Great start to school year
We have had a terrific start to the school year and staff are very impressed with how quickly students are settling into their work routines. It is worth remembering that your child is re-adjusting to the demands of thinking hard and learning new skills after an extended period of relaxation. Please don't be shocked if your child is tired and grumpy and even reluctant to come to school (My family are contending with this same issue and I should really know better after all these years of teaching!)

Welcome to Peta Lucas who is the latest member of our staff team and we are thrilled to have Peta join us from Little River Primary School.

International Baccalaureate (IB)
At the end of term 1, 2009 our school will become a fully authorised International Baccalaureate World School.

During January (whilst students were on holidays) our staff voluntarily participated in a series of workshops being conducted in Melbourne by the Asia Pacific region of the IB. I would like to extend my appreciation to all staff for their commitment to what we all recognise as being a fantastic development for our school.

Whole School assemblies
At 3.10 pm each Friday afternoon Parents are invited to a whole school assembly that is conducted in the hall next to the school. This is a great opportunity to share in the great learning experiences our students are involved in. Everyone is welcome. This Friday at assembly, we will be celebrating the retirement of Peter Mellross who has been a Highton teacher for many years. I encourage members of our community to come along and help give Peter a fitting send off. Families are invited to stay behind after assembly and have a cuppa and a chat with Peter.

School Council Elections 2009
March 31st will see the end of the two year term of office for parent member, Fabio D’Agostin as well as the retirement of Wayne Watson Margot Davies and Dean Gibson and Department member, Joy Lewis. On behalf of our school community I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of these councillors who have willingly volunteered their services for the benefit of all students in our school.

Highton Primary School Vision
Our vision is to inspire our children to value; caring, respect, tolerance, honesty and positive attitudes through a curriculum aimed at individuals, fostering life long learning within an international perspective.

Highton Primary School is a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate Organisation Primary Years Program
Education Maintenance Allowance 2009

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided to assist eligible families with the costs associated with the education of their children.

To be eligible for receipt of the EMA you must:
be either a parent or guardian of a primary or secondary school student up to the age of sixteen; and
be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004 or be a Veterans Affairs (TPI) pensioner or be a foster parent.

Consequently parents/guardians are able to access the EMA if they have a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card. The eligibility criteria must be met as at the first day of Term 1 (28 January 2009 which is the first day for teaching staff) and Term 3 (13 July 2009).

The EMA application must be submitted to the school by 27 February 2009 for the first instalment and 7 August 2009 for the second instalment.

Parents with continuing eligibility, who are paid the first instalment of 2009 through this school will not be required to complete a new application for the second instalment. Parents who transfer children to another school after 27 February 2009 and prior to or on 7 August 2009, must reapply at the new school for the second instalment.

EMA application forms are available from the school office.

Parenting Boys Program

For Parents of Boys aged 8—12 years old
Highton Primary School
Run over 4 nights
(4th, 11th, 18th & 25th March)
By John Hanley
Please register with Joy Lewis by 25th February

Book Club

Our first Book Club for 2009 is due back by Thursday 12th February. This is a fantastic opportunity to buy books etc for your children at a reasonable price and support the school.

Second Hand Uniforms

Second Hand Uniforms are available from the Parents Club at school
Please see Lyn in the office or Helen Perry (Jess Prep, Brooke JRL or Nick SNS) to arrange a suitable time for purchase.
We are always looking for good quality uniforms that your children no longer require, please leave any surplus uniforms at the office, or see Helen Perry if you wish to sell them.
Welcome back and I hope everybody is refreshed and ready for the new school year. It has been very nice to have so many happy faces calling into the Art room and the Preps were extremely eager and enthusiastic during their very first Art lesson today. During Term 1 children will be focusing on “Cultural Art.”

All students need to have an Art smock or old shirt clearly labelled with their name and class ASAP. This is very important as school uniforms are expensive and they need to be protected from paint etc. These Art smocks will be stored in your child’s class.

At the moment the Art room has ample recyclables and until further notice I no longer require containers, meat trays, boxes etc. Thank you to the parents who have already dropped off bags of goodies in the art room.

A huge thank you to David Kavenagh for painting the Art Room tables – they look fantastic.

Art timetable (Subject to change)
Tuesday- Senior Garland, Senior Stewart, Prep Curtis-Short and Prep Diaz.
Wednesday- Middle Allan and Middle Johanna.
Thursday- Junior Lucas, Junior Henzgen and Junior Pecchiari.

My Crayon
By Michelle Harris

With my crayon
I draw my dreams,
Color my rainbows,
And then draw me.

I am just a boy,
One with a crayon,
I’m full of imagination,
And full of colorful dreams.

I love my crayons,
Red is best,
It’s my favorite color,
One I draw with.

Do you have a favorite crayon,
Come draw with me,
Use your favorite color,
Then draw your dreams.

I hope you enjoyed this poem about children’s Art as much as I did.

Thank you
Tania Kiddle –Art Teacher
I now call for nominations to fill these vacancies for a new two year term of office. Nomination forms can be collected from the school office.

School Crossing

We are all teachers and leaders whether we realise it or not. It is important that everyone in our community accepts responsibility for the safety of others. Please remember that if we can teach our children to always use the school crossing then we are potentially passing on a life saving gift. All drivers need to be aware that we have clearly marked drop off zones at the front of the school where cars cannot be left unattended. These zones are designated for dropping off students and going. Council traffic officers will fine drivers who park in these areas whilst school crossing flags are on display.

Appreciation

The Perry family have been at it again and our school grounds are looking neat, tidy, trimmed and terrific. On behalf of all of our school community I extend my sincere appreciation to Helen and Mark.

