Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At Gorokan Public School we believe in the importance of developing a strong sense of community spirit and involvement.

**Community Service Program** – We welcomed several Gorokan High School students (most of which had attended Gorokan Public School) this week. Both schools are committed to affording students with opportunities to develop the attributes of service, trustworthiness, punctuality, respect for others, cooperation and a variety of other community service related skills. These students will visit our great school for 10 weeks. We welcome these community minded students and trust that they will have a very positive experience.

**Bernard Tan Optometrist** – Sincere thanks are extended to Bernard Tan our local optometrist who gave up a significant amount of his time last week to assess the vision of approximately 50 of our students for no charge. We are most appreciative of Mr Tan’s ongoing commitment to the students of Gorokan Public School and his generosity. Mr Tan's practice is located at 17 Wallarah Rd Gorokan, and the contact number is 02 4392 3258 should further information be required.

**Voluntary School Contributions** – To assist in covering the cost of the many educational opportunities, resources and programs that are on offer at our great school, each family is being asked to make a one off voluntary contribution of $30 per first child and $20 per additional child to ensure the viability of these programs and resources into the future. This payment will allow the students to access programs such as specialist sports programs including athletics and gymnastics, subscriptions to *Reading Eggs* and *Mathletics*, stationery supplies for the year, and excursion/incursion supplementation. Thank you for your anticipated prompt payment of the voluntary school contribution. Families who are experiencing hardship should contact the office for confidential advice regarding payment options.

**School Swimming Carnival** – A special presentation assembly was held last Friday to acknowledge the efforts of our swimmers at last week’s school swimming carnival.

Twenty students have qualified to enter the Zone Swimming Carnival at Mingara on Wednesday 2nd March – a brilliant collective result! Congratulations to the following students who will make up team Gorokan:


**Swimming Carnival award recipients**

**Parent Teacher Interviews** – All parents / carers are invited to meet with their child's teacher in weeks 10 and 11 this term. The aim of these interviews is to exchange information that could enhance the learning outcomes of students over the course of the year. The stage supervisors will provide further information about this in their sections of this newsletter and a separate note will follow.

Together we can make a difference.

Jesmond Zammit

Principal
**Dates to Remember**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 29th February</td>
<td>P &amp; C Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 2nd March</td>
<td>School Photos</td>
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<td>Wednesday 2nd March</td>
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<td>Thursday 24th March</td>
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<td>25th – 28th March</td>
<td>Easter Long Weekend</td>
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<td>Friday 8th April</td>
<td>Last day of Term 1</td>
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**Kindergarten Supervisor – Mrs K Lansdowne**

**Information Afternoon** - Thank you to the families that came to our information afternoon. If you wish to speak to your child’s teacher please contact the school office and make an appointment.

**Homework** - Homework and home reading commenced this week. The children are to choose one activity from a box on their homework sheet to complete. Mathletics and Reading Eggs are extra activities that the children can participate in. The book sent home can be read to them more than once along with library books and books of their own choice. **All homework is to be returned every Friday.** Sight words will be sent home in the next few weeks.

**Attendance** - If your child is absent from school please send a note to school on their return.

**Parent Helpers** - If you are able to assist with your child’s class please let their teacher know so the appropriate paper work can be completed. Mrs Lansdowne would appreciate any parent that can assist with changing home readers every Friday for about 20 minutes.

**Supplies** - Thank you to the families that have sent in tissues, paper towel, whiteboard markers and headphones.

**Class Award winners:**
- K/1B - Scott
- KL - Yzabella, Oliver
- KS - Amelia K, Cayden
- KR - Amonia, Logan
- KT/S - Shanae, Katara

**Stage 1 Supervisor - Mrs C Behringer**

**Excursion** - A note will be going home next week regarding our K-2 excursion in week 2 of Term 2. The cost of the excursion is $35.00. This is to ensure that you have enough time to get the payment in by next term. The students will be going to Newcastle to view a live theatre production called “The Peasant Prince.”

**School Photos** - Please remember to get your school photo money in by next week. The students will be getting their photos done on Wednesday and Thursday.

**Stage 2 Supervisor - Mrs R Ransse**

**Fruit Break** - Stage 2 classes have fruit break daily, usually in between 10am and 10:30 am. Students are encouraged to bring in a small piece of fruit that they can eat at their desks whilst completing their learning tasks. Please ensure that your child has a piece or fruit for fruit break.

**School Uniform** - Thank you for your efforts in ensuring that children are wearing their school uniform. The students are looking absolutely fantastic!

**Reading Eggs & Mathletics** - All students have been set up with their Reading Eggs and Mathletics usernames and passwords. Students are encouraged to use these highly educational programs at home. If your child does not have their log in information, please ask them to see their teacher. A reminder that the voluntary contribution fees contribute towards the payment of these programs.

**Stage 3 Supervisor – Mr M Densmore**

**Maths Text Books** - During 2016, all Year 5 & 6 students will require a Maths plus text book. Students will be using their books every week in class to enhance their mathematical learning. The cost of this book is $20.00. This is a discounted rate offered to Gorokan students. Please purchase your books by 26th of February as all classes will use these books on Monday, the 29th of February (Week 6). Thanks to the parents/caregivers who have already purchased the books.

**Sport** - Year 5 and 6 have sport every Wednesday. The school hat, appropriate footwear and a drink bottle are highly recommended.

**Tennis** - We are happy to offer tennis as a sport option for our students. There are 10 places left for students who would like to receive professional tennis coaching during sport time on a Wednesday afternoon. If you would like your child to attend please pay $15.00.

