Lest we forget

On Monday, 10\textsuperscript{th} November, we held a dedicated Remembrance Assembly to pay tribute as a school community - to all soldiers in all wars - having paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Our School Captains (Oliver A, speaking above), gave a stirring and heartfelt speech to honour the fallen and recount their heroic endeavours throughout history.

In other school activities...

Year 6 and 7 students attended a very special ceremony as part of a Walk of Remembrance at the Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera (right).

Students prepared paper poppies and positioned before the School Flags and Remembrance Stone outside the School Library (left).
The X-Factor (Final Instalment)

Executive Function Skills and Social Play

Executive Function skills play a significant role in children’s social play, and are a common denominator for both learning and social interaction. Young children who have problems staying focused and resisting urges to respond impulsively, not only have trouble in school, but also have trouble following directions generally, and are at elevated risk of displaying aggressive and confrontational behaviour with adults and other children.

Executive Function skills such as completing tasks, solving problems, organising information, and making and revising deliberate plans, are important facilitators of interpersonal interactions and behaviour. In fact, some researchers have hypothesised that it is the complexity of human social relationships - not the need to do complex maths, which is the reason that the prefrontal cortex in humans is so large, and our Executive Function skills so advanced.

Children’s social play is believed to be an important practice ground for the development of Executive Function skills. Its importance lies in the fact that children need to test for themselves the skills that adults have been scaffolding for them. As mentioned earlier, to be effective, Executive Function skills must work together. For example, in a simple game of ‘Let’s Play House’, the children have to come up with the plan for playing house, communicate with each other about role assignments, and then remember that Susie will be the bossy older sister, Ralph will play the dog, and Jackie will be the baby. Keeping track of what each actor has done, and inserting a new piece of the story that makes sense to everyone, requires the effective exercise of emerging Executive Function skills.

The child who cannot demonstrate sufficient executive functioning competence is either told what to do by others; gets pushed out; or causes the game to fall apart. Children who lag behind in Executive Function capacities relative to their peers, find themselves at a disadvantage because they cannot keep up with the complexity of the play, and therefore get frustrated, act out, and may cause other children to not want to play with them. In short, the skills that help children to master many academic tasks, are the same ones that help them get along with their peers, and be viewed as good classmates.

Enhancing the Development of Executive Function Skills

Children enter school with distinct profiles of strengths and weaknesses in Executive Function skills. Young children differ widely in how well they are able to adjust their attention, control their impulses, follow rules and directions, and adapt to other demands of their environment. Interventions designed to strengthen young children's capacities to use Executive Function skills in the classroom, tend to adopt one of the following strategies:
1. Programs aimed at fostering emerging Executive Function skills (e.g. retaining and using information, focusing and resisting distractions, and planning actions and revising plans).

2. Programs that train and support teachers in effective classroom management strategies (e.g. rewarding positive student behaviour, and redirecting inappropriate behaviour).

3. Programs that train teachers to model and coach children as their social-emotional skills are developing.

What these approaches have in common is a focus on supporting self-control, and effective goal-oriented approaches towards learning and social encounters.

The same 'neuroplasticity' that makes Executive Functioning skills vulnerable to genetic and environmental disruption, also presents the possibility of actively developing these skills. This can be done in a number of ways. Firstly, adults can play a significant role by 'scaffolding' tasks for children - through establishing routines, providing cues, and breaking big tasks into smaller chunks. Within a sensitive, responsive and individualised teaching context, children should then be given multiple opportunities to direct their own activities - with decreasing adult supervision, over time. Children should also be given time to practise their skills.

Secondly, an orderly, predictable environment in which the child is free from sustained threats, lays the foundations for the development of Executive Function skills. In contrast, chaotic, unpredictable environments can lead to poor self-regulatory behaviour. Likewise, adverse environments resulting from neglect, abuse, and/or exposure to violence can impair the development of Executive Function skills - as a result of the disruptive effects of toxic stress on the developing brain. Chronic fear and anxiety associated with living in highly threatening, chaotic, or stressful environments can make it very difficult for young children to engage their executive abilities – even in situations like school where they may in fact be safe.

Thirdly, it is important to provide effective support of early emotional regulation by enabling children to routinely experience social interactions that provide opportunities to make them more capable of resisting distractions, controlling their emotions and behaviour towards others, complying with adult requests and rules, and engaging in goal-directed behaviour.

