Dear families and friends,

A special welcome to the many new families and to the returning families of the Specimen Hill Primary school community. I trust that your experience at Specimen Hill is very positive and rewarding. I hope that everyone had a very relaxing and enjoyable holiday break and that you are now ready for a new and fresh year of fun and learning at school.

WELCOME

Firstly I would like to welcome 2 new staff members to Specimen Hill - Miss Leah Backas who is teaching in 3/4 and Mr Scott Pysing who is teaching in Grade 5/6. We wish them well in their teaching experience. To Miss Heard who has returned this year –welcome back; and to all of our returning staff members, it’s wonderful to have them all on board for another fabulous year. It seems that most have already settled in and are keen to embrace the year ahead.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The School Council Election process is upon us already. Nomination forms are available from the Office. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our retiring parent members of Liz March, Dean Stewart, Mark Snell, Veronica Collins and our community member Wendy White. Staff reps who are retiring from Council are Sally Brown and Kylie Gould. All of these people have generously given up time to participate in the smooth functioning and operation of our school. The role of School Council is a highly respected, rewarding and valued role in the smooth functioning and operation of our school. The role of School Council is a highly respected, rewarding and valued role in the smooth functioning and operation of our school.

- There are 4 parent positions and 2 staff positions up for nomination. (more information on Page 2)
- School Council Election Timeline:
  - Wed 9th Feb.- Notice of Election and call for nominations.
  - Wed 16th Feb.- Closing date for Nominations.
  - Friday 18th Feb.- List of candidates displayed.
  - Mon 21st Feb.- Ballot papers distributed (if required).
  - Mon 28th Feb.- Close of ballot and vote count.
  - Tuesday 1st March- Declaration of ballot.

Monday 7th March- First School Council Meeting for 2011.

BLACK SATURDAY BUSH FIRES 2ND ANNIVERSARY

On Monday at Assembly the school had a one minute silence to reflect on the devastation, the grief and loss and the generosity and regrowth from the 2009 Bushfires. The impact on many of our families was huge and a trauma that will never be completely erased. But like all trauma it is the support from others, the resilience we show and the coping mechanisms that we develop that help us through these tragic periods. Individuals and the school community as a whole have helped each other and demonstrated all of these aspects in a very positive and generous manner.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

All children are required to wear full school uniform at school every day. The school uniform shop sells uniforms at very low prices and also has an abundance of preloved uniforms (at no cost) in excellent condition. Please see Val or Kaye at the Office.

Hats—During Terms 1 and 4 it is compulsory to wear school hats whenever children are outside. These are available to purchase at the Uniform Shop. Please name all clothing items.

PREPS

What a delight it was to see our new Preps arrive at school. This is the start of their exciting journey into formal education. We wish them well for a happy and embracing journey of life long learning.

CHINESE VISIT

In the last Newsletter for 2010 I mentioned that the school will be hosting 10 Chinese students and one adult teacher from Xing Hai school in China. This visit will be occurring in May for 2 months and I am seeking families who are able to host a student in their homes for one or 2 months duration. This will be a fabulous opportunity to engage in a rich and rewarding experience of hosting a child from another culture. All Chinese students will speak English as the aim of the program is for immersion into the Australian culture. The students will all be in Grade 5 and will attend Specimen Hill P.S. on a daily basis unless alternative daily activities are arranged. There will be some financial support for host families. From Tuesday 15th Feb any family interested in being a host family can collect an Expression of interest form from the Office. There will be information sessions to follow before a full commitment to the program is required.

READERS

All students will be bringing readers home each night and as part of the home school partnership ALL children should be heard to read each night for at least 20mins. We are asking parents from students of all grade levels to sign off in each student’s reading diary on a nightly basis. We are closely monitoring home reading behaviours across the whole school. The most significant way to improve or to extend ourselves further is to practise!

CONCERNS/QUERIES

If you have any concerns or queries or there are any changes to your family circumstances or Wellbeing issues please feel free to contact Corey Warne, Bernadette Wright or myself for assistance.

I wish everyone a happy, friendly, fun filled, hard working and successful 2011 at Specimen Hill Primary School.

Welcome back to the 2011 school year at Speci
CALENDAR
There will be a monthly calendar sent home with the newsletter next week to put on your fridge. Check your weekly newsletter to add new dates as they arise. This will help to keep everyone up to date with school happenings.

