2016 CALENDAR

Term 1:  28 January to 24 March
Term 2:  11 April to 24 June
Term 3:  11 July to 16 September
Term 4:  3 October to 20 December

MARCH
5th  Toora Variety Market 8:00am - 1:00pm
12th PFA Catering at Welshpool Flower Show
13th PFA Catering at Welshpool Flower Show
13th PFA Catering at Toora Annual Pear Party
14th Labour Day  Public Holiday
15th Parent Teacher Interviews 4:00 - 6:00pm
16th Sporting School Athletics Program 3:30-4:45pm
17th Parent Teacher Interviews 4:00 - 6:00pm
18th PFA Meeting 8:30am in School meeting room
21st RACV Street-Scene Incursion
23rd Sporting School Athletics Program 3:30-4:45pm
24th End of Term 1  2:20pm dismissal

APRIL
11th  School resumes Term 2
25th  ANZAC Day public Holiday

Absences  - All absences are recorded electronically using our COMPASS program, please phone the office on  56 862 283 or write in your Child’s communication book if your child has had an absent day or will be away for any reason.

IT’S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

From the day we are born one of the most critical necessities of life is our relationships. They provide a sense of belonging and purpose, and an environment which will require at least as much giving as taking. It’s in our relationships that we learn the gift of putting others first, and of treating them the way we would like to be treated. Of course the centre of the strongest relationships is found in a bond of real love. We have times in life when we might struggle to love or feel loved, particularly if we are feeling low about ourselves, or with the way we perceive we are being treated. Sometimes we may feel left out or neglected: hopefully never rejected.

The other critical factor that enables relationships to remain strong, and which is intertwined with love, is forgiveness – being willing to say sorry, and being willing to forgive.

As a Kidsmatter school, the welfare of your children is at the forefront of our concerns. We hope to be able to guide your children in learning new life skills that will help them cope in a world that has many challenges. It is often said, though, that the place that is first and foremost the best place for your children to learn these life skills is in their home, with you.

Attached is one of many Kidsmatter brochures that is designed to encourage you in your family relationships, and we trust that as we partner together in this most important task of teaching your children well, you too will experience an increasing joy of sharing in this love that matters most. Please, if we can help in any way, do not hesitate to speak to us.

Have a lovely weekend.
Gary Wentworth,  Toora Primary School Chaplain .

PFA NEWS

THE WELSHPOOL FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW
The PFA are catering for this event on the 11th and 12th March. We need parents help either in the form of food donation or a short amount of time on the day. Every little bit counts!! Please let us know asap if you can donate something. All donations to be in by Thursday 10th. Please see Emma Hughes or Jacqui Woods for more details.

PEAR PARTY
The PFA are having a stall at the Toora Pear party on Sunday 13th March, we are selling slices of pizza and samosas. If anyone was interested in helping out for an hour or so between 11am - 3pm on the day that would be wonderful! Please contact Nigel on 0431 904 899

Our next meeting is on Friday 18th March 08:30am, in the School Meeting room.

DONT’T MISS - TOORA VARIETY MARKET
SATURDAY 5th MARCH 8:00am to 1:00pm
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM BADGE PRESENTATION
The school considers that every student should have the opportunity to develop his or her leadership skills. Last Friday 26th February our Student Leadership team were presented with their leadership badges by local Member of Parliament Mr Danny O’Brien. Each member of the Leadership team was presented with a leadership badge which holds with it high expectations and the fact that they are the senior role models in the school.

L-R: Mrs Louise Gilbertson, Ava Brown - School Captain, Isaac Tanner - Student Steering Committee, Mr Danny O’Brien MP, William Cashin - Franklin House Captain, Mr Brett Whittle, Xavier Westbrook - Student Steering Committee, Jaxon Lewis - Agnes House Captain and Zane Baker - Student Steering Committee.

LOTS OF COLOURING COMPETITIONS FOR OUR STUDENTS....

- **Toora Village Art Centre in conjunction with Toora Pear Party,** “There’s a Pear In There”... If you haven’t already done so, please get your entries in. Entries can be dropped in to the school no later than TOMORROW (4th March) or over the weekend at the Toora Village Arts Centre in Stanley St, Toora (next to Wind-Mill Café)

- **Bendigo Bank Easter Colouring Competition** - This one is attached to todays newsletter. Enter for your chance to win a Great Easter Prize.

