and learning relationships.

“Executive Functions are crucial to successful learning and can determine the possibility of success throughout life”

Fay Stasinowsky, Director Parafield Gardens Children’s Centre

As we move towards putting our Site Improvement Plan in place, we will be focusing our attention more on these Executive Functions, and how they can help our students grow into strong learners and community members.

Don’t forget that students don’t return until Wednesday of next week – enjoy the long weekend!

**Regards,**

Ruth

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**GOVERNING COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

In our last newsletter I asked people to consider joining one of our Governing Council committees. As yet we have had very little response. These committees do not involve a large time commitment, and are a great way to contribute to the life of our school. Please consider whether you could be involved:

**Grounds, Facilities and Pool:** this committee oversees projects that involve the up-keep and improvement our grounds and facilities, and also overseeing the running and maintenance of the pool during summer. The convenor is Richard Howard.

**School Development:** this committee reviews current policies of the school, and considers the need for new policies as required. The convenor is Sonia Broadbent.

**Bus:** this committee reviews bus routes, and makes recommendations for changes as required. The convenor is Adam Morgan.

If you are able to, please fill in the form at the end of this newsletter and return it to the front office, and the convenor of that committee will be in touch. The Parent representatives do not necessarily have to be School Councillors, and parents are also encouraged to ring members of the committee to pass on any ideas they have.

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**P&F FUNDRAISING**

Our families have been fantastic in supporting the P&F fundraising activities this year – so much so that we sometimes get swamped with money! To make things easier and more streamlined, we are asking that if you are sending in a cheque or cash with your children, that you clearly label who the money is from, and for what project. You can also now make deposits online! The details are:

- BSB 105-104
- Account 384180140

After direct deposit, please send an email or SMS details of what the payment was for to Tanja Morgan, P&F Treasurer.

Email: northside5@bigpond.com
Mobile: 0429395918
**Parent Teacher Interviews**

Our parent teacher interviews will be occurring on Tuesday and Wednesday of Week 11, the 12th and 13th of April. These are an important way for you to have some time with your child/ren’s teacher and discuss important issues and concerns. Students can be a part of these interviews if the parents would like them to be. **Please call Sue in the front office to book a time.**

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**Haese Maths Books**

We have a number of year 5, 6 and 7 Haese Maths text books that we no longer require. These books can be very helpful in explaining various math concepts and strategies. If you would like to purchase one, simply let Sue know in the front office. They will be $10 each.

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**Book Swap Postponed Until Next Wednesday: 16th March**

Bring a book to swap and a gold coin donation. Raising money for library books for an orphanage in Cambodia.

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**Junior Primary Class Update**

Hasn’t time flown! I can’t believe it is the end of week 6 already. I have been incredibly proud of the development students have been making and I would like to say a big “Well done!” to our 8 Reception students as the last two week has been amazing, watching them properly settle into life in the Junior Primary room. The Year 1 and 2 students have been such fantastic leaders this term and I thank them for all the guidance they give to our Receptions.

It was great to see some Junior Primary faces at the Bat Night on Wednesday night. I hope they learnt some new information about bats. This week in Science, because we have been learning about habitats, we spent time learning all about mega bats and micro bats and their habitats. In our discussions this morning after two lessons of Science, here were some of the student’s answers on questions about bats:

- Bats are nocturnal. They sleep when we are awake! - Matilda
- Bats are mammals because they have hair and ears and they have blood in them. - Charlie
- Bats have colour on their faces. - Claire
- Bats can eat insects and they love blood and fruit. – Sophie

Here are some photos of our learning on bats this week:

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In Science we have also continued learning about sea creatures and their habitats and features. We spent some time learning about sharks last week and this week in Shared Learning we talked about boat safety and did some
activities about sharks, boats and lighthouses. This fit in really well with our focus on rhyming words and our listening response tasks to our study text: ‘The Magic Beach’ as we read and found rhyming words to the story ‘There is a Shark in the Park’ this week. Here are some of our lovely shark creations and imaginative under the sea play from Week 6:

And lastly, the students and I have really enjoyed talking about families the past few weeks. We have done a lot of activities about families, incorporated through all our learning areas. We would love to share our Family Forest to you all. Thank you for sending in some photos and I really like the students family portraits too:

Stay tuned for some notices about the last few weeks of the school term in the JP class as we have a few exciting learning activities planned.

