Dear Parents and Carers,

At Gorokan Public School we believe that continual improvement comes from self-reflection and feedback from the community.

**Tell Them From Me Student Survey** - I am delighted that this term, our school, like many others in the state, will participate in a Department of Education initiative: the *Tell Them From Me* student feedback survey. The survey aims to help improve student learning outcomes and measures factors that are known to affect academic achievement and other student outcomes. The focus of the NSW-wide survey is on student wellbeing, engagement and effective teaching practices.


The survey is a great opportunity for our students to provide our school with valuable and quick feedback on what they think about school life, how engaged they are with school and the different ways that teachers interact with them. Schools in Australia and around the world have used the *Tell Them From Me* survey to help improve how they do things at school.

I want to assure you that the survey is confidential and school staff will not be able to identify individual students from their responses. The survey is conducted online and will typically take less than 30 minutes to complete. It will be administered during school hours between 14 March and 8 April. Participating in the survey is entirely voluntary.

A consent form and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) for parents/carers about the survey is being sent home with students. If you do not want your child or children to participate, please return the consent form to school by Friday 26 February. The FAQs and copies of the consent form, including translated consent forms, are available from the website above.

**Clean up Australia Day / School Working Bee** – The School Earth Rangers group is organising a school working bee on Sunday 6th March from 10:00am till 2:00pm.

Any help would be appreciated. Further information is detailed on page 3 of this newsletter.

**Parents and Citizens Association** – The P&C AGM will now be held on Monday 14th March in the technology lab at 3:15pm. All parents and caregivers are warmly invited to attend. Nominations for positions close at 3pm Monday 7th March.

**New Telephone System** - We have installed a new telephone system throughout the school to improve communication and safety. The new system allows each classroom to be able to have contact with the office and vice versa.

**Collecting Students from School Early** - If you are collecting your child from school early, please report to the office. The office ladies will then phone the classroom and your child will be sent down with their schoolbag. It is unsafe and disruptive to learning if people are making unscheduled visits to classrooms. Similarly, if you need to see your child's teacher regarding an issue please make an appointment via the office. Teachers are very busy preparing for the day in the morning and are often involved in meetings after school. To ensure that you receive their undivided attention, an appointment is essential.

**Sporting News** – The Zone Swimming Carnival was held today at Mingara. Congratulations to the students who competed. Further updates will be provided in next week’s newsletter. Best wishes are also extended to the students who are attending the Zone Rugby League and soccer trials this week.

**Parent Teacher Interviews** – A further reminder that parent teacher interviews will be held in weeks 10 and 11 this term. I would encourage all parents and carers to take advantage of this great opportunity.

Together we can make a difference.

**Jesmond Zammit**

Principal
**Kindergarten Supervisor – Mrs K Lansdowne**

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

**Homework** - Just a reminder that homework should be returned **every Friday** so that books can be exchanged for a new one. The children only need to complete **one activity** each week from the worksheet. Reading Eggs and Mathletics are an extra activity if they wish to do so.

**Photos** - Last week a photo that was taken on the children’s first week at school was sent home. If you wish to purchase any extras please check the information that was sent home with it.

**Excursion** - An excursion has been organised for the **5th May** (term 2). The cost will be $35.00. The children will be seeing a performance of the Peasant Prince. A note will be sent home soon.

**Best Start Feedback** - The Best Start Feedback will be sent home this week. Please remember that it is a snapshot of the child on that day and children have already begun to learn lots of new things.

**Parent Teacher Interviews** - Parent teacher interviews will be held during week 10 and 11 of this term. A note will be sent home shortly to arrange times. We would encourage you all to try and attend these interviews so we can continue to build a strong relationship.

**Class Award winners:**  
- **K/1B** - Noah  
- **KL** - Bailey, Max  
- **KS** - Jack, Lilli  
- **KR** - Liliannah, Lilah  
- **KT/S** - Taylor, Andrew

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**Stage 2 Supervisor - Mrs R Ranse**

**BYOD** (Bring Your Own Device) - For the first few weeks this year, Grade 4 students have been trialling a program where they have been able to bring in their own devices for use on a Friday afternoon. We are now ceasing this trial and students are no longer required to bring in any device such as an Ipod, Ipad or computer tablet from home. Students will have access to the school Ipads and laptops on a regular basis.

**Sport** - Sport for all of Year 3 and 4 students is on Tuesday afternoons due to a scheduling conflict with choir. Please ensure your child wears their school sports uniform each Tuesday.

**Mathletics and Reading Eggs** - A reminder that all students have now been set up with Reading Eggs and Mathletics. Please see your child's class teacher if you need further information regarding usernames and passwords.

**Paper Towel / Tissues / Handwash** - All donations of paper towel, boxes of tissues and bottles of hand wash will be warmly received by class teachers. Thank you for your support in keeping our students clean and healthy.

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

Tennis - We are happy to offer tennis as a sport option for our students. There are now 10 places still available (originally 30) for students who would like to receive professional tennis coaching during sport time on a Wednesday afternoon. Tennis coaching has already commenced and the students have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. If you would like your child to attend please pay $15.00 as soon as possible.

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.

Parent/Teacher Interviews - In weeks 10 and 11 (02/4/16 – 10/02/16), parents/caregivers will be given an opportunity to meet with the classroom teachers to discuss their child’s progress. This is a worthwhile opportunity for the parents/caregivers to work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to ensure your child achieves success.

Tell Them From Me Survey - Notes will be coming home this week regarding the survey. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. This research helps our school understand how we can improve our students' well being and engagement in the school. The survey also assists the teachers and Mr Zammit in determining methods or improving our students’ outcomes.

School Photos - The school photos for Year 5 and 6, class captains/prefects, house captains, swimming team, debating team and the school choir have been scheduled for Thursday, the 3rd of March – 2016.