- **Foster Primary School Fete** - colouring competition. These need to be completed and handed in by Friday 18th March to, Foster Newsagency, Gecko Gallery Fish Creek or Foster Primary School.

FOSTER FAMILY FETE
Sunday 27th March (EASTER SUNDAY). Foster Primary School will be hosting the **Foster Family Fete** with an aim to raise funds to support the improvement of resources and facilities across all departments within the school. What better way to spend an Easter Sunday with the family enjoying:

*Early Bird WRISTBANDS FOR RIDES FORM is attached to this newsletter.*

- Graffiti Wall
- Spinning Wheel
- Monster Garage Sale
- Ripper Rides
- Fabulous Food
- Competitions
- Creative Cakes
- Photo Booth
- Marvellous Music
- Adventurous Activities
Corner Inlet District Sport

Due to a reduction from 2 to 1 lane for our District in Athletics at Division level, Corner Inlet District has had to review our sporting processes for 2016 and beyond.

After much consideration and deliberation Corner Inlet District (Welshpool, Toora, Foster, Tarwin Lower, Fish Creek and Tarwin Valley schools) has decided that we will run a Grade 3-6 District Athletics day instead of the usual Prom Coast and Waratah days.

Corner Inlet Athletics Day
When: Wednesday 27th April (Term 2, Week 3)
Where: South Gippsland Secondary College
Who: Students in Grades 3 to 6 from the 6 Corner Inlet District Schools (Prep/1/2 students will have their own Athletics day later in the year)

We see this as a fantastic opportunity to create some new sporting traditions in our District. The 6 schools will compete for a District perpetual shield which is calculated by each school’s total score divided by the number of Grades 3-6 students who compete, from that school, on the day. We will also have male and female age champions across all age groups.

This year is transition year to a new structure and we are endeavouring to provide a great day of competition and sportsmanship. After the event we will be reflecting on the day, acknowledging what worked well and what can be improved for 2017 to make a great new sporting competition considering all schools and students.

We thank you all for your continued support of our schools and look forward to sharing this exciting new chapter in the history of Corner Inlet. Your feedback of the day, of course, will always be warmly welcomed.

If you require any information regarding the changes to our Athletics carnival please see your school Principal.
CATERING FOR THE FLOWER SHOW

The PFA are catering for the Welshpool Flower Show on the 11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} of March. We need some baked cakes and slices donations to help sell on the day. All we ask is that baked goods have no fresh cream, kept whole, not cut and all items to be in an air tight container named for storage in fridges. All containers will be returned. We need the cakes/slices to be delivered \textbf{by 9.00 am on Friday 11\textsuperscript{th} March.}

Also we are once again asking for some extra items to be donated. If you would like to donate any of these items please leave them at the school before Thursday 10\textsuperscript{th} March by 3.30pm. We will have to purchase these item if we are unable to receive any donations.

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<th>1 bottle of tomato sauce</th>
<th>Hundreds and thousands sprinkles</th>
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<td>2 x 500 gms butter</td>
<td>Curry powder</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 x large jar mayonnaise</td>
<td>Large bottle orange cordial</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 x large box Tetley tea bags</td>
<td>Parsley and mint fresh big bunch</td>
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<td>Earl grey tea bags</td>
<td>1 large cucumber</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 large jar coffee</td>
<td>1 x orange</td>
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<td>1 kg sugar</td>
<td>2 x lemons</td>
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<td>2 x 500mls cream</td>
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<td>1 x box earl grey tea</td>
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We also require some volunteers to help with the serving and preparation of the food. We need assistance from 1.00pm until 4.30pm Friday 11\textsuperscript{th} March and on Saturday between 9.30am until 4.30pm.

We understand that it’s over the weekend and people have some other commitments to attend to, but if you can only spare a few hours we would greatly appreciate any help.

If you can help \textbf{please with catering, donations or volunteering time please} either place your name on the notice board at school opposite the office or contact Emma Hughes 0422394330 (call or text) or Jackie Wood 0423082777 with the item that you will be supplying.

Thank - you
About family relationships

Children thrive on feelings of belonging and affection that come from having caring and supportive families. Research affirms that the quality of family relationships is more important for children’s wellbeing than the size or composition of the family. Whether families have one parent or two, whether they include step-parents, grandparents or other carers, they can build strong, positive family relationships that promote family wellbeing and support children’s mental health.