Fourthly, scientists and clinicians have begun to design and access specific training programs aimed at helping young children with Executive Functioning difficulties, particularly attention and working memory. For example, one laboratory-based approach uses computerised programs to strengthen the neural circuits that control specific Executive Function skills. The program uses 'staircase' training which involves adjusting the difficulty of the task as the child's performance improves. The data that were cited suggested that these interventions have direct, beneficial effects on prefrontal cortex development. However, to date, the effects have not yet been tested on preschool children. Likewise, there is emerging research examining the critical issue of 'transfer' of learning. For example, Diamond (2011) confirmed that training did improve working memory, however the transfer to other executive functions was narrow.

It is important to realise that interventions that have an explicit focus on Executive Function skills do not need to be implemented separately from interventions that focus on developing early literacy and numeracy abilities. Indeed, there is value in blending the interventions. While we cannot be certain that demonstrated improvements in children’s abilities to direct their attention, control impulsive behaviour, and stay focused on their schoolwork contribute to their academic gains, evidence is increasingly supporting this interpretation (Bierman et al. 2008; Bierman et al. 2008a; Duncan et al. 2007; Raver et al In Press; Welsh et al. 2010).

I hope that you enjoyed reading The X-Factor series, and that you now have a better understanding of Executive Functioning, and the identified set of skills that are essential for school achievement, social interaction, and preparation for life.

**School Administration**

**Job Vacancy: Teacher Aide Position - 2015**

A vacancy exists for one temporary part-time Teacher Aide working 30hrs per week (6hrs per day) + ADO time commencing on 22nd January 2015 until 11th December, 2015 (with possibility of extension). Please refer to the Applicant Information Package available on the School website or available from School Administration. Hard copy applications, addressed to ‘The Business Services Manager’ must be received at School Administration by 3.30pm on Friday 21st November 2014. Knowledge, experience and qualification in teacher aide related roles along with demonstrated high proficiency in literacy, numeracy and information technology is considered advantageous.

**Community Award Nominations 2014**

The “McDowall State School Community Award” is presented to a member of the school community for outstanding service and contribution to our school. The recipient may be any member of staff, a parent or community member having significantly invested of themselves, beyond that normally experienced, toward the improvement and benefit of the school, and in particular, student learning and welfare. Nominations must be received at School Administration, within a sealed envelope, addressed to ‘The Principal’ by Friday 21st November, 2014 at 3.30pm.

Nominations may be made on the provided ‘Nomination Form’ within the school website www.mcdowallss.eq.edu.au or be in note form, as long as the following items are included within the Nomination. (a) Name of person being nominated (b) Name and contact details of person making the nomination (c) Statement of why this person is being nominated. Please indicate the full extent and duration of this person’s service and contribution to the school. This assists in the selection process. (d) Statement of what influence or difference this person’s service and contribution has made to the school.

All nominations received by the Principal will entitle the nominated person to receive a “Community Award Nomination Certificate” endorsed by the Principal and P. & C. Association President. The Parents’ and Citizens’ Association will review all Nomination Forms, with details of the Nominee (remaining private). The “McDowall State School Community Award” is presented by the Principal at either the Year 6 or Year 7 Presentation Assembly on Tuesday 9th December, 2014.

**Tartan TAPS (Teacher and Parent Seminar)**

*Tartan TAPS 5-6 ..... Twilight Session on 18th November, 2014. 5pm-7.30pm*
Kiss and Ride Facility Use

Prep-Yr 2 students do not arrive at the Kiss-and-Ride Lane until approximately 2.40pm. The Kiss-and-Ride Lane is generally empty by 2.50pm. Student supervision is provided until 2.55pm so vehicles arriving between 2.45pm-2.50pm have ease of access and departure. Vehicles picking up Yrs 3-7 students are not to enter this facility before 2.50pm.

Yrs 3-7 students do not arrive at the Kiss-and-Ride Lane until after 3.05pm. The Kiss-and-Ride Lane is generally empty by 3.15pm. Student supervision is provided until 3.20pm so vehicles arriving between 3.10pm-3.20pm have ease of access and departure.

