

NEWSLETTER

January

1998

ENCL: 1998 CALENDAR,
ARTS OPTIONS SHEET,
LAND MAP for new families
IMMUNISATION FLYER for Tinies,

*Welcome to new families,
and welcome back to the old:*

FIRST DAY is TUESDAY 3rd FEB

CALENDAR FOR 1998

Please find enclosed. There are extra copies in the display stand behind the door in the south east corner of the common room.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

poc, please advise parents of this.

TEACHERS, PARENTS and FRIENDS - Gathering to say hello from 7:30 - 9pm on Friday 6th Feb in the Meeting Room (upstairs at 599).

TINIES 2PM FINISH during February. Full days are exhausting at the beginning for some.

FIRST DAY ACTIVITIES

8.45am arrive at School.

9am Leave FCS for meeting in Community Rooms (incl interested parents of course)

10.00am Fruit and drink

10.15am classes according to timetable, during which new people will be welcomed, sort out drawers, boxes, books. There is no need to bring any stationery unless you want to.

1.00pm picnic at the Edinburgh Gardens near the swings - all welcome. Children may be collected from the Park (advise Faye or Jeannette) or will be brought back to school at **2.30pm**.

FEES for 1998

School fees for each term are to be paid before that term starts.

Please pay on the invoice you receive and make cheques payable to *FITZROY COMMUNITY SCHOOL*.

Please post your payment to the school accountant or place it in the bursar's box in the school kitchen. Pay before school starts. No cash though – if it must be cash, see Philip who will swap it for a cheque.

Please note that after term 1 this year, each term's fees are due by the last day of the preceding term.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Continuing students will be assumed to be taking the same optional extras as in 1997. If there are any changes, the fee invoices will be adjusted later in the term. Please do not delay paying your fees for this reason while these details are sorted out. Any adjustments will show in the next invoice.

New parents please complete the attached form and return to Jeannette if you desire optional extras (e.g., Dance, Violin, Chinese, etc).

If there are to be any changes, please hand in option forms to Jeannette on the first day - or if you need to discuss your options, during the first week.

Best Wishes to ANDREW, CAIT, DAVID, HUGH, LEAH & MATTHEW

Our thoughts go with you, our graduates of last year. We have every confidence that you will do well at your big secondary schools - as have those who went before you. Remember, we love to see you and to hear how you are going.

LOLLY DAY

On WEDNESDAY afternoons (only) children may go to the corner shop. (Tinies and Littlies must wait to be escorted by teachers). Small children typically bring \$1.00 on this day. There are to be no lollies or soft drinks at school at any other time. No chewing or bubble gum EVER.

CERTIFICATE of IMMUNISATION STATUS required for new entrants. Place in Secretary tray in kitchen or hand to Jeannette. (See red leaflet)

SWIMMING

First swim will be on the second day of term, the 4th of February, and every Wednesday. Bring bathers and towel. Make sure sunscreen is applied before school. While weather is hot swimming is at Fitzroy Pool (Alexander Parade). Later in the year we go to Brunswick Baths (Dawson Street).

ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

Parents please see that all children have sunscreen on their face and arms when they come to school. All children should have a hat at school or in their bag every day. There are always outings, scheduled and unscheduled.

ARRIVAL TIMES and BEFORE SCHOOL CARE

Official arrival time is 8.45 am. Staff are on duty as from 8am.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

At 3.15pm any remaining children will be assembled and by 3.20pm will be chauffeured to:

- (i) the Organ Factory - PH 9486 2675
- (ii) St. John's - Queens Parade PH 9489 1346
- (iii) Princes Hill Community Centre (their bus collects)

Please ring Jeannette to arrange one of these.

LUNCH

The children do not bring lunch to school. They make it here. Sometimes there is a hot meal. This contributes to the development of kitchen skills and to a family atmosphere where everyone shares the same food.

Both vegetarians and omnivores are routinely catered for. If your child has special medical requirements please speak to Jeannette or Faye.

Staff and parents please understand that you too are invited to partake of food and drink in the school common room (kitchen).

A CHILD'S CONFIDENCE

Parents, you are engaging the services of an ALTERNATIVE school. A parent must select the school that best fits their aspirations and values. Having done so, it is important then that the parent impart to their child a **sense of confidence in the chosen school** - for this greatly enhances the value the child takes from the school.

