Welcome back and a very Happy New Year to you. I am really excited to be back at school and I am feeling very energetic. It appears that our students are full of energy too! It was such fun greeting everyone on Thursday morning and seeing the smiles on both our students and parent/carers faces, as you all entered the school: it made my day.

The school year has started off with such a positive vibe. Congratulations to all students and staff for your contribution to making our school the best it can be!

Welcome
A big welcome to our new staff: Tomas N, Jessica R. I’m sure you will be made welcome to our school and community. A big welcome back to Kim P, Kristina B and Anne F.

We also welcome the following students and their families: Finn W, Louie H, Jasmine B, Blake K, Noah L, Alexander Mc, Hannah W, Noah C, Hamish W, and Talia B. With our new enrolments, our total student numbers are at 130, with 127 being our Effective Full-Time enrolment. Of these numbers, ten students are dual-enrolled at various other schools. Bendigo SDS is stable with its enrolment numbers this year.
School Values – ENcouragement: Our School Community promotes encouragement to inspire and build confidence.

Great Start Conferences (GSC) February 23rd 11.00am – 6.00pm
In order to provide parents/carers with the opportunity to express your thoughts and to ensure the year starts on a positive note for our students, we are running ‘Great Start Conferences’ on MONDAY 23rd FEBRUARY between 11.00am and 6.00pm. You will be required to make an appointment with the classroom teacher. Notes have been sent home in regards to the organisation of these conferences. The feedback provided by our families in regards to the Student Achievement Conferences held twice per year, towards the end of Semesters 1 and 2, has been so very positive, and we look forward to the Great Start Conferences being of immense value too.

Prep Students
March is approaching very quickly! We look forward to our Prep students attending school full time - five days a week - as of Monday 2nd March. With Prep students attending school on a part-time basis over the first few weeks of Term One, I am sure it will take a little time for them to adjust to five full days. We hope they all have a great time as they settle into school on a full-time basis.

NAPLAN
Each year students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participate in a testing program which assesses Writing (a narrative task), Language Conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation), Reading and Numeracy. All students at Bendigo Special Developmental School are exempt and will not be required to perform this task. If you have any questions please call at any time to discuss them with me.

Newsletter to be emailed
Would you prefer your newsletter to be emailed each fortnight? If so fill in the form on the back page of the newsletter as soon as you can and return it to the school office.

School Photos
The school photos will be taken on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th February.

Welcome Back BBQ – March 4th 5 – 7pm
Come along and meet other parents, families, students and staff on March 4th from 5 – 7 pm. Kiwanis will once again support our evening by cooking sausages, topped with onion and serving our guests. There will be cordial available. Hope to see you there! The night will be held in the Main Yard at the rear of the school.

This term provides many opportunities for families to be involved in the school; so come along and join in the celebrations. We would love to see you here!

Enjoy the weekend!

Julie Hommelhoff
Principal

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Welcome back. I hope that you have enjoyed a safe and happy holiday and feel ready to take on the routine of school.

It has been fantastic to see our students return to school with huge smiles and looks of anticipation and excitement to take on their 2015 school year.
School Values – RESPECT: Our School Community is encouraged to treat others with grace and kindness. The use of manners is respect in action.

So far, for Administration, this is the “Year of the Bus”, as the Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) Student Transport bus services, Bendigo Region were overhauled. Peter Ball of Christian’s Bus lines was, in particular, instrumental in ensuring that one hundred of our bus travelling students are able to get to school accessing this reassessed service. Thank you to Peter and the other bus proprietors who worked over the holiday period to create an overall better travel service for our students.

This process, however, has not been without some trials. Some families have experienced significant change, which we appreciate has impacted on family routines and support networks. Please know that we will do all that we can to make changes if possible. We sincerely appreciate the patience of parents and carers at this time.

