Dear Parents

Students have generally settled well into the year. My observations over the past two weeks have been of students focused and working hard on their learning programs across all areas of the curriculum.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the parents / carers from our Railton campus that attended the ‘meet and greet’ evening held last Wednesday. With a total change of teaching staff at our Railton campus it was an important but informal opportunity to interact and develop that partnership between the school and home, which we know can have a positive impact on student learning.

**Student Attendance**

Over the past 2 years we have made significant improvements in our school attendance data. This is in regard to both explaining student absences, and also the importance placed on the value of school by the school community, and the awareness that EVERY DAY COUNTS! Michael Grose gives some interesting insights for parents within his newsletter article titled 'It's not ok to be away….or late to school'.

The associated graphic has been extracted from the department platform ‘edi’ which indicates the Sheffield School’s average daily attendance rate. We are currently at 94%, it would be great if we could maintain this or better. I will include this graphic regularly within our newsletters. With each of the 3 student reports this year you will also receive individual attendance data for your child, as well as year group, school and state comparative percentages.

As a reminder for parents I have included an overview of the school student absence procedures below.

**Student Absence Procedures**

When a student is to be absent from school, our preference is for the office to be notified on that morning. This can be done by phoning 64918222, and if the office is unattended leaving a message on the answering service. Alternatively a message can be sent via email to sheffield@education.tas.gov.au.
If a student in grades Kinder to 10 is absent from school without explanation, by 10.00am on that morning a text message will be sent to parents. This message has two purposes. Firstly, it is an opportunity for parents to explain the absence quickly and conveniently with a reply text message, or as a reminder to send a note to the teacher the next morning. Secondly, this is an important safety issue, ensuring the whereabouts of all children. Obviously our mobile phone contact details for parents need to be accurate, so if yours have changed, please let the office know.

If parents have not taken any of these opportunities to explain absences, teachers will send a ‘notification of student absences slip’ home with students the week following the unexplained absence, to be completed and returned to school, if this slip is not returned teachers will attempt to make contact by phone, and failing that a letter will be sent from the office.

**Texting When Your Child is Absent from School**

A reminder that we text from an online texting service which means our texts are sent from shared mobile numbers. This means on different days a parent might receive a text from different phone numbers. Parents can reply to any text received from the school regardless of when they received it, but CANNOT type in one of the mobile numbers and send us a text – they MUST only reply to a text we have sent. Therefore, please do not save any mobile number received from the school for later use as we won’t receive your text if you do.

**Swimming Carnival**

Last Friday we held our annual swimming carnival at the Splash Aquatic Centre in Devonport. It was great to see so many students participating and enjoying themselves on a beautiful summer’s day. The result of the carnival will be announced at the next 3-10 assembly. Congratulations to the Roland student ironman team who were successful by the smallest of margins over a fast finishing staff team in the final event of the day. Thank you to those parents, family and friends that were able to attend and support their children. Finally a thank you to all staff, particularly Mr Hays, Miss Scattergood and Miss Parsons for the organisation of the carnival.
**Bus Safety**  
Each year we focus on bus safety within an early newsletter, this is due to the fact that approx. 80% of our student population utilise this mode of transport to get to and home from school. I would recommend parents take some time with their child/ren to visit the website [http://bussafety.dier.tas.gov.au/](http://bussafety.dier.tas.gov.au/). There are some excellent tips, activities and visual reminders that support safe practices both on and around buses.

Congratulations to the following students who have been appointed Bus Monitors for 2015. Bus Monitors assist the drivers and school staff in the safe operation of buses to and from school. I am sure the following students will carry out this role diligently this year.