Dates to Remember…
- Wed 9 Feb - School Council electoral process starts
- Wed 16 Feb - Nominations close—School Council elections
- Mon 7 Mar - School Council meeting
- Mon 14 Mar - Labour Day Holiday
- Tues 15 Mar - P-2 Arts Incursion
- Mon 21 Mar - Swimming program starts Prep-6
- 6-8 Apr - Grade 5/6 Camp
- Fri 8 Apr - Last day Term 1

STARS OF THE WEEK
The Star of the Week awards will be presented at next Monday morning assembly. These awards are given to students who demonstrate the values we hold at Speci. Such as: Supporting others, trying to do your personal best, achieving excellence in a particular area. We also celebrate citizenship and give out merit & effort awards.

School Council Information from DEECD

School Council Elections – Information for Parents

School Council Elections 2011

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.

- 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 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 February or March 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. For parents, this notice will probably be given to your child so you may need to check with them whether it has been sent home.

If you decide to stand for election, you will need to arrange for someone to nominate and second you as a candidate in either the Parent category or DEECD employee category. Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted in 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.

Contact Di Craig for further information.
STAFFING FOR 2011
Prep/Year 1:
Natalie Gleeson, Kim Manley
Year 1/2:
Jenny Ball, Jacqui O’Shea,
Kylie Gould/Julie Quinlan, Teresa Smart/Julie Quinlan,
Year 3/4:
Wendy Jackson/Sandy Young, Leah Backas, Lisa Maxwell.
Year 4/5 & 5/6:
Lorraine Campbell, Allan Sing, Scott Pysing, Katie Heard
LOTE: (Indonesian)
Helen Turpie
Art:
Sally Brown
PE & Sport / Year 1/2 & 3/4 classrooms:
Hayden Polglase
Reading Recovery:
Sally Brown & Helen Turpie
Business Manager:
Kaye Blackley
Office support:
Val Quinlan
Integration support:
Karen Emerson & Leah Johns
Casual Integration support:
Ms Ruth East, Mrs. Louise Smith
OHSC:
Leah Johns, Karen Emerson, Michael Lawlor, Arren Smith
Acting Assistant Principal:
Corey Warne
Acting Principal:
Di Craig

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA)
Parents eligible to receive the EMA must fill out the appropriate paperwork and return it to the school office after presenting current evidence (as at 1st February 2011) of eligibility. Parent or guardians must be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 1986 or be a foster parent; and submit their application to the school by 28th February.

Instalment 1
Parent share $80.50
School share $80.50
Instalment 2
Parent share $34.50
School share $34.50

The application form is attached to this newsletter. (Note: It must be presented in person to the school office with your Centrelink Benefit Card.

The school’s share is used to cover your child’s school fees and the balance goes towards your child’s excursion levy.

PERSONAL PROPERTY BROUGHT TO SCHOOL
Personal property is often brought to school by students, staff and visitors. This can include mobile phones (these are banned at Speci), calculators, toys, sporting equipment.
Please note the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development does not hold insurance for personal property brought to schools and it will generally not pay for any loss or damage to such property. (Cars parked on school premises are not covered.)

Therefore these items are brought at the owner’s risk.

BOOKS & REQUISITES PAYMENT
A reminder to parents about the schools Books and Requisites payment for 2011.
This fee pays for the books we purchase on your behalf for each student, at a cost of $100.00.
We request that each family contributes a voluntary $40.00. This amount will support the continued development of our grounds & upgrading school learning programs.
Thus the amount owing to the school is:
$140.00 for the first child and
$100.00 for each child thereafter.
We are very happy for families to arrange to pay this off or pay as a lump sum.
EMA recipients (School Share $125.00) have these fees partly covered.

EXCURSION LEVY
We have an option of pre paying your child’s excursion levy. This system has worked well over the past three years. Parents can pay up front for those parent funded items (like visiting performances) that previously needed to be paid for just before the performance. If you pay up front, your child will not miss the performance and you won’t have to be chasing around for change on the day before. That will mean you pay in advance and not worry about it for the rest of the year. (see detailed information enclosed – yellow sheet)

SCHOOL PAYMENTS
ALL school payments/excursion notes are to be posted in the letterbox at the school office. (Classroom teachers do not accept payments and excursion notes).
Please place your money and/or note in a clearly marked and secured envelope with your child’s name, grade and excursion. Family payments/notes may be enclosed in one envelope. Please ask your child to post the envelope at the office before school, to ensure they do not keep money in their school bag during the day.
The school offers an eftpos facility for any payments over $10.00.
During the year, if you have any queries regarding payment of money for excursions, balance of your child’s excursion credit etc. please see Val or Kaye in the office.

PICKING UP STUDENTS AFTER SCHOOL
As you are aware, school concludes at 3:15pm each day. In the interest of your child’s safety our rule is that
students not picked up by 3:30pm must come to the school office and be picked up there. This is because our yard duty teachers come in at 3:30pm. Your co-operation is appreciated.