This year we have been asked to raise funds for a special swing for our wheelchair students and maintenance on our gardens.

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.

Canteen News

Canteen Roster 2016 - Week 6 Term 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday 3rd March</th>
<th>Laura Ferguson, Paul Tydeman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 4th March</td>
<td>Shayne Dodds, Tina Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 7th March</td>
<td>Kimberley Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 8th March</td>
<td>Linda Stewart, Maria Poulos</td>
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<td>Wednesday 9th March</td>
<td>Kimberley Grant, Lee McCann</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 10th March</td>
<td>Paul Tydeman, Laura Ferguson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 11th March</td>
<td>Susan Cheney, Jodie Miller</td>
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Fruit & Veggie Friday - This term's fruit and veggie Friday will be on 4th March, 2016. Menu will be advertised outside the canteen. Lunch orders will be as normal.

Breakfast Club - Thank you to all the families and Baker's Delight who have donated bread and margarine towards our breakfast club. We are still in need of margarine.

School News

5 Cent Challenge - The P&C are trying a new fundraiser this term called the “5 cent challenge”. Each class has been given a bucket where children can put in all their 5c pieces. The fundraiser will run for 3 weeks beginning on Monday 7th March, 2016 and ends on Friday the 25th March. The class that raises the most funds will be rewarded with an Eagle Boy’s pizza luncheon on a date to be decided by the teacher. Start collecting your 5c pieces!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
**Parenting Ideas**

**Fathering teenagers**
By Michael Grose

**Shift parenting gears** - Most parents have to shift parenting gears when their kids move into adolescence. Mothers often make the shift first as they are quicker to see the signs (such as being argumentative, displaying silly behaviour, spending more time alone) that their loving child has been replaced by a teenager. Some dads are constantly angry with their kids during early adolescence as for the first time they experience challenge ("How dare you say that to me!"). But many are sad at the loss of their loving and lovely child. Once the shift is recognised and reconciled a dad can establish a new, deeper relationship with his teenager where he teaches, advises and inspires, at the same time giving them the space to make their own decisions.

As our attention is drawn towards young people’s schooling, particularly with their academic performance (or lack of it), it’s easy to forget that the developmental task for young people is to form relationships outside their family, with peers being the stepping stones to their own family. The job for a dad is to guide and assist teenage children to form meaningful relationships with others outside the family. This is best done by modelling healthy relationships with others outside the family. I believe that there are times when girls should argue with their father and let him know when he is on the wrong track, and that he should get off her back for a while. If she can learn to do this in a loving atmosphere she will learn to be on an equal footing with a man, and importantly to stand her ground.

**Be available** - The real trick to successfully fathering young people is to be emotionally available. It’s not just being in their vicinity because you can be in the same room as a young person but never connect. It means having a shared interest such as a love of the same football team so you have a connecting point, and also a genuine willingness to take an interest in their life right now. Perhaps the most common complaint I hear from teenagers is that their fathers focus too much on what their young people should be in the future, rather than on what’s important in their life right now. Taking an interest in their interests may well be the most potent strategy in a father’s armoury.

**Fathering sons** - Many fathers and sons get locked into the old ram/young ram syndrome. The young ram, full of energy and verve locks horns with the old ram that is desperate to prove himself at the expense of his son. Two things need to happen during this stage. First, dad needs to engage his son in fun, safe ways such as sport, physical games or even verbal jousting. Second, boys need to form relationships with someone outside the family who may give the same message as you, but is more easily accepted. Sports coaches, neighbours, uncles, aunts, teachers, even older siblings can fill this important role. Dads need to make room for others, which can be difficult for some men.

**Talk about relationships** - If there is one topic a dad should talk about with his teenage son it is about healthy relationships— both girls and boys. In particular, a boy’s attitude to women is strongly influenced by his father’s attitude. Peers do play a part, and their voice is strong during this age, but a father’s views are vital and need to be heard especially around treatment of women, and the place that pornography, that is now readily available, plays in the formation of their attitudes to females and healthy relationships.

**Fathering daughters** - A man’s relationship with his teenage daughter can be problematic. Teenage girls, who are notoriously verbal, can easily make their fathers feel irrelevant. It helps to have common interests. It also helps to share your passions and open up some of your world to your teenage daughter. If you want your daughter to be interested in you then you need to be interesting to her.

The active involvement of dads in their daughter’s lives has been linked to positive outcomes in many areas, including positive body image in girls. There are two things that dads can do that promote positive body image. First, get active with your daughters – rough and tumble games when young, sport in adolescence – to help her develop a sense of power and self-confidence. Also a dad demonstrates that he enjoys being with her in a way that has nothing to do with how she looks. The second thing that dads can do to promote positive body image is to compliment his daughter about how she looks as well as what she does. Far from sending mixed messages it can be reassuring to a girl that her appearance is acceptable to the most significant male figure in her life.

**Allow your daughter to stand up to you** - Why is it that some adolescent girls allow themselves to be pushed around while others assert themselves? The reasons are complex and can’t be attributed to one factor, however if you want a girl to stand up for herself, first she needs to find her voice in her own family. I believe that there are times when girls should argue with their father and let him know when he is on the wrong track, and that he should get off her back for a while. If she can learn to do this in a loving atmosphere she will learn to be on an equal footing with a man, and importantly to stand her ground and expect to be treated well.

There’s no doubt that adolescents are on steep learning curves, absorbing both lessons and values that will stay with them for life. While teachers and peers play a part in shaping their views, parents play a major role. Dads can easily feel locked out of their children’s lives during this critical stage. But it’s vital to claim your space and let your voice be heard albeit with sensitivity, compassion and a sense of humour.

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