Dear Parents,

**SOLAR POWER FOR SPECI!**
We have been successful in our application for the Federal Government’s Solar in Schools program. **This will give us $50,000.00 to install a 4.75kW solar power system** on the school roof. We have also put in an application for the State Government “Smart Schools” solar initiative and are waiting to hear about that. If successful (and we are quietly confident) this will give us enough money to put in a 6.3kW system! (about $75,000.00 worth!) This will be a magnificent addition to our facilities saving us money and reducing our carbon emissions! Staff & students will be able to monitor the power we produce and the savings we make then report this to you via the newsletter. A Web portal (internet site) will give us all this information as the system will have the technology to transfer this data to the portal. With all the additional computers in our school (Netbook program—reported in the last couple of newsletters) access to the information will be easy. An exciting program!!!

**SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS—2009**
At the close of further nominations last week we had more parent nominations than positions available. Therefore we have had to have a ballot for the three remaining positions. The ballot papers were sent home last week with a statement for each parent nominated. We need all ballots to be returned to school before Thursday this week. The ballot will close at 4:00pm—26 Feb.

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 2009**
Last year staff and the School Council discussed working with **Kim Donald again in 2009** on another Artist in residence program. All were enthusiastic to develop another project with Kim after last year’s fantastic wall mural project. Last year’s project involved Kim running classroom workshops then having each child come out to paint with her, eventually developing our fantastic ‘Bush to the Sea’ mural. This year we will be following a similar program with each grade selecting a ‘Value’ like ‘honesty’ or ‘respect’. Each child in the grade will be part of developing a grade totem around the Value they choose. When these are finished we will have them put into the ground in various spots around the school for all to enjoy.

**Dates to Remember…**
- Thurs 27 Feb - EMA applications close
- Mon 2 Mar - New School Council meeting 6pm
- Mon 9 Mar - Labour Day Holiday
- Sat 14 Mar - Working Bee
- Tues 24 Mar - Arts Incursion
- Fri 3 April - Last day Term 1

**Term 2**
- Mon 20 April - Start Term 2—2009 - School Photos
- Mon 27-29 April - Year 5/6 Camp

**STARS OF THE WEEK**
The Star of the Week awards were presented - Monday 23 February to:

- PG - Sean B
- PQ - Kira H
- P/1B - Zara W
- 1/2 H - Abby W
- 1/2 MY - Jasmine N
- 1/2 SW - Grace N
- 3/4B - Alyssa E
- 3/4G - Jordan H
- 3/4J - Haylee L
- 5/6B - Karley S
- 5/6M - Codie W
- 5/6S - Bronte M

Principal’s Award - Jackson E (1/2MY)

**Congratulations to all these students for their achievements & contributions**

**EDUCATION TAX REFUND** – Get 50% back

Under the new Education Tax Refund, parents and others who are eligible can now claim 50% of their eligible education expenses up to $750 for primary students and $1500 for secondary students.

This means you could receive a refund each year of up to $375 for each primary and $750 for each secondary school student in your care.

**Are you eligible?**
To be eligible you must have received Family Tax Benefit Part A for each child whose education expenses you wish to claim. You can also claim the...
Education Tax Refund if you were stopped from receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A because your child received any of the following:
- Youth Allowance (student) aged 18
- Disability Support Pension
- ABSTUDY
- the Veterans’ Children Education Scheme
- the Student Financial Supplement Scheme
- a scheme under s258 of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004
- an Australian Postgraduate Award.

Independent students are also eligible to claim.

What can you claim?
You can claim the purchase, lease, hire or hire-purchase costs, repairs and running costs of:
- laptops, home computers and associated costs — for example, internet and paper
- educational software, printers, USB flash drives, disability aids to assist in the use of computer equipment for students with special needs
- stationery and art supplies
- school textbooks and associated learning materials
- trade tools and safety equipment for secondary school trade courses.
- The materials cost of $70 per child at Specimen Hill PS can be claimed as you are paying for books and materials purchased on your behalf.