Have a great long weekend,

Miss. Lorelle Barton
GPS bat night

We were very lucky to have a break in the damp weather for the running of our Bat Night last night. It was great to see a number of families and community members attend the evening along with the Middle and Upper Primary class students. The night was both educational and entertaining and allowed the students to get some amazing hands-on experience in the field of Conservation Biology. A big thank you goes to Harry Beauchamp from the NRM and Rachel Williams from the Murray Mallee LAP who made this opportunity available to us as well as to Chris Grant who makes the study of bats so fascinating! The MUP class would also like to thank Miss Barton for sleeping over with us, Mrs Bond for preparing our tea and Mrs Temby for helping to serve it. I would like to thank the students for their enthusiasm and involvement in the evening as well as their impeccable behaviour during our sleep-over, which ensured we were all able to get a good night’s sleep. 

Kathryn Roberts

I learnt how to set up a bat trap and that bats are the only mammals that can fly. There were two types of traps, a mist net and a harp trap. We didn’t catch any bats but lots of birds flew into the mist net.

Georgia

A good crowd helping to set up the nets.

Bats find their food by echolocation.  

I learnt that bats can use their squeak to get insects.

Jemima

One fact I learnt was that bats have very good eyesight. We used radios and i-pads to help us find the bats and Me and Matilda have been really close to a Chocolate Wattle Bat.

Jade

Me and Libby found two Wattle Bats.

Chris explaining how the harp trap works.

We used i-pads to see the frequency of the noise the bats made to help identify them.

Tracey

Enjoying Chris’s presentation in the library.
I learnt that a bat’s wings are like a human arm and hand. It was so much fun helping set up the nets.  

Jack

I learnt to tell the difference between a micro bat and a mega bat. Micro bats have big ears and a pig-like nose and mega bats have small ears and a fox-like nose.  

Olivia

I liked the i-pad when I found two bats and you can scroll back to see it.  

Libby

After we finished setting up the traps Chris showed us a slide-show about bats all around the world.  

Jamaica

I learnt that there is at least 1000 species of bats in the world. My favourite part was using the i-pads.  

Amy

I learnt there are 9 different bats in South Australia.  

Sophia

We learnt that bats live in big colonies.  

Harry

A special person, Chris Grant, came to teach us about bats. Unfortunately we didn’t catch any but we used the i-pads to detect that there were some around.  

Lilly

The types of bat include Chocolate Wattle Bat, Gould’s Wattle Bat and Lesser Long-eared Bat.  

Matthew

Some bats are very smart.  

Oliver

Rachel has left us an automatic bat monitoring unit to set up at the school. She will download the data we record over the next two weeks onto a national database. This is another great activity for the students to see Science in action!

If anyone is interested in participating in the community bat monitoring program and having one of these monitors at their own property, please visit the website www.malleefutures.org.au then navigate to ‘Projects’ then ‘Community Bat Monitoring’.

Rachel showing Harrison and Matthew how to use the i-pads to identify bats by the frequency of their calls.
**Pancake Breakfast**

**Friday March 18th**

As buses arrive at school, all students and staff will be given a delicious pancake breakfast, supplied by the PCW Support Group.

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**Mental Health Carer Support and Respite Murray Bridge**

Uniting Communities Carer Support and Respite Service aims to assist families and individuals to develop a range of skills and strategies in a flexible manner to help support their family member with the mental health challenge.

This is a free and confidential service. No diagnosis is required. You can self-refer or be referred by another service provider.

To make an appointment or to find out more please contact:

Cathy Smith – Senior Coordinator
Uniting Communities
4 Third Street
Murray Bridge SA 5253
Phone: 08 85310571

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**BOOK LAUNCH & LUNCH**

Friday 18th March 2016 at midday
Lameroo Community Hotel
Lunch is from the hotel menu board at own cost.
Launch to follow

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**SAPSASA Swimming Report**

Well done to Olivia and Lilly for attending the SAPSASA Swimming Selection Day at Murray Bridge. Swimming laps in a 50 metre pool is a big step up for our swimmers and a great experience for them.

Congratulations to Olivia on being selected in the Murray Mallee Team as a member of the Freestyle Relay Team. Good luck in Adelaide at the Country Swimming Championships on the 18th March.

*Kathryn Roberts*

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**Shaun W Smith**

**Kids Entertainer**

Carnival activities & live entertainment
**Friday March 18th 2016**
7pm-9pm @ Mallee Life Church Lameroo
Enquiries to Marg Smith 8577 2216

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**BOOKS**

**Meredith Appleyard**

*The Doctor Calling*

Bookings to Gay Glynn
Ph: 85762 024
GOVERNING COUNCIL COMMITTEE NOMINATION

I ______________________ would like to nominate myself as a member of the following committee/s:

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<th>Grounds, Facilities and Pool</th>
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<th>Bus</th>
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My contact details are:

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