Di Craig
Acting Principal

WELLBEING NEWS
Welcome back to everyone.
Bernadette Wright, the school’s Wellbeing Officer will be working in the school on a Monday, Thursday and Friday again this year. Bernadette once again will be working with teachers and students in classrooms with the Wellbeing Program during the day but has some time available to catch up with students and parents. Parents wishing to contact Bernadette must ring or organise a time at the office to see Bernadette.
If you have any concerns in relation to your child’s schooling, health, or any personal friendship or family issue please contact Corey Warne so that we can seek a solution or resolution on the issue.

ANAPHYLAXIS
The risk assessment and school and individual plans are currently being reviewed. To assist the school in its risk minimisation we would appreciate if parents could-
Avoid sending any nut products to school in lunches. (nutella, peanut butter, nut bars)
When contributing to class parties avoid nut products or inclusion of nuts on cakes etc. Listing ingredients would be appreciated.
Reminding students not to share lunches with others or to seek items from other children’s lunch boxes. This will be enforced at school
Please Note- Can parents please ensure the school receives an updated anaphylaxis plan for students who are required to have these. Plans can be handed in to the office A.S.A.P

ASTHMA
Can parents please ensure children who require a ventolin inhaler at school bring one in a clearly labelled bag.
Inhalers can be given to the class teacher.
Please ensure the school receives an updated asthma plan for all students who are diagnosed with asthma.
Assistant Principal

PARENT MANAGED HEAD LICE PROGRAM
We are seeking parents interested in assisting with this highly valued program. The program runs fortnightly.
Please fill out the form below and return to school.
Corey Warne, Actiing Assistant Principal

NAME: ________________________________
Student: ___________________________ Grade ________
I am able to assist with the program on
[ ] Wednesday [ ] Thursday [ ] Friday

PARENT MANAGED HEAD LICE PROGRAM

Senior Department News
Welcome to our school community for the 2011 school year. We are looking forward to a year of growth in learning and personal improvement. The 5/6 Camp for 2011 will be at the end of the term and more information adding to last year’s initial note will be sent home in the near future. This camp is a fantastic opportunity for students to advance personal skills in an adventurous but supportive setting.
The 1-1 Netbook program for the senior school will be under way soon. There are a few administration and technical details to finalize before a request will be made for attendance at an information session prior to students taking home netbooks.
Congratulations to the students involved in the Prep Buddy Program. These students do a tremendous job in helping the new Preps assimilate into the Speci school environment. Please remember to assist your child’s reading progress and habits by encouraging them to read each night, have some discussion about what they have read and record this activity in their reading log.

5/6 News Team

Middle Department News
A warm welcome back to all students and their families. We hope you had an enjoyable and restful holiday. For those students moving into the senior school we are sure you will enjoy the new opportunities, challenges and programs that our upper school offers.
The 3/4 team members are Leah Backas, Lisa Maxwell, Sandy Young, Hayden Poiglase and Wendy Jackson. Leah is new to Specimen Hill and we would like to welcome her to our school and team. We look forward to working with Leah.
Students will have the opportunity to undertake an hour of Art, LOTE and Physical Education throughout the week. All students in 3/4 will spend an hour in the garden, weather permitting, where they plant, assist with maintaining the garden in addition to harvesting produce and cooking what they have grown. And yes, also eat the result!
All students are required to undertake home reading on a nightly basis and this will be closely monitored by classroom teachers. We are asking families to establish a regular reading routine with their child. A suggestion for students who are too tired at bed time to read, a healthy snack after school followed by their home reading. All diaries should record the reading undertaken at home. We require parents to listen and monitor those children who are not yet independent readers, whilst students reading independently should discuss their reading with you on a daily basis. This greatly assists with comprehension. This is the best way that you can assist your child’s education.
A few housekeeping reminders. Students require a hat, otherwise they will have to sit on the veranda, under cover, during break times. Also an art smock will help to protect your child’s uniform during art sessions and a library bag means less damage to our valuable library books.
We look forward to a busy and rewarding year with your child.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns about your child.

3/4 Team

Our children’s future in the very best of hands.............
Junior Department News
Prep
Our Preps had a wonderful start to school this week. The children enjoyed meeting new friends and teachers. Our SEA interviews are well underway. Please see your child’s teacher if you are unsure of your child’s appointment day and time.

Grade 1/2
Grade 1 and 2 children have settled into their new classrooms beautifully. Please remember to send hats and readers to school each day. It has been wonderful to see that most children have a healthy sandwich and some fruit in their lunch boxes.