The Kiss-and-Ride Lane is for through traffic only. If your child is not present and you may need to wait, you need to move your vehicle into another bay elsewhere to use a parking bay. You will need to leave your vehicle and then collect your child from the footpath area. Ensure that your child knows when you are likely to arrive at the Kiss-and-Ride Lane.

Students wait for their vehicle under the red shade structure. Students are not permitted to walk into the car park area unaccompanied by their parent. Safety is prioritized over driver convenience. Should a driver not want to leave their vehicle, they must join the Kiss-and-Ride Lane queue. Students wait for their car to stop within the vehicle queue close to the red shade structure before accessing their vehicle. In this way, 4-5 cars can be accessed at any one time. The queue flows well.

While in queue, it is illegal for a vehicle to enter and stop within an intersection. Drivers need to regulate their vehicles movement within the queue, especially near traffic lights. Should police or parking officers be in attendance, the driver will be fined.

Additionally, drivers place pedestrians in danger when they stop their vehicle over the pedestrian crossing. Should this become a frequent event, the Principal will request police attendance to issue fines.

The sole role of staff in attendance at the Kiss-and-Ride Lane is to oversee what students do. Students are instructed in procedures that promote their safety. It is expected that parents, as responsible adults, will model safe practice and behaviour. Students are expected to remain alert to their vehicle having arrived within the Kiss-and-Ride Lane. They then, collect their belongings and move to the concrete apron to await vehicle arrival and stopping. Students should always enter the vehicle from the footpath side.

Students are not permitted to use the Rode Road footpath to access a vehicle in queue on the blind side of a crest. This is extremely dangerous.

IF YOU’RE LATE

- After 3.20pm, students are to be picked up from School Administration.
- Note that School Administration closes at 4pm.
Public Speaking Competition 2014

This week saw McDowall State School students shine again in the annual Speaking Challenge competition. On Tuesday afternoon, class winners from Years 4 and 5 presented their speeches in front of their parents, teachers and friends. A fantastic display of oral speaking was delivered by all of our speakers.

The Year 4 topic was ‘A Day in the Life of..’, where many of the speakers took on the role of being a convict child coming to Australia aboard the First Fleet. The Year 5 topic was an autobiography of their life so far.

On Wednesday morning, the Year 6 and 7 winners battled it out for the Linda Davidson Trophy for oral speaking. They presented their speeches to the audience and a panel of judges in the School Assembly Hall.

The Year 6 competitors had to present a speech about an ‘Influential Migrant to Australia’, while the Year 7 speakers had to present a persuasive talk. All students did a very convincing job. The Year 6 winner was Tahlia K and the Year 7 winner was Diana Y.

Congratulations to Tahlia and Diana who this year share the Linda Davidson Trophy for oral speaking. Well done girls. A big thank you to all of our speakers, you did a wonderful job. Thank you also to the teachers and parents who supported students in the lead up to the competition.

We must also send out a warm thank you to our judges for giving their time and providing students with valuable feedback. Our judges were: Mrs Lee West, the Honourable Tim Mander MP and Mr Peter Turner.

CONTACT – Mrs Ann Russell - Speaking Challenge Co-ordinator

SPEAKING COMPETITION 2014 - CLASS WINNERS

4E1 Cayley Y  
4E2 Tara L  
4E3 Jack T  
4E4 Sydney B  
4N1 Jacob T  
5D1 Joshua M  
5D2 Emily B  
5G2 Matisse J  
5G3 Hanna G  
6C1 Ethan S  
6C2 Phoebe S  
6C3 Elise C & Tahlia K  
7D3 Patrick S  
7D4 Oliver A, Lily D & Diana Y

Overall Year 6 winner: Tahlia K  
Overall Year 7 winner: Dianna Y

Year 4 and 5 class winners

The Hon. Tim Mander MP with Yr 6 & 7 winners - Tahlia K (left), Diana Y (right)

Year 6 and 7 class winners
Japanese students visit McDowall

McDowall State School recently hosted a group of students from Kudan High School in Japan. The students spent three days at McDowall State School. During their visit, the Japanese students attended English (ESL) classes and many other McDowall State School activities. They spent time in various year levels as part of integration sessions organised by the school.