The keys to developing strong and caring family relationships include making relationships a priority, communicating effectively and providing support for each other. However, building and maintaining positive relationships with children and with all family members is not always easy. Different needs arising within the family may create tensions between family members, and pressures that come from outside (e.g., work or financial pressures) may also impact on families and children. Sometimes these pressures can make the development of positive family relationships more difficult. Yet, even taking these influences into account, there is much the adult or adults in the family can do to build strong family relationships.

Families are different

Families vary in the expectations they hold regarding children’s behaviour and the roles of parents and carers. This leads to differences in family relationships and communication styles. Many beliefs about what makes for strong family relationships are influenced by the values and experiences that parents and carers were exposed to in their own families while growing up.

Cultural background can also impact on the values and goals adults have for children’s development. For example, it is common in Western industrialised societies like Australia for parents and carers to value children’s independence, whereas parents and carers from other cultural backgrounds sometimes give more emphasis to family responsibilities than to children’s independence. There are also many differences within cultures. Differences in the ways that families are made up lead to different relationship and support needs.
Meeting different kinds of relationship needs

Two-parent families are built on the primary couple relationship and this continues to have a major influence on relationships amongst all family members. Parents can find it a challenge to meet children’s needs as well as their own needs as partners, however, ensuring that some time is set aside to attend to the couple relationship is very important. When conflict between parents is not resolved, it may impact directly on children and/or on parenting effectiveness. Maintaining effective communication and support for each other as parents enhances the couple relationship and supports positive relationships in the family as a whole.

Sole parents are a diverse group. They may miss the support that having another parent or carer would provide and may feel over-stretched by the responsibility of caring for children alone. For sole parent families in particular, having a support network of friends and relatives makes a big difference. Separated sole parents and children also benefit from having a positive co-parenting arrangement with the other parent. This can be achieved when parents and carers value and respect the importance of children having opportunities to develop their relationships with both parents.

Blended and step-families can have more complex relationship needs to take into account. Children may feel their prior relationships with parents or carers are displaced by the new couple relationship. Family members, especially children, may still be grieving the loss of their original family. New relationships between children and parents or carers need to be negotiated and old ones renegotiated. Children may spend time with two families who have different expectations of them. These changes can cause significant strain and stress to children as well as to parents and new partners. It is important to reassure children that they will still have the love and support of both parents. Taking things slowly helps by allowing time for everyone to adjust to new circumstances. Making realistic expectations and house rules clear to all step-family members is very important. For example, it is especially helpful for children and step-parents to recognise that they don’t have to love one another but they are expected to treat each other with respect.

What supports strong family relationships

Two main dimensions of the parenting role have been found to have important effects on family relationships and on children’s development, no matter what kind of family children are raised in. These are:

1. Communicating warmth and care
2. Establishing clear and appropriate limits for children’s behaviour

Positive styles of communication are a common element that supports both of these dimensions.

All families experience ups and downs as they strive to do their best for children and deal with challenges that come along. A recent study asked Australian families of different kinds to nominate what they considered to be the characteristics that made their families strong in spite of any difficulties they might face. This table shows the eight characteristics that were identified.

Family strengths as identified by Australian families

- **Communication** – listening to each other and communicating with openness and honesty.
- **Togetherness** – sharing similar values and beliefs that create a sense of belonging and bonding.
- **Sharing activities** – spending time together doing things they enjoy, for example, sports, reading, camping, playing games.
- **Affection** – showing affection and care on a regular basis through words, hugs, kisses and thoughtfulness.
- **Support** – offering and being able to ask for support, with family members knowing they will receive assistance, encouragement and reassurance from one another.
- **Acceptance** – understanding, respecting and appreciating each family member’s unique personal qualities.
- **Commitment** – seeing family wellbeing as a first priority and acting accordingly with dedication and loyalty.
- **Resilience** – being able to withstand difficulties and adapt to changing circumstances in positive ways.

Families in this research also identified that the biggest challenges in family relationships were communication breakdown, parenting issues and difficult relationship dynamics. Acknowledging existing family strengths is a good starting point for addressing challenges and building stronger family relationships.
Communication skills for building relationships

Good communication is essential for healthy relationships. The way people talk and listen to each other builds emotional ties and helps make expectations clear. Effective communication helps family members feel understood and supported. The adults in the family in particular play a critical role in communicating to children values such as respect and caring. They do this by talking with children and especially by demonstrating their values in the way they communicate.

