

MEPS MAIL

Term 1, Week 11 - 7 April 2022

Key Dates

Term 1

Friday 8th April, 2022

- End of Term 1

Term 2

Monday 25th April, 2022

- Anzac Day – no school

Tuesday 26th April, 2022

- no school – Staff
Development Day

Wednesday 27th April

- Term 2 begins –
students return

Wednesday, 4th May

- Mothers' Day Stall

Tuesday 10th May –

Thursday 12th May

- NAPLAN

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Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

The end of this week marks the end of Term 1 and possibly one of the most disruptive school periods that I've encountered due to both staff and student absences from Covid. This term, we have been required to use our school staff to cover classes for absences as casual teachers are in very short supply. More recently, we have been supported by the Department of Education non-school based teachers - that is, qualified teachers that would normally work in a state or network office. Next term, we will be in a similar position and additional school programs may be disrupted.

The weather has played havoc on a number of planned events including our Cross Country Carnival, the K-2 Sport Carnival and Years 3-6 Athletics Carnival. At this stage we are looking at the 5th May 2022 for the Athletics Carnival and K-2 Sport Carnival.

The lifting of some of the restrictions means that our school can move towards pre-pandemic school organisation. School excursions can resume, along with organisation for the Year 5/6 Canberra excursion later in the year. We are still maintaining some Covid restrictions as we cannot be complacent about the impact on students and staff. It would be incorrect to say the pandemic is over. **Our school continues to have positive cases of Covid amongst our school community.** We will continue to advise the classes where a Covid case occurs and ask parents to monitor their child for symptoms. We will continue with ventilation in classrooms by maintaining open windows and having masks as an option. Parents will be invited onto the school site whenever a major school event takes place.

During the school vacation, there are many free activities for parents and students. First, public transport is free so there is ample opportunities to travel into the city via train or even by ferry from Parramatta. The Museum of Contemporary Arts, Art Gallery of NSW and the Australian Museum are all free. Walking through The Rocks area, Circular Quay and even spending time in the Botanic Gardens are all wonderful experiences for students.

Merrylands East Public School has 92% of students from a language background other than English with a wealth of various religious backgrounds to enhance and enrich the cultural diversity of our school community. My staff would like to say "Ramadan Mubarak" or "Ramadan Kareem" to our school community who may be fasting during the holy month. May it be a time of refreshment, reflection, family and generosity.



Applying for Year 5 entry to an opportunity class

Opportunity classes cater for intellectually gifted and high potential students who may otherwise be without sufficient classmates of their own academic standard. These classes help students to learn by grouping them with students of similar ability and using specialised evidence-based teaching methods and materials. Year 5 enrolments are available at 76 primary schools across NSW including a virtual opportunity class at Aurora College for students in rural and remote areas. Parents apply when their children are in Year 4. Successful students are offered placement, and if the parents accept the offer, the students usually attend the opportunity class full time in Years 5 and 6 at the relevant public school. This is a two-year placement program and there is no provision to apply for Year 6 entry only. In the majority of cases, students who accept a place in an opportunity class will leave their current school to attend the school with the opportunity class.

Who can apply

Parents of Year 4 students enrolled in NSW public and non-government primary schools can apply. Students who are home schooled or from interstate and overseas schools can also apply. Students must be Australian or New Zealand citizens or permanent residents of Australia to be eligible for placement.

Important Date

Year 4 parents considering an application for an opportunity class must apply online by Friday 13 May 2022. The application site will close at 11.59 pm on 13 May 2022. This closing date will be strictly observed, except where there is a shortage of suitable candidates (usually rural or remote) or where extenuating circumstances are serious, well documented and prevented both parents (if applicable) from applying for the entire time applications were available.

After parents apply online, you will receive 'Test authority' advice by Monday 18 July 2022. If you do not receive Test authority advice, please log in to your application and send a message to the Team.


High Performing Students Team

Applying for Year 5 entry to an opportunity class in 2023

Once you complete and submit your application you can change details, send and receive messages through your application dashboard.

Thinking of applying for Year 5 entry to an opportunity class in 2023?

You must apply online at:
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5>

Key dates

Application website opens:
Tuesday 26 April 2022

Application website closes:
5pm, Friday 13 May 2022
You must apply before this deadline

Test centre advice sent:
Thursday 14 July 2022

Opportunity Class Placement Test:
Thursday 28 July 2022

Placement outcome information released overnight on:
Friday 7 October 2022

Please read this document carefully before applying.

Parents* monitor the Department's website regularly for updates throughout the application and placement process at:
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5>

Please check the Department's website for information before you contact the Team.



The opportunity class placement process for Year 5 entry is administered by the High Performing Students Team*.