- Railton /Kimberley: Jamie Gerke, Eliza Kerr
- Railton: Isobel Heger, Emmett Kerr
- Beulah: Emily Jackson, Bradley Huett, Angus Alsop, Taylor Grabe (jnr)
- Lower Barrington/Wilmot: Lucinda Anderson, Paige Tirant, Jason Colgan, Lachlan Gower
- Nook: Brady Rouse, Maggie O’Neill, Chloe Temple
- Staverton: Joel Creeley, Daman Sims, Dylan Cochrane
- Paradise: Jack Febey, Jacob Steers, Manisha Kernan
- Claude Road: Hayley Rowland, Corey Foley

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**Student Achievement**  
Congratulations to Pyper Page, who has been selected to represent Tasmania in the Australian team of five riders to travel to Lexington Kentucky in USA, to ride in the Prince Philip Games Exchange in July this year. She will be the only Tasmanian rider in this team.  
A wonderful achievement!

Ron Daly  
PRINCIPAL
It’s not okay to be away … nor to be late to school

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem.

One of the most important things you can do to ensure your child has a bright future is to make sure he or she goes to school every day—and gets there on time.

It sounds simple, but it’s true.

The correlation between school attendance and children’s achievement levels is well-established. The more time kids spend at school, the more likely they are to experience school success.

Conversely, according to a report from the Victorian Auditor General, students who are regularly absent from school are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school early, and of experiencing long-term unemployment.

When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem. Also, many teachers tell me, it’s often the kids who can least afford to take time off school who are most likely to be absentees.

Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools—and much of it is parent-condoned.

It’s hard to get an accurate picture across the country but it would appear that Australian students miss an average of between 12 and 15 days per school year, with parent-condoned absenteeism highest among young primary-aged children.

That adds up to a year’s lost schooling over the school-life of a child.

In today’s highly competitive world, this rate of absenteeism is alarming, putting our kids at a distinct disadvantage.

That’s not a reason to be away!

It’s now commonplace for children to stay away from school for reasons that would have been unheard of just twenty years ago. These include staying away to celebrate their own or a sibling’s birthday; being absent because they stayed up too late watching television; going shopping for clothes; an extended long weekend; and kids not wanting to take part in a sports day or special school event.

This type of absenteeism sends a strong message to kids that parents don’t really value learning or their children’s school experiences.

Australian kids only spend 15% of their total time at school. They spend more time asleep than they do at school. So we need to maximise every day to get full value. That means turning up to school every day, on time.

As a Parent:

- Commit to sending kids to school every day.
- Make sure kids arrive at school and class on time.
- Inform the school when they are away, sending medical certificates and other evidence of genuine absence.
- Consider catching-up on missed work.
- Make kids who are away stay in their bedroom – that is where ill kids should be.

Being late is not okay either

Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late.

Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day, with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do, valuable learning time is lost.

It takes strong parenting...

As a parent myself I know how persuasive children of all ages can be when it comes to taking a day off school. It takes a strong will to resist the persistent pressure that kids can bring to bear, particularly if they play the guilt card with comments such as “It’s not fair that I have to go school today because Aunty is coming to visit!”

Nice try. But the answer should be “No!”.

As parents we need to make a commitment that our kids make the most of their precious time at school. That means that we send them to school every day, on time and ready to make the most of the school day.

Of course, there will be times, such as illness or genuinely extenuating family circumstances, when kids should be away. But these need to be a rarity rather than the norm.

It’s reassuring to know that you increase their chances of future success just by making sure they turn up to school every day. And of course regular school attendance also helps kids prepare for the workforce, where it will be expected that they turn up each day work-ready. The real world is unforgiving of those who stay away with NO EXCUSE.
**CALENDAR DATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 26 February</td>
<td>Quicksmart Parent Information Session – 3.15pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 27 February</td>
<td>Clean Up Australia Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 4 March</td>
<td>Inter-high Swimming Carnival Burnie</td>
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<td>Monday 9 March</td>
<td>Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11 March</td>
<td>Assembly 3 – 10</td>
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<td>Friday 13 March</td>
<td>Immunisations (all Grade 7 students)</td>
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<td>Progress Reports sent Home</td>
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<td>Tuesday 17 March</td>
<td>NWPSSA Athletics Carnival</td>
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<td>Thursday 19 March</td>
<td>NWPSSA Twilight Finals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 20 March</td>
<td>GRIP Leadership Conference (Grade 10 SRC and House Captains)</td>
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<td>Mount Roland Climb – Grade 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 25 March</td>
<td>Leven Canyon – Grade 9</td>
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<td>P – 6 Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 26 March</td>
<td>Socials – Theme “Cowgirls &amp; Cowboys”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 27 March</td>
<td>LAC Badgers Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 1 April</td>
<td>End of Term 1 for Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Primary Fair and Pet Parade (Sheffield Campus)</td>
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**WHAT MATTERS TASMANIA 2015... IT’S TIME TO WRITE! (Years 5-12)**