It is with our bus changes in mind that I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate some of our students. Yesterday I spoke with Billie B (Room 13) and I asked Billie how she felt about her bus change. This is what she had to say:

“It was okay changing buses. I was a bit scared. When I got on the bus I asked them if I was on the right bus, and it was so then I was okay. I will be okay. It is hard to do something new, but I do know some of the kids on the (new) bus, so this made it okay. I do miss my old bus, but I’ll be okay.”

I am so proud of Billie because of the way she has coped with such significant change. I congratulate Billie, Billie’s family and her teachers for helping Billie develop strategies, which help Billie to be resilient to such change.

Ryan P (Room 10) and Elliot P (Room 7) also need to be acknowledged for their resilience. Due to some administrative errors (yes, it was me!) Ryan and Elliot needed to access alternate transport on their first day (thanks Jenny A and Catriona P). Both Ryan and Elliot coped so well with deviating from their schedule and coping with an unknown ‘Plan B’. Again, I congratulate their families and teachers for explicitly teaching that coping with ‘deviating from a schedule’ is a very important skill.

If you have any questions about bus travel, please feel free to contact me.

Our Preps
Yesterday, our Speech Therapist Callum came to tell me that he had witnessed the best first Prep session ever! His assessment was also reflected by the ‘buzz’ in Reception as students were reunited with their families. We really look forward to getting to know the newest members of our school and their parents/carers. Thank you to Krystal, Donna, Kylie, Cherie and Callum for ensuring first year school success for our newest students.

Birthdays
We have two students celebrating birthdays next week. Isobella E will be celebrating her 16th birthday next Tuesday, and Eli I will celebrate his 17th birthday next Thursday. Happy Birthday to you both!

Thought For The Day
“Be as you wish to seem.” Socrates.
School Values – ENCOURAGEMENT: Our School Community promotes encouragement to inspire and build confidence.

Bus Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bus Contact Phone Numbers</th>
<th>Driver / Chaperone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town 1: 0427 287 843</td>
<td>Jack &amp; Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town 2: 0428 159 660</td>
<td>Peter &amp; Cynthia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedderburn: 0427 380 040</td>
<td>Peter &amp; Janine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town 3: 0428 261 802</td>
<td>Max &amp; Kathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlemaine: 0409 421 500</td>
<td>Darryl &amp; Wendy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malmsbury: 0428 271 824</td>
<td>Bevan &amp; Kathryn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathcote: 0427 380 046</td>
<td>Russell, Jenny &amp; Kay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyneton: 0428 236 271</td>
<td>Leigh &amp; Helen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town 4: 0429 041 763</td>
<td>Sue &amp; Katrina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jacqui Righetti  
Assistant Principal

Conveyance Allowance 2015

In some locations, eligible students are unable to access free school buses, or have to travel 4.8 kms or more to the bus pick up/drop off point.

The conveyance allowance helps cover the costs resulting from any transport gaps between the public transport system and the school bus network, or where multiple transport services are required to get to and from school. The allowance can be applied to the use of public transport, private cars, private buses and taxis.

Eligibility for a conveyance allowance is based on the following criteria:

- Students must attend the nearest specialist school
- Students must live at least 4.8km from the school or nearest bus pick up / drop off point.

If you consider your child is eligible for this allowance please contact the office for an application form as soon as possible.

If you have already applied successfully in 2014 and your circumstances have not changed, you are not required to reapply in 2015.

Fundraising 2015

Dear School Community,

Fundraising at BSDS will see some important changes made in 2015. The fundraising committee will be formed with only 2 members of staff, and the remaining positions will be offered to parent/ carers/ friend’s volunteers. This will present as a major opportunity for those interested to become directly involved in raising funds to improve educational outcomes for the students.

This model is already being used by the majority of schools with great success. We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity and look forward to developing new and innovative ideas together next year.

Early this year an expression of interest will be made available to those parents/ carers who are interested. Following this the team will be formed and a meeting will be held to discuss the fundraising policy and assign roles and responsibilities associated to the team.

For more information contact Michael Ring here at BSDS.

