From the Principal

As I reflect on the busy year we have had, it is heartening to note the full support that I, and the school, receive so consistently from our extended community. We are so fortunate to have such support from current, past and future families, who contribute valuable expertise and assistance to the school. In a community where families value education, show an interest in their children’s education and their children's efforts, we can only grow towards success. In a period where the drought is placing extra strains on families these attitudes have never wavered – and those long bumpy drives on the school-run keep happening every day! At the end of a busy, satisfying and successful year for all concerned, it is now time for a break and a re-charge of the batteries! I hope everyone will have an enjoyable break, and that we will all come back refreshed for a great 2016.

Playgroup, RAFS, Uniting Care Health and Hughenden Health Visit

The close-knit bond within our community was never more apparent than on Monday the 16th of November, when Chappy Sarah together with the RAFS girls held a playgroup at our school. There were 16 young children from our district kept mesmerised by a myriad of activities set out for them, helping to enhance their social, interpersonal, intrapersonal, fine and gross motor skills. The dirty hands and bodies, tired and smiling faces at the days end, were a clear indication of a super fun day had by all.

The Uniting Care Health and the Hughenden Medical Teams were also there to have a chat and attend to any health issues anyone may have had. Overall, a wonderfully successful day, thank you to all involved.
From the Chappies

In my travels amongst the schools in the Flinders Shire, I come across many folks who appreciate having a chaplaincy service in their school. However not many people know exactly what it is that we do in their school. Of course this can be a variable thing depending on the size and location of each school. In smaller schools a much higher percentage of our time is spent in educational support, however that is only one role of seven key roles that chaplains might undertake. Over the next several newsletters I’d like to unpack for you these key roles of school chaplaincy.

The seven key roles, along with the average time as a percentage that a typical chaplain would invest in that role, are: social and emotional support (41%); mentoring and role modelling (16%); educational support (15%); extra-curricular activities (9%); community development (7%); spiritual support (6%); and team contribution (6%).

In this article I’ll unpack the role of social and emotional support. Social and emotional wellbeing is a concept of wellbeing that can be broken down into five smaller areas of concern: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management and responsible decision making.

Research shows that there are strong links between positive social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people and their successful life outcomes, including educational ones.

Schools are very interested in promoting social and emotional wellbeing in their students and school chaplains work alongside other school staff and stakeholders to promote the school’s goals in this area. For chaplains, promoting social and emotional wellbeing takes place on a number of levels. It is a big part of their role, typically taking up over 40% of their work time.

Firstly, chaplains are involved in activities that promote an overall positive, caring environment across the whole school, often focusing on positive values, attitudes, behaviours and relationships.

Across their average week chaplains are engaged in activities that make the school a more attractive place to be for many students, and of course they make themselves available for and build relationships with students, families and school staff.
Secondly, chaplains will sometimes have more formal conversations with students, families and school staff to help them resolve issues that are of concern to them. Through these more formal conversations, chaplains provide general pastoral care, information, resources, referral information and advocacy as required.

Chaplains and students talk about a lot of different things in their formal conversations, but the top three things they talk about are family relationships, friendships and bullying. Staff and parents/carers mostly talk about the concerns they have for students, but sometimes they will talk about work and family concerns.

Thirdly, chaplains will sometimes run social and emotional support programs for students. These programs can be more generalised in nature or be aimed at students who are considered to be at-risk of school disengagement or other harmful outcomes.

Through the social and emotional support part of their role, chaplains make an important contribution to the overall goals that families, schools and communities have for children and young people.

There is a strong link between educational outcomes and social and emotional wellbeing that works both ways – students who are doing well in their lives tend to do better at school and students who do better at school tend to do well in their lives.

By promoting social and emotional wellbeing, chaplains are both directly and indirectly ensuring that children and young people have the best chance possible to experience full lives and a bright future.

Next time we’ll look at the role of mentoring and role modelling.

**From Mrs Townley**

What a busy term it has been for staff and students! The students have been working very hard in the last few weeks to finish off all their assessment pieces and practise items for the end of year concert. I am sorry that I could not attend school on Monday, as I have been spending a couple of days at Hughenden State School Library to give some training to staff. In my place was Karlee Bowtell. Karlee has been appointed full time to the Hughenden State School staff for 2016 and has spent much of her time this year on prac in Hughenden. Karlee was very impressed by our little school! When a teacher, such as myself or Liz attend training or even when sick, we still are required to leave our programs and plans for the releasing staff, so that there is continuity in our teaching practise and curriculum content. This means extra work, but ensures students are engaged and continuing with the program.

Liz and I have been busy, burning the midnight oil, doing assessment and writing report cards, please remember that with C2C units, the assessment and grading is very different to the other units. During 2015 I taught History which was a C2C unit, while the arts, technology, Health and Physical Education were not C2C units, but in 2016, most of these areas will change over to C2C units. This may mean you will see a change in grades, as attaining a “C” for Achievement means you are ON TARGET for your age level! It may be harder to get an “A” or “B”. These grades are not awarded simply to the top students in the class. They are only given to students who show that they are independently capable of working beyond the criteria required for their Year Level.

So what does all the information above mean? Many parents are likely to see more “C” grades on their child’s report cards. An “A” for Effort and a “C” for Achievement indicates that your child is “On Target” for their age. (This grade should be celebrated with students because it means they have worked hard to be where they need to be.)

Thank you to Liz, staff and the P&C for another great end of year break up. It was a lovely night and the food was, as always, of the highest quality. The students, wow, weren’t they great! So great to see them up performing in front of a big audience and giving it their best. Well done!

I hope that you all have a very wet, wet Christmas and New Year and when we return to school in 2016, it will be great to see a green surrounding! Please stay safe over the holiday period and have a well-deserved rest, you must all be commended for the big effort you give each and every school day ensuring the students are at school on time prepared for learning, overcoming the barriers of distance, isolation and drought. All the best. Brenda Townley.
Speech Night, Concert, Christmas break-up

The year wound up with a well-attended and enjoyable community evening where awards were handed out, Amelia was appointed School Captain for 2016, Chelsea summarised the P&C year, the students presented a number of skits, dances and a short play, demonstrating the careful training by Mrs Townley. As well, some of the mothers presented a song and dance act for our entertainment. Father Christmas, accompanied by a helpful elf, was a huge success with the community kids – the looks on their faces as they received their presents were priceless. Fabulous food provided by the community ladies really got the taste buds moving, then a pleasant time to chat and relax topped of the evening.

Preparations for the evening

Mrs C summarises the year

The trees were softly lit for the evening

Student creations for sale

After a fun day of preparation, the students sold their wares
A Poem – “The Big Great Dane”

Chelsea reports on the year for the P&C

Our new School Captain speaking

Two very popular visitors

“The Lion Sleeps Tonight”

This is how to get their attention!
Presents for all

Thanks so much Santa

With a bit of help from Dad

Happy families!

Best Wishes to everyone for the Christmas Season