This writing contest is open to students from Years 5 to 12, and has the following topics:

- What actions do you think should be taken to build a better society?
- What would you change if you could?
- What do you want other people to care about?
- WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

Entries must be typed, and are to be an opinion piece of 400 to 600 words. The grand prize is an IPad. Prizes up to $350 are available in each division, and finalists are invited to a special writer’s workshop in Sydney!

For more information, please see Mr Ashby in his office in the secondary school, or come by his classroom, B21, for a chat. Parents or students are also encouraged to email Mr Ashby on bob.ashby@education.tas.gov.au for more information or with questions. Assistance is available for all students wishing to participate. Also, you may visit the competition’s website at bit.ly/tased-whatmatters.
K-6 FAIR & EASTER PET PARADE

WHEN: Wednesday 1st April 2015
TIME: Easter Pet Parade from 11:30am followed by a sausage sizzle & fair
WHERE: Primary Playground and Undercover Area (Sheffield Campus)

Tokens can be pre-purchased or on the day
MANY EXCITING ATTRACTIONS AS ALWAYS!!

ENJOY A GREAT CAPPUCCINO OR HOT CHOCOLATE FROM THE CANTEEN!

We extend a warm invitation to all families to join us at the fair on Wednesday 1st April.
**ROSTRUM VOICE OF YOUTH COMPETITION (YEARS 6-10)**

Do you have something to say? Have the gift of gab? Or maybe you are terrified of public speaking, and would like to develop your skills in a friendly and supportive environment.

If any of those apply to you, you should consider the Rostrum Voice of Youth competition. There are Junior (11-14 as of January 1st, 2015) and Senior (Under 18 as of January 1st) divisions. Juniors will present a 6 minutes pre-prepared speech and a 3 minute impromptu speech, and seniors an 8 minute pre-prepared speech, with a 3 minute impromptu.

While this sounds like a lot of talking, you'll be amazed at your ability to stand on a soap box and let your voice be heard! Support, advice and coaching is available by Bob Ashby, Senior English and History teacher, both during break times at school and after school by appointment.

_Did you know that when asked what their biggest fears are, most people name death and public speaking, with more people afraid of public speaking than dying?_

**SEE…EVERYONE’S SCARED OF PUBLIC SPEAKING. SO GIVE IT A GO!**

Whether you win or lose, Rostrum’s Voice of Youth Competition is a great way to build confidence and overcome your fear of public speaking!

For more information, please see Mr Ashby in his office in the secondary school, or come by his classroom, B21, for a chat. Parents or students are also encouraged to email Mr Ashby on bob.ashby@education.tas.gov.au for more information or with questions. You may also find topics and more information at [http://rostrum.org.au/rvoytas](http://rostrum.org.au/rvoytas).

The first round of speeches are on Friday May 8 at 6:30pm in Burnie. Registrations end soon.

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**MURAL FEST 2015 KENTISH SCHOOLS WRITING COMPETITION (K-10)**

This year, in conjunction with Mural Fest and Kentish Arts Festival, all students attending schools in Kentish, including both the Sheffield and Railton campuses of Sheffield District School and Wilmot Primary School, are invited to enter a writing competition that will be held in conjunction with Mural Fest.

All entries must be based on the poem that is the theme of this year’s Mural Fest, _Window of Our Dreams_. This comes from the poem:

*From a place of hope and plenty*  
*Where a wish is all it seems*  
*The wind of change blows gently*  
*Through windows of our dreams*  
*by Keith Sommer*

Entries may be in one of three formats:

- Poem
- Story or Narrative (250 words max for primary students, 500 words max for secondary students)
- An opinion piece or essay (250 words max for primary students, 500 words max for secondary students)

Judging will be done by an independent panel of experts. The first prize for primary entries is $50, and the first prize for secondary entries is $100. All entries will be displayed as part of Mural Fest.

