Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to, what is shaping up to be, a fantastic year! Our calendars are slowly filling with fabulous educational experiences for our students, lots of opportunities for growth academically, socially and personally.

We are very glad to see you all back, and to welcome our new students - Harper, Ruby, Annabella (Prep Students), Bree-Anne (Year 2) and William (Year 5).

Staffing

With our new enrolments, our school has reached 27 students. This means that, if we hold these numbers until our magical Day 8 (5th March), we will be allocated a new teacher. We are excited to have found a sensational teacher, Mrs Kim Sparrow, who has joined us today. Mrs Sparrow will be here on contract until 12th February, but if we are still holding our numbers, she will stay for the remainder of the year. Mrs Sparrow will be teaching the P-3 class, and the 4-6 class will be taught by Mrs Fillery. We will communicate any changes to you as soon as we know more.

This year, our staff are as follows:

Principal: Kim Fillery
Administration Officer: Christine Wagner (Mon-Thurs)
Geography & Science Teacher: Susan Hallas (Mon, Thurs)
History & HPE Teacher: Renee Perry (Tues)
Day 8 Teacher: Kim Sparrow
Teacher Aides: Christine James, Leanne Smith, Deidra Elliott
Cleaner: Debra Gauld
Groundsman: Ross Jenner

Deidra Elliott has joined us from Woodford State School. She brings her two children Bree-Anne and William with her to school. Deidra has a lot of experience in Students with Disabilities and we are very glad that she has joined us to help our students.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 8th February

P&C meetings will be held on Mondays on the 3rd and 7th week of every term. Please mark these in your calendars.

All families and community members are welcome. A successful P&C is imperative to support the dreams of our children, helping to provide them with support in their academic and extra-curricular adventures.

We look forward to seeing new and old members at our next meeting.

Playgroup is back this week, 3rd February.

Benarkin State School hosts a playgroup every Wednesday morning, from 9-11.30am, for all parents and children from 0-5 years.

Our qualified staff prepare fun, safe and stimulating activities for children, providing an opportunity for learning and playing together. This year, specialist staff from Bush Kids will structure lessons around books, giving children an opportunity for academic growth through play.

Learning and Growing Together

Regional Expectation - Every Student Succeeding

Benarkin State School Priorities - Reading, Numeracy, Spelling, Attendance, Behaviour

Required Attendance 92.2% - Our Attendance 96.9%

iAIMs Physical Program is run between 8-8:45am each day.

The aims of this program is to increase class engagement by stimulating the brain, encouraging health and well-being and have fun with our peers.

Activities will change regularly, Mrs Smith wants to incorporate team sports as well as general fitness into the regime.

Please note, students will be expected to participate if they are present at school. This is the only student supervision available.
Chantelle Buttery will be working with us as a volunteer this year. Chantelle is studying her Diploma of Education Services, using her time at Benarkin to help her gain valuable hands-on experience. Welcome Chantelle!

Swimming
Swimming forms have gone home to all families. This term, we are doing a 3 day block swimming and then 4 weekly sessions. Students will have qualified staff assisting them to learn water safety and swimming techniques. Please return your forms to school as soon as possible.

Homework
Homework will begin today, week 2. This year, students will bring home a reader each night, with a book for parent signature and comment regarding the reading. Spelling and Number Facts are also to be completed each night. There will be a weekly revision sheet of English and Maths skills that have been taught in class. This sheet will be handed out on Mondays and is due by Fridays. It will not be a massive task, but individual revision designed to support the learning at school. If your child has difficulty with a task, please let us know so we can revisit the topic with them.

Dental Van
The Dental Van is visiting Blackbutt State School between weeks 2-4. As more details are available, we will let you know.

It’s a boy!
Shaun is delighted to announce that he and Willow have a younger brother now, Connor George Ray. Danielle and Connor are doing well, although Shaun tells us that he cries a lot! Congratulations!

What is THRASS?
THRASS is a teaching tool. It stands for Teacher Handwriting Reading And Spelling Skills.

At Benarkin State School, we use THRASS to teach our spelling program. The results speak for themselves. It teaches students about the letters, speech sounds and spelling choices of English.

Your student will have a THRASS chart as part of their homework folder. We will be teaching students how to use the chart and how to get the most out of THRASS. The program is wonderful for students who have difficulties with spelling, increasing their confidence and enjoyment in reading, writing and spelling.

Uniform
Shirt  * Unisex Polo Shirt (royal blue, red and white) with embroidered logo  $20
Shorts  * Unisex Shorts (royal blue)  $15
Hat  * Unisex bucket hat with embroidered logo on the front  $15

Please note important uniform rules from Benarkin State School Uniform Policy:
- Hair must be up in a hair band if it is longer than shoulder length.
- All students to wear plain ankle length socks.
- All students to have closed in sneakers (no thongs or sandals).
- Jewellery not permitted - watch and medical alert jewellery is allowed.
- Makeup not permitted - including face makeup and finger nail polish

Students will be asked to remove non-uniform jewellery as it is often unsafe for sporting and schooling activities.

KIDS MATTER
Starting school involves a big change for your child. It is normal for children to have strong feelings as they start to think about these changes, such as excitement about the prospect of going to school as well as nervousness about what lies ahead. Your child may also be feeling sad or angry about leaving early childhood education and care. This includes letting go of relationships formed with educators and other children, as well as a change to their familiar routines. Some common feelings children have during transition to school can include:
- excitement
- sadness
- anger
- anticipation
- fear or anxiety

Understanding and helping your child to handle the feelings associated with starting school will help to reduce their stress and can provide them with positive coping strategies.

We asked some of our students what they have enjoyed about their first few days back at school.

This is what they had to say:

Harper:
I get to make new friends. I really like getting books out of the library and learning to write things.

Amber:
I like doing all of the different subjects.

Sage:
To see all my friends and I am in Year 3 now!

Paris:
I love doing sports!

Joseph:
The staff. They are all fun and very nice and there are rewards for doing the right things.

Tia:
To see my friends again.

Kylah:
Doing work and playing with my friends

Brock:
Doing the iAIMs sport every morning. It is loads of fun!