Preps-2 Team

GENERAL NEWS

BOOKCLUB
Bookclub order forms will come home this week. Please return by Tuesday 22nd Feb. All money needs to be returned in a named sealed envelope to the office please. No late orders will be accepted.

SPECI PLAYGROUP
Playgroup meets every Thursday from 9am to 10:45am in the Multi Purpose room starting on 17th February. We offer a variety of activities for 0 to pre-school aged children. The Playgroup provides an opportunity for school parents / carers to connect with others while children play in a safe, familiar and educational environment. Activities are fun and varied. Please bring a healthy snack, hat and sunscreen along to each session.
Cost is $1 per child per session.
Come along for a visit, bring along a friend.
Contact the office during school hours for more details.

LIBRARY NEWS
Welcome to the new 2011 year. We would encourage all children to take up borrowing books from our Library. All children will require a Library bag which are available from Mrs Young for $2.00, or you may use a shopping bag or pillow case to protect our books. Anyone finding books at home from last year please return ASAP. All books gratefully received.
Grade 1/2 will change their books on a Wednesday if parents could assist children in having their Library bag and book at school EVERY Wednesday.
Grade 3/4J will have Library Tuesday.
Borrowing will also be available on Monday and Wednesdays at lunchtime if children visit the Library during recess.
Thanks
Sandy

BREAKFAST PROGRAM
Speci Healthy Breakfast program will start next Wednesday 16th Feb. Please note change of day. All children are welcome to attend.
Time: 8.15 to 8.45 - children must be in the MPR by 8.30
Where: Multi Purpose Room
What: Cereal, toast, juice, fruit.
All children attending must have a signed slip.

HEALTHY BREAKFAST
Name: _________________________
Grade: _______________
I give my child/children permission to attend the breakfast program.
Parent’s signature: _____________________
A BIG THANK YOU

to parents who came up during the holidays to keep and have our grounds tidy and ready for 2011 start. It was very much appreciated.
Sally Brown

AFTER SCHOOL TUITION AND HOMEWORK HELP

The Kangaroo Flat Community Centre provides tuition for Prep to Year 10 students who need assistance with reading, spelling, English and maths. Financial help may be available to students who qualify. For information call the office on 5447 9687 during business hours to leave a message or phone Michael directly on 0413 116 096.

DENTAL CHECK-UPS

Free dental check-ups for Heathcote and Bendigo locals. An Oral-B mobile dental clinic will be at Heathcote RSL Club, 127 High Street, Heathcote this Friday 11th February. The clinic will be offering free dental check-ups, demonstrations and product samples to children and families from the area. This initiative is part of a wider Oral-B Health Program campaign. In its inaugural year, the Oral-B Health Program will fund a grants program for children from regional areas so they can receive timely access to much needed dental services. Th grants will be operated by Barnardos Australia. Children who visit the mobile clinic and are found to need dental work will be encouraged to apply for a grant. For more information on the mobile clinic or the grants program visit www.oralb.com.au or contact Chontelle Clark on 02 8353 5782

COMMUNITY NOTICES

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

• ASHC Phone No. 0447 788 636. Please ring Leah Johns for bookings/cancellations. Accounts will go home on a fortnightly basis and need to be paid at the school office.
• Thurs 10th Feb. - Yoghurt & Two Fruits, Cordial / Games on Basketball Court
• Fri 11th Feb. - Fresh Fruit Platter picnic / Quiet play in Multi
• Mon 14th - Mini Pizzas / Cooking
• Tues 15th - Fruit/Veg Platter picnic / Balloon fun
• Wed 16th - Mini Hotdogs / Free play on outside
• BSHC Phone No. 0438 062 561. Please ring Danika for bookings/cancellations.

UNIFORM SHOP

At this stage uniform order for short sleeve polo shirts have not arrived. Hopefully they will be here by end of week. Art smocks and shorts have arrived. Uniform Shop hours—8.30-12.30 Mon. & Tues. and all day Wed.

NEWSLETTERS are available from our website http://www.shps1316.vic.edu.au.

FOR SALE

CHOCOLATE FROGS
EVERY WEDNESDAY
END OF SCHOOL DAY
FOR $1.00

MEDICATION

If your child requires any medication at school whether natural, bought over the counter or prescribed medication, parents MUST come up to the school to fill our and sign the school Medication forms. We are unable to give medication without this appropriate authorisation. A letter from home is not sufficient.

Medication must have child’s name and label with details on prescribed medicine.

OUR children’s future in the very best of hands.............