Dear Parents and Guardians,

On Thursday of this week we will be holding our Easter Parade to coincide with our Books for Homes launch. All parents, community members and friends are invited to come along and support the students. The parade will commence at 11:30am with the Books for Homes Launch at 12:00pm. The program will conclude with a whole school tabloid games afternoon commencing at 1:45. On Thursday there will be some slight changes in our daily timetable – Recess will be from 10:45am to 11:05am and Lunch will be from 1:00pm to 1:45pm.

Last week a number of Gillwinga students took the opportunity to refine and develop their Public Speaking skills by entering in an in-school competition held for students from Stages two and three. The eleven contestants were each asked to deliver a prepared speech on a topic of their choice and an impromptu speech on an unknown topic. One of the more common themes running through the prepared speeches was the multicultural theme of “Differences” which coincided with Harmony Day. Some of the other topics included a mouth watering lesson on the history of chocolate, some very interesting information about Japan and one student dealt with the controversial subject of hunting and the eradication of animals that are considered to be pests.

From the results, the judges selected four students, Krystelle Lentfer and Hanna Kaptein from Stage two and Griffin Wheatley and Lex Bagster from Stage three. These four students will compete in the finals of the Clarence/Coffs Public Speaking competition that will be held later in the year. Thank you to those parents and friends who came along to show their support to the students and congratulations to all those students who took part in the competition.

Thank you to those parents and grandparents who took the opportunity to attend our assembly and morning tea last Friday as part of Senior’s week. Ms Cross, Miss Watters and 5/6C did a wonderful job of putting together a fabulous slide show dedicated to grandparents.

Parents and students are reminded about the annual ANZAC day commemoration that will be held on Thursday 25th April which will be in the second week of the school holidays. I would ask that people please mark this date on your calendar and ask as many students as possible to participate in the march and the commemoration service. The ANZAC day march traditionally starts at the New School of Arts and concludes with the wreath laying...
ceremony and service held at the cenotaph at the river end of Skinner Street.

I hope that everyone has an enjoyable time over the Easter break and with any luck the weather will allow everyone to get and do the things they enjoy. School will recommence for all students and staff on Tuesday 2nd April.

“Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, it's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope.” — Dr. Seuss

Mr Phil Cavanagh
Principal

School Attendance

One of the key issues that Gillwinga P.S. is focussing on through the Management Plan and School Targets is that of school attendance and the procedures and policies associated with it.

Our school procedures have been reviewed and updated to correspond directly with the current legal requirements of State and Federal policies. Some of the key policy information is:

- All students who are enrolled at school, regardless of their age, are expected to attend that school whenever instruction is provided.
- Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.
- Parents are required to explain the absences of their children from school promptly and within seven school days to the school.
- Schools must provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance.
- Schools will undertake all reasonable measures to contact parents promptly and within two school days of an unexplained absence occurring.

With this in mind, over the next three Newsletters you will be provided with some key information to assist parents and staff to maximise attendance, ensure absences are recorded and monitored effectively and allow students the opportunity to maximise their potential.

What Do I Do If My Child Has To Have A Day Off Or Is Late To School?

If your child has to be absent from school for any reason, especially arriving late or leaving early, you must inform your child's teacher or the administrative assistant at the school. You must explain the reason in person by phone, email or written note as soon as possible, but must be within seven days. Failure to explain an absence within this time will be recorded as an Unjustified Absence on a student's record.

A small number of absences may be justified if your child:

- has an unavoidable medical or dental appointment (preferably these should be made after school or during holidays)
- has to go to special religious ceremony
- is required to attend a serious and/or urgent family situation (e.g. a funeral)
- is too sick to go to school, or has an infectious illness.

To help accurately record all students absences Gillwinga P.S. are implementing the following procedures that will be fully applied in term 2.

1. Designed green absent notes and distributed to community as an option to explain a student’s absence.
2. On the second day of returning from absence without an explanation the class teacher will give the student a green absent note with relevant date filled in to be completed by parent or carer.
3. On the fourth day of returning from absence without an explanation the class teacher will attempt to phone parent to establish the reason for absence.
4. On the seventh day of returning from absence without an explanation the class teacher will record the absence as Unjustified.

As you can appreciate there is a lot of additional administrative work for the
classroom teacher to do if notes are not brought in promptly so please assist us by sending in a note the very next day after an absence.

Next week we will look at the question: What Happens If My Child Has Too Many Unjustified Absences?

Music
Anyone interested in guitar lessons please contact the office. Cost is $12 per week and your own guitar is required.

AWARDS
Congratulations to our weekly award winners: C-Jay Flentjar, Trent Pearce, Chance Fuller, Catie Holloway, Xander Fisher, Ryan Fallon, Ally Grant, Jaime Lowe, Mickayla Joseph, Melanie Laurie.

Writer of the Week: Rose Williams
Times Tables Champion: Adam Ward

Library
Notes are going home today for outstanding library books. Please help your child to locate these books and return them to school. If the book has been lost or damaged, please pay the amount on the slip to the front office so the book can be replaced and your child is able to continue borrowing. Storing their books in a library bag will help to keep them clean and make it easier to locate. Library bags are available for $5.50 at the front office if you do not already have one.

Dates to Remember:
Thurs 28th March: Easter hat parade

School Banking
School banking will be on Tuesday 2nd April next week due to the Easter Monday holiday.

P&C News
Don’t forget Mother’s Day coming up in May. Any donations for items for the Mother’s Day stall would be greatly appreciated.

Canteen Roster
Mon 1st April: Public holiday
Tues 2nd April: Michelle Tainsh
Wed 3rd April: Kylie Chalker, Terri Duroux, Kylie Kelly

COMMUNITY NEWS
Cranes – Family Relationship Skills Program
2 workshops to support parents get strong after difficult times:
2. Attending to Stress – Understanding and recognising the effects of stress, developing a plan. Monday 8th April 9.30am-2.30pm Pullen Centre, Grafton.
Child care is available for both courses. Contact FRSP 66427257. Books essential.

BASKETBALL FUN MORNING – Grafton Sports Centre
Tuesday 23rd April 9.30am – 12pm
Cost: $10 (includes morning tea)
Ages: 5 – 12 years
NO BASKETBALL EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
FUN MORNING OF SKILLS AND GAMES

CRAFT MORNING
Monday 29th April (Pupil Free Day) 9.30am – 12pm
Cost: $15 (includes morning tea and all supplies)
Ages: 5 – 12 years
A VARIETY OF CRAFT INCLUDING MOTHER’S DAY CARDS & GIFTS
Where: Grafton Sports Centre, 300 Powell Street
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL (for Craft)
Enquiries & Bookings: Please phone Dylan or Beck on 66431188 or email: gsc@clarence.nsw.gov.au
Check out our website for upcoming activities www.grafton.basketball.net.au

Grafton Winter Futsal - FNC NSW FUTSAL
(5-A-SIDE INDOOR SOCCER) Starts 1st May 2013
For further information Robyn Lawrence 0488 288 827
All ages groups Men’s, Mixed, Youth, Women, 8yrs skills, 10yrs, 12yrs, 14yrs www.futsalfnc.com.au