Dear Parents,

As I write the final newsletter for 2014 amongst the hustle and bustle of term 4, it is difficult to believe that the school year is almost over and Christmas is nearly here.

On behalf of Bluff State School, I would like to thank Miss Kirsten Iszlaub for everything she has done in the school over the last 3 years. We wish you all the best with your future pursuits in career and wholeheartedly thank you for your contribution to education at Bluff State School and improving so many young people’s lives. Kirsten, you will be dearly missed by students, parents and staff.

Bluff State School is a truly wonderful small school. We have very dedicated staff who give everything to ensuring that your child is provided with the very best education. Often our teacher or teacher aide to children ratios are as low as 1:3. This means that your child is receiving differentiated and individualised teaching and learning. Education is the main job of our school and we will continue to work hard at this every single day. Please remember that I am always open to feedback about how our school can continue to improve.

Report Card writing has been completed and I would like to congratulate all students of Bluff State School. It has been very exciting to support and encourage children to improve throughout the year. All students should be proud of the efforts they have put in this year and the marks they have achieved.

Over the past week, I have had interviews with the four Prep children for 2015 and their parents. It has been exciting to welcome two siblings to our school and two new families – we hope that you enjoy your time with us at Bluff State School. The transition day last week was a huge success. The year 6 boys are familiar with High School and looking forward to it – they are definitely ready for the next chapter in their lives. The year 2 boys enjoyed being in the 3-6 classroom and participating in activities in preparation for next year. The 2015 prep children had a great day working with the current prep and year 1 children and certainly settled in quickly.

**Bluff Giving Tree**

I am overwhelmed by the response to the Bluff Giving Tree. Thank you for supporting this initiative, you have brightened Christmas for many other families/children. Sister Carmel and Sister Colleen will be distributing the gifts to families in the local community who can’t afford much this Christmas. It has warmed my heart to see so many students and families donating gifts and getting excited about it. It certainly highlights the meaning of Christmas.
Report Cards
Report cards will be available for collection from the office on Tuesday 9th December. If they are not picked up, they will be posted.

School based play group
In 2015, I would like to run a supported and structured school based playgroup. It will be open to all children in the community from birth – 4 years old. Depending on interest shown from parents, the group will run on one or two mornings each week of the school year (beginning in Term 1, Week 2). At present, I am gathering information from interested parents and speaking to the relevant organisations to get the playgroup up and running.
I will run a detailed parent information session on Thursday 29th January from 3pm. Please see or call me with any questions or to express interest.

Year 6 Graduation Dinner
The Year 6 Graduation Dinner is being held tonight at the Bluff Hotel. It will be a very special evening for the year 6 boys, their parents and staff as we congratulate Will, Bailey, Brock and Clay on completing primary school and celebrate their achievements.

End of Year Learning Celebration / Awards Night
Our End of Year Learning Celebration is being held on Wednesday 10th December at the CWA Hall. The evening will begin at 6pm with students to arrive from 5:45pm. Please bring a plate to share. If your child is in Prep – Year 2, please bring something savoury. If your child is in Year 3 – 6, please bring something sweet.

Party Day
Thursday 11th December is Party Day and we are going to Blackwater pool, the park, the Police Station and having McDonalds for lunch! Children may wear their togs to school under their school uniform and bring a bag with their sun shirt, hat, underwear, towel, sunscreen, goggles (if needed), morning tea and enough water for the day.

Clean-up Day
Friday is clean-up day. Students may wear free dress clothes though must still bring their hats and wear closed in shoes. Students will need to bring morning tea and lunch. All students that attend clean-up day will also get to participate in a cooking activity.

In the event of a natural disaster - Access to school closure information
QSchools app
The QSchools app will provide up-to-date information about school closures, in the event of a natural disaster causing damage to the school or preventing access to the school.
Visit the department’s apps page for more information and all the features: http://deta.qld.gov.au/about/app/
The QSchools app is available for free download through iTunes, Google Play and the Window’s store.