Sincerely,

Michael Ring

Fundraising Coordinator
Bendigo Special Developmental School
School Values – RESPECT: Our School Community is encouraged to treat others with grace and kindness. The use of manners is respect in action.

A Message from the City of Greater Bendigo…

Parking and Animal Services from the City of Greater Bendigo have contacted our school and requested that the following information be conveyed to our school community.

The illegal parking of vehicles adjacent to our school poses a safety concern to children, pedestrians and other road users. Parents are reminded that it is essential to comply with parking restrictions when dropping off and collecting children from school.

Motorists must not stop in no stopping areas, even briefly, with or without the motor running. They must not stop next to a continuous yellow edge line, on resident’s nature strips, too close to school crossings, park over driveways or double park. A number of schools have short term time restricted areas, such as 2 minute pick up drop off. These parking areas are in place to allow for ease of access close to schools and these restrictions must be adhered to. Drivers should also be aware that they cannot perform a U-turn over an unbroken or continuous dividing line.

With regard to children’s crossings, the law requires that a driver approaching a children’s crossing must drive at a speed at which the driver can, if necessary stop safely before the crossing. Please slow down and take extra care when driving in school zones.

City of Greater Bendigo Parking Officers and Bendigo Police do conduct random patrols throughout the school year at various locations to ensure that motorists are adhering to the Road Rules.

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School Values – ENCOURAGEMENT: Our School Community promotes encouragement to inspire and build confidence.

School Values – PROFESSIONALISM: We honour our job descriptions and work place values.

A big thank you to the **Rotary Club of Bendigo – Strathdale** for their generous donation of $500.00 to our school, it is greatly appreciated by the students, staff and whole school community.

This donation will go towards the purchase of a very important piece of Therapy Equipment for our High Needs Students – a Standing Frame.

A big thank you to **Joy Langham** for her generous donation of $1,000 to our school, it is greatly appreciated by the students, staff and whole school community. Joy’s donation will also go towards the purchase of a very important piece of Therapy Equipment for our High Needs Students – a Standing Frame.

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**Registration Form for Autism Seminar - Autism and Girls**

Thursday 26th February 2015 at 9.30 - 12.00

Museum for Australian Democracy at Eureka (M.A.D.E.)

102 Stawell St South Ballarat

**Registration Form / Tax Invoice 26th February 2015**

Organisation: __

Number attending: __

Names:

1. __

2. __

3. __

4. __

Email contact: __

Phone contact: __

Cost: □ Parent/carer $25 □ Professional $65

Total payable: $____________________________

**Registration options:** complete form and email - kks@netconnect.com.au

**Payment options:** Direct Deposit □ cheque □ Cash - □ (pay at the door)

A Tax Invoice is available on request

**Direct Deposit Details:** Bendigo Bank Ballarat Autism Network

BSB 633-000 Account – 11001 4883

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Ballarat Autism Network ABN: 427 267 391 79

PO Box 1422

Bakery Hill PO

3354
School Values – RESPECT: Our School Community is encouraged to treat others with grace and kindness. The use of manners is respect in action.

Family Statements were sent home today. Please take note of the following information and please contact the office if you have any questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL CHARGES 2015 per student</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Education Items(Curriculum)</td>
<td>$433.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL to pay per student</td>
<td>$433.00 (less $33.00 if paid by the end of Term One)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Plans Available</th>
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<tr>
<td>$108.25 per term</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>$43.30 per month (based on 10 months Feb – Nov)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21.65 per fortnight (based on 20 fortnights Feb - Nov)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Contribution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Council Voluntary Contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds</td>
<td>$10.00 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$25.00 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$468.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefits to Families for Payment in Full before the End of Term One
- $33.00 discount
- Payment in advance ensures that Programs can continue to run in the future

Benefits to Families who pay ANY amount before the end of Term One
- You will go into the draw for a chance to win back half the amount that you have paid in Term One

Payment Options in 2015
- BPay (as on your statement)
- Internet Banking (school bank account details on your statement)
- Eftpos (eftpos machine at reception)……. has nearly arrived!
- Centrepay - this is a free voluntary service for Centrelink customers to pay expenses as regular deductions from their Centrelink payments. Deductions can be started, changed or cancelled at any time to suit the family’s circumstances ……nearly set up, just waiting on finalisation from Centrelink!
- Payment Plan - please contact the office if you wish to set up a Payment Plan. Payments can be direct debited from your credit card or eftpos debit card
- QKR School App………. has nearly arrived!