Also a big thank you to the members of our Environment Committee who have been constantly working through out the holidays.

A special thank you to Mark Nicholls and Dean Gibson for packing up our chook house.

School Council Invitation

School Council will be holding their first meeting for 2009 on Monday evening (Senior Classrooms) commencing at 7.30 pm. All members of our school community are welcome to attend these meetings.

Weather Extremes

We are very fortunate at Highton that our classrooms are fully air conditioned. During periods of hot weather we will not be closing unless there is a loss of services (i.e. power or water) to the school. During weather extremes children will follow the same procedures as a wet day and remain in doors.

We encourage all children to drink regularly and the wearing of a hat when venturing out doors is compulsory. Students who forget their hat must remain beneath shade areas during lunch and recess breaks.

Daily Organisation Changes

This year we have made a change to the organisation of daily class times. Each day will generally commence with a two hour literacy block from 9:00 am—11:00 am followed by a thirty minute snack break. From 11:30 am—1:30 pm classes will complete an hour of numeracy and then an hour of inquiry or specialist subjects. The lunch break will run from 1:30—2:30 and the final session from 2:30—3:30.

These changes have been made to maximise teaching and learning times for students. Teaches have long known that students learn best at the commencement of the school day when they are rested and enthusiastic about the day ahead which is why literacy and numeracy is generally scheduled during am hours. We also believe that nutritionally students will benefit from the longer break between recess and lunch and thus ensure that all of their healthy lunches are eaten.

The sound of rumbling stomachs yesterday and today (I am largely referring to staff) tells us that we will need to get our body clocks synchronised with these changes but believe the effort will benefit learning for all students.

Fire Drill

Each year we practise a number of emergency drills and our first fire drill this year will be conducted on Friday the 20th of February.

Student Support Group (SSG) Meetings

Support group meetings are currently being organised for the week commencing Monday the 23rd of February.

School Entry Assessments—Prep Students

Prep students will not be required at school on Wednesdays until the week commencing Monday the 16th of March. On these days Marie and Elisabeth will be conducting individual assessments with students to enable them to plan and teach each student at their point of need. An individual appointment time will be arranged with each family. We understand that this can be an inconvenience for families but hope that you can appreciate the importance of teachers conducting these initial assessments. To determine the precise learning needs of each student.
Highton Primary School Council Elections 2009

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally formed bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within centrally provided guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council?

There are three possible categories of membership:

- **A mandated elected Parent category.** More than one third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) employees can be Parent members at their child’s school as long as they are not employed at the school.

- **A mandated elected DEECD employee category.** Members of this category may make up no more than one third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.

- **An optional Community member category.** Its members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DEECD employees are not eligible to be Community members.

The term of office for all members is two years. Half the members must retire each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Why is Parent membership so important?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might seriously consider

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

No. What you do need is an interest in your child’s school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school’s future.

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or
you can nominate yourself in the Parent category.

DEECD employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not employed are eligible to nominate as parents for the school council where their child is enrolled

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

**Remember**

Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do

Consider standing for election to council this year

Be sure to vote in the elections.

**Highton Primary School**

**Schedule 4     Notice of Election and Call for Nominations**

An election is to be conducted for members of the School Council of Highton Primary School

Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4 pm on Tuesday 10th of February 2009.

The ballot will close at 4 pm on Tuesday 24th of February 2009.

Following the closing of nominations a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership category</th>
<th>Term of office</th>
<th>Number of positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent member</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 2009 to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2011</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEECD employee member</td>
<td>From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 2009 to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2011</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

**Contact Craig Salmon for further information.**
Helping Children Develop Friendships

Parents and professionals often struggle with helping children learn to be good friends or to understand the complexities of social interactions. Below are a number of strategies that can help children develop friendships.

1. **Get Involved** – Participate in community sports teams, art programs, and special events. These are wonderful opportunities for children to engage in structured activities with peers. For children with special needs, communities increasingly are offering camps and activities geared towards their specific needs. Ask professionals and support groups for information on these programs or check your community newspapers, centers, and websites. Another great activity, for children who benefit from very direct instruction, is social skills groups. These groups, which are offered in many communities, are a great way for children to develop their social skills in a fun yet structured environment.

2. **Leverage the Child’s Interests** – If the goal of enrolling a child in a program is to provide opportunities for making friends, look for activities the child enjoys. Some children like the arts while others enjoy sports. If a child is particularly shy, look for activities that initially have less direct contact. Tumbling and swimming are examples of individual sports while soccer and basketball involve more contact with peers. If children start in activities they enjoy, they are more likely to join other programs.

3. **Role Play Difficult Skills** – Practicing social skills is a way to work on specific aspects of social interactions. For example, if you notice your child stands too close to peers or repeatedly asks the same questions, help them learn about personal space or conversational skills through role play. By practicing these skills in the home, children can learn to improve their social skills and apply them outside the home.

4. **Provide Examples** – While reading books or watching television, explain social situations to children. Point out how helping others, using kind words, and listening when friends talk are ways to be a good friend. When characters are being hurtful or invading someone’s personal space, point these actions out and ask the child what the character could do differently to be a better friend.

5. **Model Being Good to Others** – Part of being well liked and being a good friend is being kind. Demonstrate kindness by saying nice things about and to others whether they are the grocery store employee or your neighbor. Point out when a co-worker does something thoughtful and how this makes you feel about them. If your child is sympathetic or says something complimentary, tell them their actions made you happy.

6. **Do Not Force Friendships** – Just like adults, children get along better with some peers than others. Teaching children to be kind and to include everyone in activities is important, but they do not have to be best friends with everyone.

To receive a **free customizable children’s book** on waiting, visit our website:

www.sandbox-learning.com