Listening

Listening attentively and actively is most important for creating a climate in which open and honest communication can take place. Focussing on what the other person is saying, rather than thinking of your own response while they are speaking, shows that you are genuinely interested. Listen for meaning and feeling and actively check that you understand the other person’s point of view, for example: “It sounds like you’re feeling sad because you wanted to have a turn like everyone else and you missed out.” To listen actively to children, give them your full attention while they are talking and help to draw out their feelings and understandings. Taking a little extra time to listen also helps you and your child come up with better solutions for problems (rather than imposing your own solutions).

Talking with children

Parenting research has found that many parents or carers talk much more than they listen to children. While it is necessary for adults to communicate their expectations, children also need to be heard in order to feel connected and valued. The way that adults speak can encourage children to respond or to shut down. Listening well, paying attention to what children say and asking specific questions encourage children to talk more. Invite children to talk by giving them space. Often they find it easier to talk when they can be spontaneous, for example, while you are doing an everyday activity with them, rather than sitting down to talk face-to-face.

Tuning in

Paying attention to emotional connections is really important for supporting positive family relationships. As well as listening to words, effective communication requires paying attention to body language and expressions so as to notice and respond to feelings. Tuning into your own feelings and expressing them in ways that allow others to understand how you feel promotes caring relationships. Tuning into children’s behaviours and the feelings they communicate is especially helpful for understanding children and guiding them as they learn to express their feelings in words.

What you do (or do not do) also sends a message which is interpreted by family members. Clear messages are less likely to be misinterpreted. Avoid giving mixed messages in which you say one thing and do another. Since actions often speak louder than words, try to ensure that there is a match between what you do and what you say. When this is not possible (eg you are not available when you said you would be) be sure to provide an explanation and apology.

Problem-solving

Addressing and solving problems supportively helps to strengthen family relationships. This involves:

- identifying the problem that needs to be solved, rather than judging the person
- making sure that everyone’s concerns are listened to
- coming up with a range of options or alternatives and thinking them through together
- choosing a solution or action plan that everyone involved can agree with
- trying it out and checking how it goes.

Using a family problem-solving approach helps to avoid blaming, demonstrates support for family members, and helps to build togetherness.

It is also a very effective way of helping children learn skills for problem-solving and decision-making that they can use in many different situations.

When families experience conflict that is repeated or severe it is important to seek professional relationship counselling. Counselling can help to prevent problems worsening, so it is ideal to seek it early rather than waiting too long. Unresolved conflict can lead to aggression, intimidation, or violence. These are completely unacceptable behaviours that have particularly destructive effects on both individuals and family relationships.
Key points for building better family relationships

Emphasise positive communication
Remember that good communication starts with effective listening. Encourage talking by listening actively to other family members to better understand their perspective.

Make regular ‘quality time’ a priority
Families benefit from having time to unwind and relax with one another. Making sure you have un-pressured time to spend doing things you enjoy together makes for positive relationships.

Offer support
Appreciate more than criticise one another and be ready to offer help when needed.

Dealing with conflict
Conflict is a normal (and healthy) part of family life. Families are made up of individuals who will sometimes have different ideas, wants or needs. Since conflict is inevitable, it is important for families to have effective ways of managing it. Remember that conflict itself is not a problem – but the way it is handled might be. When conflict is managed in positive ways, family relationships are strengthened. When not dealt with effectively, conflict can be stressful and damaging to relationships.

Many parents and carers find that conflict between siblings is a recurring concern. Children in the same family often argue, tease and complain about each other, even though at other times they may provide good company for one another. When children fight it is important for parents and carers not to take sides, but to help children identify the problem behind the conflict and guide them through a process of peaceful conflict resolution. Though children may look to a parent or carer to judge who is right and who is wrong in a conflict, taking this approach can lead to more frequent conflicts. Assisting children to work through the steps of conflict resolution helps them learn how to manage conflict fairly and builds a basis for cooperation.

See the KidsMatter Primary information sheets on problem-solving and decision-making, social and emotional learning, effective discipline, and resolving conflict for ideas on building stronger family relationships.