- Some of the expenses you cannot claim include school fees (That is the voluntary $30 per family at Specimen Hill PS.) or the cost of school uniforms, school excursions or travel to and from school, musical instruments or sporting equipment, clothing or footwear. For a more comprehensive list visit www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au

When can you claim?
You can claim your education expenses in your 2009 tax return. If you do not have to lodge a tax return, you will be able to lodge a separate claim with the Tax Office from 1 July 2009.

- Remember, you need to keep all receipts for expenses you claim.

If your education expenses in one year are more than the claim limit for your children, you can add the excess to your education expenses for the following year.

For more information:
visit www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au
phone the Tax Office on 13 28 61.

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 28th January 2009) 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 27th February.

CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?
If you have changed your address or phone number - WE NEED TO KNOW! Please see Kaye or Val at the school office or call 54 435 353. Thanks for your support with this matter.

BOOKS & REQUISITES PAYMENT
A reminder to parents about the schools Books and Requisites payment for 2009. This fee pays for the books we purchase on your behalf for each student, at a cost of $70.00. We request that each family contributes a voluntary $30.00. This amount will support the continued development of our grounds & updating our technology equipment (eg. Notebooks & Interactive White Boards).

Thus the amount owing to the school is: $100.00 for the first child and $70.00 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) covers the cost of these items.
This year School Council are providing another prize which will be won by one family who have paid their requisites & levy by the 1st of May. Each family paying by May 1st will be placed in a raffle draw for the prize. (EMA payment is accepted). The prize will be determined soon and advertised in the newsletter—last year we raffled three family vouchers to the “Zone”.

EXCURSION LEVY (reminder)
Last year we designed a single levy for the various excursions & excursions that we have during the year. This means that you 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.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK
The secret of achievement is to hold a picture of a successful outcome in mind.

Doug Jones
Principal

WELLBEING NEWS
As the term is progressing it has become quite noticeable that many children are very tired and listless at school. When children are tired they find it very difficult to focus on their learning and to interact positively with those around them. Therefore it is crucial that children have adequate sleep, usually 10-12 hours and have a healthy diet. We all know as adults how we respond on too few hours of sleep and a poor diet and children are just the same. Set sound routines of an evening with

Our children’s future in the very best of
mealtime, reading, bath and bed and children will respond in a more alert, vibrant and positive manner.

**Thanks**

A special thank you to Wendy White who organised a Linen Sales Fundraiser for the school families affected by the recent bushfires. Thank you to the parents who supported the fundraiser. Raffle tickets for a doona cover are available from the office. Tickets are 50c each or 3 for $1.00

Di Craig
Assistant Principal

**CLASS NEWS**

**JUNIOR NEWS**
Preps, Grades 1 & 2
Thank you for coming along to share information about your child at our recent interviews. It was a great opportunity to meet you and learn more about your child. We're looking forward to the Prep children being here all week next week. As of Monday they will attend school every day now.

It is very important that the children are able to read and share their books with you. Research has proven that the children who read regularly have a greater chance of success at school.

Clothing items, lunch boxes and drink bottles often get misplaced or lost. To help avoid this event make sure everything your child wears or brings to school is clearly labelled with their name.

Junior Dept. Team

**SENIOR NEWS**
Grade 3/4
Thankyou to all the parents who took the opportunity to come along last Wednesday and introduce themselves and their child to us. We hope you found this as valuable as we did.

Just a reminder that all students require a library bag. This should preferably be a material one, as they are more durable than plastic.

Congratulations to all students who were nominated or nominated themselves for the Junior School Council. Students did a wonderful job of preparing and delivering their speeches. It is very pleasing to see so many students keen to participate.

Congratulations to the following students for being elected to the Junior School Council in the 3/4 area. Kye and Cassandra from 3/4 J, Bailey and David from 3/4 C, Dacoda and Ebony from 3/4B & Kayla and Rikki from 3/4G.

Thankyou, Judy, Natalie, Craig and Wendy

**Grade 5/6**

Our final Gym Fitness Session will be on Thursday. It has been very successful with students participating responsibly. As we were able to achieve three sessions instead of four we have been offered catch-up sessions later in the year.

Last evening the Netbook Information Session was run with more information about the Netbook Program being shared. Speci's Netbooks should arrive next week and we can begin the familiarization process with staff and students once they are set to the school network.

Peer Mediation training will commence Monday and all Grade 5/6 will be involved in Peer Mediation.

