

NEWSLETTER

January

1999

ENCL: 1999 CALENDAR,
ARTS OPTIONS SHEET,
LAND MAP for new families

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

FIRST DAY is TUESDAY 2nd FEB

CALENDAR FOR 1999

Please find enclosed. There are extra copies in the display stand behind the door in the south east corner of the common room. Note these dates where you will see them.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Parents in receipt of a Health Benefits Card qualify for this. Talk to Leslie.

Teachers, Parents & Friends -
Opportunity to say hello from 7:30 - 9pm on Friday 5th Feb at school.

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

**ARRIVAL TIMES and
BEFORE SCHOOL CARE**
Official arrival time is 8.45 am.

Staff are on duty as from 8am.

FIRST DAY ACTIVITIES

8.45am arrive at School.

9am Leave FCS for meeting in Community Rooms at oval opposite (parents welcome)

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 1999

School fees for each term are to be paid by the last day of the preceding term.

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

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

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Continuing students will be assumed to be taking the same optional extras as in 1998. 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 CORA, EMMA, GABE, MATTHEW, and MIRIAM,
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, Middlies in groups). 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.

SWIMMING

First swim will be on the second day of term, the 3rd 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.

TIM and the LADS

Tim B is at present crossing China by train with Matthew, Warren, Nick Van D, Jasper, and Cameron. Looking forward to hearing your tales of the Orient chaps.

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, or
- (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.

We ask parents to support this practice with their children because of the community spirit it helps create.

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 at any time (kitchen).

All parents please read carefully.

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 fees that few could manage

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 if we seek their help with behavioural guidance.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

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

Five of our 1992 graduates did VCE last year. Congratulations to Luke A, Romany, Mary and Tessa who all got TERs in the 90s (from 92.95 to 99.4). Congrats too to Zoey. We don't have her mark yet, but she was awarded the RMIT Caltex VCE *Student of the Year* Award for General Excellence. Zoey will go on with the Australian Ballet School now. Alex J did an IB course, and we are looking forward to finding out what Alex's plans are for 1999.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

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 avoidance behaviour and other 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. What we claim for our school is that by the time they get through Year 6 here, the children 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, Philip & Faye 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 the Chapter on *The Origins of 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.

CONGRATS KIRA (Volkoff-Clarke) (FCS 1992) who has been appointed School Captain at Balwyn High School for 1999.

BOOTS and SHOES

There tends to be a bit of an agonised search for footwear at the end of the school day, especially for small people

and especially on hot days. To avoid the necessity for a distressing end to the school day, we recommend good quality shoes from the opportunity shop, several pairs of. Most do tend to resurface eventually.

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 or to 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.

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 2nd.

*Philip, Faye, Jeannette,
Tim
& Staff*