A big thank you to ASQ Garden and Landscape for their generous donation of $276.43 to our school, it is greatly appreciated by the students, staff and whole school community.

This donation will go towards the purchase of a very important piece of Therapy Equipment for our High Needs Students – a Standing Frame.

Thank You!
An Important Message About 2015 for all Families re the removal of EMA

All families received a letter from our School Council President

From 1 January 2015, the government will provide financial support directly to Victoria’s neediest schools instead of providing the Education Maintenance Allowance directly to parents. Parents will not be able to apply for the Education Maintenance Allowance in 2015.

The money will be allocated to eligible schools through schools’ core operational funding mechanism. The Bendigo SDS will be receiving less total funding in 2015 as a result of this DEECD funding restructure.

Two Key Questions Answered….

1. Why is the EMA changing?
The reason for the change stems from the 2013 School Funding Reform Agreement, signed between Victoria and the Commonwealth. The Victorian Government committed an additional $5.4 billion school funding, which included a change to the way it helps low-income families with education expenses.

2. What support is still being provided directly to parents?
The School Kids Bonus is still available to support families to assist with meeting the costs of education in 2015.

To be eligible, you must be a parent or carer who gets Family Tax Benefit Part A for a dependent child attending primary or secondary education. From 1 January 2015, an income test will also apply. Eligible families and young people with an adjusted taxable income of $100,000 or less will be paid Schoolkids Bonus.

How much will I receive? From 1 January 2015, eligible families will receive Schoolkids Bonus in 2 instalments of $211 for each child in primary school - a total of $422 each year.

More information can be obtained from the Department of Human Services.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you can speak with the Principal to discuss payment difficulties and also how you can access State School’s Relief Committee for assistance with uniforms.

If you have any questions about this change, please contact the Principal.

SCHOOL APP – TIQBIZ

Have you signed up for the School App?
We are using an app to communicate with you.
You’ll be notified of our news, messages, event and other communications.

ABSENCES:
You can notify the school via the app if your child is going to be absent from school.

PERMISSION FORMS:
You can give permission for your child to attend an excursion/outing via the app.

CANTEEN ORDERS:
Canteen lists are also on the App, you can send your order through via the contact envelope on the App.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL:
You can let us know if you are coming to an event at School via the app e.g. International Day of People With a Disability, Christmas Basket Tea etc.
Contact the school office if you have any further enquiries.
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School Values

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**Parents & Friends Group / New Families**

Our Parents (and Friends) gather once a fortnight to have a chat and a cuppa. Pre School children are most welcome to join in the fun! Our next meeting is Friday 6th January. Our meetings are held in the school staff room straight after School drop off. So why not come along and join us for a cuppa!

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**Access Travel Pass**

Do you have the above assistance cards? We have application forms in the School Office. Our Health Professionals: Cherie (Occupational Therapist), and Callum (Speech Therapist) are willing and able to support you with the endorsement of forms if necessary.

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**‘Find A Carer’**

Find A Carer at [www.findacarer.com.au](http://www.findacarer.com.au) is a website which connects carers and children with special needs, people with a disability and the elderly.

Email: info@findacarer.com.au  Mob.0402 635 285

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**Newsletter: E-mail Registration – Please Return Form to School Office.**

Your Name: .................................................................

Students Name: ...........................................................

Students Room No: ..............................................

E-mail Address that you would like us to E-mail the newsletter to: ..........................................................

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