Congratulations to our 2009 school captains and student leadership team and we hope their leadership experience day in Melbourne has begun to extend their skills.

Thank you
5/6 News Team

**PERFORMING ARTS**

A note will be coming home with information about the Arts Incursions we have booked for this year. Please read carefully and return the accompanying permission slip.

Julian Regan

**PE NEWS**

**Volleyball**

Volleyball training for team 2 will start TOMORROW night at 3.20-4pm in the multi purpose room. Parents are asked to be prompt in picking students up after training.

The Volleyball Associations matches will begin next Thursday, 5th March at 4pm.

**Netball**

Netball Coaches meeting to be held in the Staff room @ 3.20pm

Corey Warne

**LIBRARY NEWS - reminder**

The Library will be available for children to borrow books. All children require a Library bag to protect books. Please encourage your child to return books regularly. Library bags are available for $2 from Mrs Young. Any overdue books from last year will be gratefully received.

Thankyou
Sandy

**GARDEN GROUPS - DONATIONS**
The Grade 3/4 Garden Groups are looking for donations of—2nd hand timber, straw, cow/sheep/horse manure, wire mesh, reinforced mesh.
WORKING BEE
Our first Working Bee for the year will be held on Saturday 14th March. We look forward to your help with a variety of jobs even if only for an hour or two.

LOST PROPERTY
A reminder that our lost property is collected and left in the Multi Purpose room.

SCHOOL PAYMENTS - Eftpos
Eftpos is available at the school office. A charge of 1.46% will be added for any credit transactions.

SCHOOL WEB SITE
You can access school newsletters, permission notes, calendar of events and other information on our web site at http://www.shps1316.vic.edu.au.

FOR SALE
Cubby House (wooden) 6ft. X 6ft. with 2ft veranda. Does need some TLC. Price: $350. Please ring Tracy on 5444 4164.

COMMUNITY NEWS
BENDIGO COMMUNITY TOY LIBRARY
Bendigo Community Toy Library (BCTL) is once again looking for stallholders for their annual ‘Huge Baby and Kids Sale’. Yes, that’s right it’s on again. Here’s your chance to clear your home of unwanted baby/kids clothes, toys, furniture – anything child related!
Sites start from only $20, so why not get together with a couple of friends to share a stall?
The sale will be held at the YMCA Stadium at 45 Mundy St on Saturday the 2nd May 2009, 9am – 1pm.
Proceeds from site sales help BCTL to maintain and update its ever growing collection of toys, games and puzzles to meet the needs of Bendigo children aged 0-5 years.
All entry (gold coin) donations will be passed on to the local Bush Fire Appeal.
BCTL will do all the advertising; you just need to man your stall for a few hours (even less when shared with friends).
For enquiries or to book a site please call Kate Tinker on 5444 5667 or contact the Toy Library 5441 3180.

DISCOVERY CENTRE
Join the...CRIME SCENE DISCOVERY CHALLENGE
Learn about various aspects of forensics -
Date: February 28th
Time: 10am—4pm
Place: Discovery Science & Technology Centre, 7 Railway Place, Bendigo.
Price: Child $12.50, Members $5.00, Adults $9.50 Conc. $8
Visit www.discovery.asn.au for more information.

UNIFORM SHOP NEWS
School dresses (heavyweight/check) are now available. Size 6 and 8 S/S polo shirts are available now as well as navy gabardine trousers. Size 10 & 12 S/S polos have been ordered.
L/S polo shirts (all sizes) are in stock.
Plain Rugby tops (w/- logo) are in stock.
Sale Items: Girls pleated shorts sizes 4 to 10 for $8; Windcheater w/- side split sizes 8 to 14 for $14. Girls pleated gabardine trousers sizes 6 to 16 for $10.
Uniform Order Forms are available from the office.
Uniform shop hours are:
Monday to Wednesday 8.45am - 12.30pm
VICTORIAN SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
Opening Term 1 - a new VSL language centre at Bendigo
South East College, Curtain Street, Bendigo
When: Tuesdays 4.30-7pm
For more information contact Mr. See Tuang Tan on 0448 026 037 or visit www.vsl.vic.edu.au.
(There is a flyer available at the school office with a lot more information.)