The Japanese students thoroughly enjoyed:
- Teaching origami to our students
- Reading with Year 1 students
- Teaching Year 3 students to write their names using Japanese script
- Playing Aussie sports with the Year 5, 6 and 7 students
- Attending Japanese, Music and PE lessons with the Year 6 and 7 students
- Playing with the Preparatory Year students during their lunch break
- Playing on the oval during lunch breaks - they could not get over the size of our school oval!

HOST FAMILIES WANTED

McDowall State School will be hosting another Japanese school visit next year.

Students from Shimonoseki High School will be visiting McDowall from 6th – 12th March, 2015.

If you are interested in hosting a Japanese student please complete the AJSP (Australia Japanese Study Programme Pty Ltd) form (distributed with this newsletter) and email to ajspkeiko@gmail.com.

THANK YOU!!

A big thank you must go out to the school buddies who helped the Japanese students during their exchange. Our school buddies really helped the Japanese students to feel at home at McDowall State School. Thank you also to the teachers and students at McDowall SS who welcomed the Japanese students into their classrooms during the integration sessions.

To the host families who welcomed students into their homes, another big thank you. The Japanese students have thoroughly enjoyed their time here at McDowall SS and I’m sure they will go home with many fond memories.

(Above) Kudan High School students with their Year 5 McDowall buddies

(Below) A Kudan High School student reads with Year 1 students
Library News

Library Borrowing
To maintain your child’s reading routine over the upcoming school holidays, we encourage you to take advantage of public library services.

We have wonderful public libraries in our area - each with a wide range of books and other resources. Students can access enough reading material to keep them reading until school starts again in 2015. Don’t forget there are plenty of books and resources for parents too!

This week is the last week of library borrowing for McDowall State School students for 2014. All borrowed books must be returned to the School Library by Friday 28 November. This will allow us enough time to locate and organise all the library’s resources before the end of the school year. Thank you for your support.

Inter-school Reader’s Cup
On Thursday 13th November, McDowall State School library is hosting the Stafford District Inter-school Reader’s Cup. This is organised and run by our local Teacher-Librarian Network.

On McDowal SSI’s team are Jack L and Hanna G from Year 5 and Aohong D and Charlotte G from Year 4.

Students are required to answer questions about two books: ‘Just a Dog’ by Michael Gerard Bauer and ‘Journey from the Centre of the Earth’ by Isobelle Carmody. Our students are well prepared for the competition and we hope they do well.

CONTACT: Mrs Saunders - Teacher Librarian

Music News

Term 4 Celebration Concert
All Instrumental Ensemble Groups will be performing, as well as the Senior, Junior and Honours Choirs. All performing students need to arrive at 6pm.

Guest Conductor visiting with Concert Band
On Tuesday 18th November, there will be a Guest Conductor visiting McDowall State School. The Conductor will be working with the Concert Band from 1pm to 2pm. This is free for all students involved and will be held in K Block (OSH Building).

Wind Ensemble & String Ensemble Tour
On Wednesday 3rd December the String Ensemble and Wind Ensemble are going on a day tour. Permission Notes will be sent home to students involved when final costs have been calculated.

CONTACT: Ms Pomroy – Music Teacher
Defence Family News

The year is nearly at an end and already we have begun to farewell some of our families. Packing boxes and cleaning in this heat is always going to be a challenge, so don't forget to take some time out for yourselves during all of the excitement!

Blue Posting Passports have been trickling into School Administration. Please send in your child’s Blue School Posting Passport for stamping. It is a wonderful keepsake for their time as a Defence Family.

If you have not yet notified the Office about any recent posting orders, please do so as soon as possible.

It has been wonderful to see so many children participating in "Little Heroes". There have been many prizes going out recently. Perhaps you saw one of the fuzzy friends we made, or a Melbourne Cup Day fascinator?

Remembrance Day was marked with one minutes silence.... As we have done each year. Students were encouraged to make a poppy and place in our ‘Flanders Field’; which was quite a sight to behold.

CONTACT: Mrs Jones - Defence School Transition Aide (DSTA)

Bandana Day – Year 6 Fundraiser

The Student Council sends a huge thank you to the School community for supporting our recent sale of bandanas to support the CanTeen charity. Through our sales, you helped us to raise over $1,350.

This money will go to those young Australians who are battling cancer or have a family member battling cancer. This help may be counselling, individual patient care, or participation in peer support programs. Again, a huge thank you for your generous support of CanTeen.