Contact Details:
 High Performing Students Team, NSW Department of Education
 Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au
 Telephone: 1300 850 367 Telephone Interpreter Service: 131450
 Postal Address: GPO Box 33, SYDNEY, NSW 2001
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/159342048077050>

Please Note:
 *In this document, the High Performing Students Team is referred to as the Team.

*Parent is defined under the Education Act, 1990, as a guardian or other person having custody or care of a child.

Mothers' Day Stall

MEPS P&C will be holding the annual Mothers' Day Stall next term on Wednesday, 4th May.

Students will be able to purchase gifts for their mums, grandmothers, aunts or special people at the stall.

Gifts will range from \$1 to \$10.

If you would like to assist at the stall, please leave your name and number with the school office.

A second stall, selling any remaining gifts, will be run on Friday for any students who forgot their money on Wednesday.



Merrylands Library

Merrylands Library is on the corner of Miller Street and Newman Street. The library is located only 5 minutes away from our school and provides a range of adult and children's reading material for borrowing. Membership of the library is free and available to anyone living, working or studying within the Sydney Metropolitan Area. During the school vacation, Merrylands Library will often have educational programs for children. Membership can be completed online.

<https://library.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/>

Opening Hours: 9:30am—8pm (Monday to Thursday), 9:30am to 6pm (Friday), 9:30am to 4pm (Saturday) and 2pm to 5pm (Sunday).



Families inundated by flood waters

A couple of years ago, the NSW Primary Principal Associations established a School for School Program where schools would work together to assist a school that was devastated by a natural disaster. We are doing that again for the floods as a number of school communities have been totally devastated and the prediction is that it is unlikely students will return to their current school site. Instead, the Department of Education is establishing temporary schools.

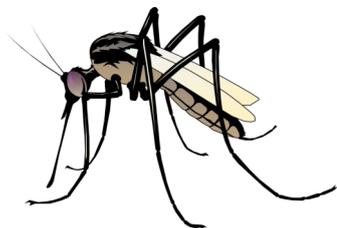
Three weeks ago, we sent shoes and clothing to Ballina Public School for distribution to students in West Ballina who have lost all their possessions. These goods come from a partnership we have with Goods 360 and are destined for students and families in need. However, there are more students in urgent need. Unlike other charitable organisations, we know that these goods will be distributed quickly by the school directly to those affected.



Mosquitoes

The recent wet weather has led to an increase in mosquitos in the school grounds and in the community.

We ask parents to consider using insect repellent while the grounds are drying out. Wearing long sleeved shirts and if possible long pants / slacks, can also help reduce the possibility of being bitten. Our school will be checking for places where mosquitos breed and ensuring that they are free of water. Storm water pits will be cleaned out and the nature strips outside the school grounds will be mowed.



Did you know?

Did you know the origin of Mothers' Day and celebrating motherhood dates back to Ancient Greece?

They celebrated the goddess Rhea during their spring festival. Rhea was the goddess of fertility, motherhood and generation.



ASSESSMENTS

NAPLAN

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM Literacy and Numeracy

The National Assessment Program of Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for Year 3 and Year 5 will take place from **Tuesday 10th May 2022**. This year, all students will complete NAPLAN online. In order to prepare for the tests, students will have a NAPLAN readiness test from the 21 March 2022. This is to test our schools Wi-Fi and provide students with an opportunity to experience an online assessment.

Kids Helpline

Trauma can often affect people of all ages. Sometimes we don't even know we, or our loved ones, are experiencing trauma.

Coming out of Covid lockdown can be a difficult time for students along with changes in family circumstances.

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private, and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Counselling is currently offered by phone **1800 55 1800**, Webchat, and email, but they're constantly expanding and new ways of contacting them will soon be available. More information can be found at:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>



ANZAC Service

On the 25th April 2022, our students will be taking part in the local Merrylands RSL ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Charles Mance Reserve. The reserve is directly opposite Merrylands Library. The dawn service is a time to remember those who have served in conflict areas or in a humanitarian capacity.

This year, it will be a time to thank our recent new arrivals from Afghanistan who served in their work for the Australian Government.

On Friday, our school will be having our own short service in the school hall. A wreath and flowers will be laid.



Return to school



Term 2 will begin for students on Wednesday, 27th April. There are **NO** classes on Monday 25th or Tuesday 26th April.

Enjoy your break!

Congratulations!

On Wednesday, 23rd March, Reemas from Year 6 represented our school and zone at the Regional Swimming Carnival. This event was held at Sydney Aquatic Centre, Olympic Park.

Reemas was 2nd in her heat and only just missed out on making the final.

Well done, Reemas! You did us all proud.