For more information please see Mr Ashby in his office in the secondary school or come by his classroom (B21), for a chat. Parents or students are also encouraged to email Mr Ashby on bob.ashby@education.tas.gov.au for more information, or with questions. Assistance is available for all students wishing to participate.
Snack ideas

Active, growing children have high energy needs that may not be met by just eating three meals a day. Eating healthy snacks between meals can help keep children’s minds alert, energy levels up and help meet their needs for growth.

What are the best foods for snacks?

- Snacks should be thought of as a ‘mini-meal’ rather than a treat or something extra.
- Include ‘everyday’ foods like breads and cereals, vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods. They’re tasty, filling and nutritious.
- ‘Occasional’ foods such as chocolate, lollies, muesli bars, chips or biscuits should only be offered sometimes and are best kept for special occasions at home. They are high in fat, sugar and/or salt and do not offer children any goodness.

Snack ideas for the lunchbox

- Fresh fruit
- Tinned fruit (in natural juice)
- Veggie sticks with dip e.g. hommus or salsa
- Rice cakes or crispbreads with peanut butter*
- Wholemeal or multigrain crackers with cheese, Vegemite™ or Promite®
- Rice crackers with cheese cubes
- Home-made fruit or vegetable muffins - visit www.gofor2and5.com.au for recipe ideas
Registration Day at Latrobe Football Club or Devonport Football Club
Wednesday 11th March at 3.30pm

Join Our Team AFLAUSKICK.COM.AU
**COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD**

**Bupa Kidfit Triathlon Series and Bupa Mini Run for Kids**

The Bupa KidFit Triathlon Series gives children across Tasmania the chance to have fun and be active in a friendly and supportive environment.

The KidFit Triathlon is open to children between the ages of 7 and 15. Plus, this year, 5 and 6 year-olds can also join in the fun by taking part in the Bupa Mini Run for Kids on the day!

**And be in the draw to win fantastic prizes***

*For full Terms & Conditions, see kidfitseries.com.au

**Register NOW**

**Five great events across Tasmania**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Registration close date</th>
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<td>Lauderdale</td>
<td>Sunday, February 22nd</td>
<td>February 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Norfolk</td>
<td>Sunday, March 1st</td>
<td>February 23rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackman’s Bay Beach</td>
<td>Sunday, March 15th</td>
<td>February 9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulverstone</td>
<td>Saturday, March 21st</td>
<td>March 16th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Sunday, March 22nd</td>
<td>March 16th</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Register today: kidfitseries.com.au For queries, contact: 03 6229 5600

**STEAM FEST MARCH LONG WEEKEND**

A three day weekend of entertainment & history for the whole family!

Steam Train Rides First Weekend of Every Month. www.edumatters.org.au

**STEAM TRAINRIDES FIRST WEEKEND OF EVERY MONTH.**

**Jason Pearce Cricket Coaching**

Batting & Wicketkeeping, individual or group sessions. Focus on skill development and match awareness.

For more information call Jason Pearce 0407 371 996 or email jasonpearce12@bigpond.com.au

**Registration Night Wednesday 11th March, from 3.30pm**

At the Devonport Football Club rooms or Latrobe Football Ground

Cost is $85 per child (family discounts apply)

Children from prep – grade 6

Season runs from the middle of April – the middle of August

Training Wednesday nights & roster games Sunday mornings

For more information contact Kristie Stewart on 0418 385 597 or Narelle Freeman 0438 347 250

(see flyer previous page)

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**Disclaimer:** Parents should note that advertisements for education services, companies, activities or similar events are published as a ‘community service’. Sheffield School is in no way liable for the quality, supervision or integrity of the provider and strongly suggests that parents make their own enquiries before engaging with the advertised event.

Ron Daly, Principal