ADULT-CHILD RATIO

Our school in particular involves the **community**, primarily the parents, often past students, etc. And it is precisely because of this broader use of human resources that we are able to give such personal attention, small class sizes, and a rich curriculum - without having to charge typical private school fees.

OUTWARD BOUND

We are also alternative in that we have a **less confined existence** for the children. We have many outings and involvements with the local community. We have physical education and camps for all ages. We allow them to use tools, crockery, etc.

We believe in the rationality of children, we work to build their survival skills and we aim to build their confidence.

Outcomes at secondary and later confirm that FCS achieves these goals.

THE VALUE OF FREE TIME

An important item on the timetable is the Free Time period (for small groups). Students learn to get along with each other (sometimes involving discussions with staff), discover their own interests and organise their own projects - all part of taking charge of oneself.

HOW we define PROGRESS

When we created this school, we made our uppermost aim the present and future empowerment of the individual child. To us this means developing self-confidence and social skills.

Naturally, it is not uncommon for beginners to lack one or two essential social graces. We are not surprised or troubled by these things, but we do expect co-operation from the parents when behavioural guidance is needed.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

It has been as much of a pleasant surprise to us as to anybody to find that attending to personal development produces high academic success as a by-product.

Our three graduates of 1991 did Yr 12 in 1997. Congratulations to Amy Prendergast - (TER score of 97.5), and James Gill - (TER of 93.7). Both Amy and Jimmy will be doing Arts at Melbourne Uni. Our other Year 12 boy, Peter Wazna-Blank is now living in the USA, is doing very well, and will finish school in July 1998.

Please note that we do not have a rigid achievement curriculum, particularly for

Tinies. The most important item on the curriculum for them is establishing a positive attitude to learning and a happy relationship with school life. We do not regard it as educational success to drum performance into small children if at the same time we are setting them up for future difficulties.

We are concerned for the quality of childhood and the **long-term** prosperity of the pupil. The special service we offer is to combine those two goals into one curriculum.

We claim for our school is that by the time they get through Year 6 here, they will be well ahead, both in attitude and achievement, of what they would have been elsewhere.

Secrets of Success of FCS

FCS has become very popular, with a growing waiting list. We believe that if we advertised, we could fill another campus right away.

FCS' unique lifestyle and glowing outcomes are of course due to the way it is conducted. There are many traps for alternative schools. The hard-won success of FCS is built on the trial-and-error of perhaps 20 failed alternative schools that opened with us in the 70s. We expect that parents joining us have, in fact, read and clearly understood the Affirmations or Enrolment Forms.

To help keep the ship on course, the Founders are writing a **FOUNDERS MANUAL** for everyone to read, one page of which will appear with each newsletter (sent to parents, staff and friends approximately monthly). The

next newsletter will include Chapter 1 *What is FCS?*

NEW PARENTS please NOTE

Road sense is essential in our school. We are an inner urban school and we front onto a busy street. We have many outings. Please ensure your children understand that the road is dangerous and that they are not to cross any street without an adult.

BOOTS

Elastic sided leather boots are wonderful for Tiny feet (no bothersome laces!) However, it is difficult to connect owner and boots when they are all in a pile in the kitchen! Phillipa (mother of Marina & Astrid) has solved the problem by sewing buttons onto the back of the elastic rings used to pull the boot on.

PARENTS, KEEP IN TOUCH!

Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time on any day - 100% access. Parents who work and are not able to visit regularly are urged to take at least a couple of hours per term to spend time at the school.

If teachers have any concerns, they will contact parents. Similarly, parents are encouraged to initiate a chat with teachers whenever the need is felt - make an appointment if desired.

On two occasions, once in Term 1 and once in Term 4, there is a Family Day at the land - the school campsite - to which families and friends are invited. Dates on Calendar. Map attached for new families.

Please note the Adult Dinner date and the Fund Raising date and write it in your diary.

Also, every Wednesday afternoon, there is an adults afternoon tea 3pm-4pm in the school kitchen - for any parents and/or friends who may wish to stay and chat.

Looking forward to Tuesday the 3rd.

*Philip, Faye, Jeannette,
Tim
& Staff.*