Zara R and Ella D

For more information, visit www.canteen.org.au
What's Happening

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<th>NOVEMBER</th>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Years 1-2 Swimming Programme begins. (2wks)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Tartan TAPS Twilight 5-6 5pm-7.30pm. Visiting Conductor to Wind Ensemble 1pm-2pm.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Year 2 - Twelfth Night Theatre. Performing Arts Celebration Concert - School Hall - 6.30pm.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Year 6 &quot;Graduate to Greatness&quot; Programme. School Community Award Nominations close.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Date Claimers for 2015 due to School Administration.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>P&amp;C Association General Meeting. K Block. 7pm.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Instrumental Music Parent Information Evening 6.30pm-7.30pm</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Student Council Spell-a-thon</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Year 6 &quot;Spinal Awareness Programme“ Final Friday Inter-School Sport for 2014.</td>
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<th>DECEMBER</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Tartan TADPOLES begins (5 days)</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>Book Pack Collection from School Hall 8.30-10.30/1.00-3.30pm</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>McDowall SS Instrumental Goes On Tour Student Banking Final for 2014.</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>Preparatory Year Christmas Concert.</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>Years 6-7 Table Tennis Tournament. School Captains Speeches and Student Ballot in School Hall.</td>
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<td>08</td>
<td>Sports Awards Assembly. Years 5-7. Years 6-7 Table Tennis Tournament. Student Progress Reports issued. Tartan Tuckerbox closed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Year 7 Presentations Assembly - School Hall from 9am. Year 6 Presentations Assembly - School Hall from 11.30am. Tartan Tuckerbox closed. Years 6-7 Twilight Dance – School Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Class Celebration Day / Casual Dress / Red Food.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>School Pack Up / Clean Up Day. P-7 Assembly at 12noon – School Hall.</td>
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Tartan Tuckerbox

**Our last Meal Deal for 2014**

Make sure you place your orders for our *Happy Holidays Meal Deal on Flexischools* by 12pm on Monday 1st December. On offer this year:

**Fri 05/12/14 – 1st break - $3.50**
- Ham Cheese Pizza Scroll or Vegemite Scroll
- Calippo Ice Block
- Choc Chip Cookies

**Fri 05/12/14 – 2nd break - $5**
- Beef Snack Pie
- Small Chips
- L.O.L or Juice box
- Mini Gingerbread Man

We want to thank all our families for their support during 2014. We had a fantastic year in the Tuckerbox! We hope you have a great holiday and that you and your families will return safely and well rested in 2015.

CONTACT – Mrs Anelle Moller – Tuckerbox Manager

**School Uniforms**

**Uniform Shop**

Open Monday and Thursday
8:15am – 9:30am

**Uniform Code**

**Daily**
- Tartan or red polo shirt uniform (at school)

**Tartan Day**
- Tartan uniform only (when specified)

**Friday**
- House shirt uniform (at school)
- Red polo shirt uniform (interschool sport)

**Other**
- As formally advised (excursions and special events)
- Black leather or jogger shoes are school uniform wear
- Bottle green socks are worn with the Tartan Uniform and Preparatory Year variation
- White (red/bottle green bands) socks are worn with the Sports Uniform (polo shirt) specific purpose variation
- Bottle green jacket or jumper is to be worn. Tracksuit available
- Please mark all items with the child’s name

**Tartan Tuckerbox Roster**

| 14 Nov  | Enza M, Susan P, Anusaya P |
| 18 Nov  | Shirley E, Esther D |
| 19 Nov  | Andrea S, Michelle R |
| 20 Nov  | Julie F, Tania R, Christine B |
| 21 Nov  | Carla K, Greg S, Anusaya P |
| 25 Nov  | Shaleen Y, Joane T, Leah G |
| 26 Nov  | Natalie P, Rieko M |
| 27 Nov  | Julie F, Jodie C, Lee P |
| 28 Nov  | Rachel C, Narelle C, Heather C |

**TUCKSHOP - LAST WK OF TERM**

Friday 5 December will be the last day for regular orders on Flexischools

| Mon 8 Dec  | Closed |
| Tue 9 Dec  | Closed |
| Wed 10 Dec | Counter Sales 1st and 2nd break - snacks and drinks available |
| Thu 11 Dec |  |
| Fri 12 Dec |  |