**Class Stationery** - It would be appreciated if all students are equipped and prepared to work in class. Students will require HB lead pencils, sharpener, ruler, coloured pencils, textas, scissors, glue stick, blue and red pens, appropriate shoes for sport/school and the school hat. Stage 3 would also appreciate donations of a box of tissues and paper towels. Thanks to the parents/caregivers who have kindly donated tissues or paper towels.
Wadalba School Community - Notes have been sent home for parents/caregivers regarding the opportunity to attend an information session at Wadalba Community School on Wednesday 24/02/16 in regard to the Year 7 Transition Program.

P&C Meetings - The P&C Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 29th March, 2016 at 3.15pm in the library. At this meeting all executive positions are vacated and nominations are taken to fill these positions for 2016. The next P&C general meeting will be held on Monday 14th March, 2016 at 3.15pm in the library. All welcome.

Fundraising Meeting - A fundraising meeting will be held on Friday 4th March at 2.00pm outside the canteen. Come along and have some fun while organising this year’s fundraising events. This year we have been asked to raise funds for a special swing for our wheelchair students and maintenance on our gardens.

Contribution to Teaching Staff - So far this year we have given each teacher $50.00 which can be spent on classroom items such as stickers, apps or any other essentials needed for the classroom.

Little Cake Day - This term’s little cake day will be held on Friday 11th March, 2016. Years 1 and 6 are requested to donate cakes and biscuits which can be left at the canteen on the morning of the cake stall. Cakes will be sold at recess for 50c each.

Easter Guessing Competition - Tickets have been sent home for this competition and must be returned with money by Monday 21st March. The draw will take place on Thursday 24th March (previously advertised as Wednesday 23rd March) at our fancy hat parade. Donations of Easter eggs or related goods are needed and can left in the basket which is located in office foyer.

House Fire Appeal - Recently a family of Gorokan Public School lost everything in a house fire. If you wish to help them out with non-perishable foods, school snacks and stationery and toys please see Julie in the canteen.

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School News

Gorokan Public School SRC (Student Representative Council)

Clean Up Australia Day
Sunday 6th March 10am – 2pm

Are you looking for an area to clean up? What about our own school? We are having a working bee on Clean up Australia Day. Our Student group Earth Rangers have been working hard to weed and plant the gardens but there are lots of things to do after the summer holidays. We have moved a mountain of mulch into the new frog pond area and into the garden, but there is still much to bring from the rest of the playground area. There are also jobs to do that children can’t manage like:

- Build a wooden deck for viewing the pond.
- Butting safety wire to cover the pond.
- Concreting seats into the ground for a class science lesson area within the pond area.
- Even if you can only spare one hour. If eight people could do one hour, that makes a whole day’s work for one person.

When you come along please bring gloves, hat and tools (wheelbarrow, garden fork, hammer etc.) We will have ice blocks and sausages for all volunteers. Look forward to seeing you there.
When speaking with parents when I present at schools, or engaging with them via our social media, bullying is always a hot topic. A recent Facebook post had one of our biggest engagement rates ever. It begged the question- “What is bullying? Do we mix it up with teasing and other forms of mean behaviour?”

It’s an important topic that needs clarification.

Bullying is a term that’s wrapped in emotion. For many people it’s associated with bad childhood memories. It’s been estimated that around 40 per cent of people have experienced bullying in the past. It’s something that we don’t want to happen to our kids.

But I fear it’s being overused at the moment and confused with teasing and rudeness.

**Rudeness** refers to thoughtless behaviours and thoughtless words. Kids often do rude things to each other without thinking their actions through. Examples include breaking wind in a child’s direction; joking about the colour of a child’s hair in front of others; failing to share possessions and neglecting to acknowledge someone. Rudeness is usually about selfishness and thoughtlessness. Taken on their own many rude behaviours can be seen as an element of bullying but when looked at in context they are more about thoughtlessness, lack of consideration and poor manners rather than a deliberate attempt to hurt someone.

**Teasing** refers to annoying, hurtful behaviour that is used to get a reaction from someone else. Teasing can be persistent in nature, but not always. It’s generally an attempt to get under a person’s skin. It can involve name-calling; it can be personal and hurtful in nature. It can also infringe on another person’s rights. But generally teasing doesn’t have the key ingredients that make up bullying.

Bullying is the *selective, uninvited, repetitive* oppression of one person or group by another. It involves **three elements** – intent to hurt or harm; power imbalance; and repetition over time. It takes many forms and guises including physical aggression; verbal abuse; emotional aggression (or blackmail); intimidation; harassment and exclusion.

The new cyber-dimension to bullying has moved the goalpost for many kids. In the past children and young people could escape bullying behaviours by being at home. Cyber-bullying means that children can’t escape bullies like they once could.

**Why the distinction?**

I hear the term bullying misused a great deal in the media and when talking with parents. We run the risk of “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” Syndrome where we become so desensitised to the term that we (or teachers) ignore it when children really are the victims of bullying. We also run the risk of failing to skill our kids up to manage rudeness and teasing if we categorise every awful behaviour that kids experience as bullying.

Our ability to be discerning about bullying is as important as the action we take when we are sure that our child is on the receiving end of bullying behaviour. These actions include: dealing with feelings; providing emotional coping skills, getting others involved; building up a child’s support networks; and building self-confidence that can take a battering.

Bullying needs to be taken seriously. But we also need to be discerning about bullying behaviours.