Websites
Up-to-date information about school closures can be accessed on the following websites.
School Closure Website: http://esc.eq.edu.au
QGOV Website: http://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/information/pages/closure.html
CARS and STARS

Summarising

A summary is a short statement that tells the main points or important ideas of a reading passage. When you use a short statement to restate the important ideas, you are summarising.

- A summary is not stated in reading passage. You must think about and restate the most important ideas in the passage to create a summary.
- A good summary of fiction tells about the main character’s problem and its solution.
- A good summary of nonfiction tells about the main idea of the reading selection, as well as the main idea of each paragraph.

eKindy

The eKindy program is a comprehensive ‘at home’ kindergarten program for children in the year before Prep. The program is supported by a qualified early childhood teacher and covers 15 hours of Kindergarten for 40 weeks a year (school terms only). The program aligns with the early years learning framework and the Queensland kindergarten learning guidelines.

eKindy is for children who are unable to regularly access a centre-based kindergarten program. This includes children:

- isolated by distance
- with a medical condition
- part of travelling or itinerant families.

Children must be born between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 and meet the eKindy eligibility requirements for 2015. The details of enrolment and how you can support these Kindy Kids can be found at the following link:
https://brisbanesde.eq.edu.au/Ourschool/ekindy/Pages/ekindy.aspx

Date claimers for this term

More information regarding each event will be provided closer to the day.

Monday 8th December: Year 6 Graduation Dinner – Year 6 students and their parents only
Tuesday 9th December: Report Cards Distributed
Wednesday 10th December: Awards Night/End of Year Celebration – CWA Hall, 6pm
Thursday 11th December: Break up Day – Excursion
Friday 12th December: Last Day of Term
Tuesday 27th January: School resumes
Thursday 29th January: School play group information session

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I am looking forward to working with you and your child again in 2015.

School resumes on Tuesday 27th January.

Warm regards,

Elizabeth
What's going on in the....

P-2 Classroom

We are now in the last week of school for 2014 and it is hard to believe how fast this year has flown! It’s crazy to think that all those little prep, year 1 and year 2 students that I started the year with, are now almost year 1, year 2 and year 3 students! All students have worked extremely hard this year and should be proud of their progress, successes and attitudes. Well done to all P-2 and 3-6 students, I am very proud of you and have enjoyed our year (or years, in the case of some students) together. I wish all Bluff SS students every success in their future schooling years! Keep up your great attitudes, keep smiling, and enjoy whatever the future has in store for you.

On a personal note, thank you to the Bluff SS staff, parents/families and community members, who have made my time here enjoyable. I hope everyone has a fantastic and safe Christmas and New Year!

3-6 Classroom

Wow, it is very hard to believe that this year is almost over. I have asked the children what the highlight of the year was for them and here they are:

Latoya: I learnt to do maths with Miss Cooper.
Tyler: My favourite thing is art and making the hot balloons because I enjoy making things.
Lexy: I love art because we get to do it with Mrs Day.
Preston: Art is cool because you can make all sorts of things.
Mia: I have learnt History and Art with Mrs Day and I have learnt lots of new things with Miss Webb.
Bailey J: I have learnt lots of things in History with Mrs Day.
Rafe: My favourite part of this year was camp. I loved laser tag.
Rowdy: I have loved doing art with Mrs Day.
Wyatt: My favourite part of camp was doing the outdoor laser tag.
Charli: I love doing art with my favourite teacher – Mrs Day.
Rory: I have enjoyed learning new ideas in art.
Will: I have enjoyed doing Geography and learning new things.
Bailey O: I have enjoyed playing with my friends at lunch time.
Brock: I have adored learning with my teachers.
Clay: I really enjoyed going on camp with my friends and going scuba diving.
Children move into secondary school at the same time that they go through puberty. This double whammy means parents need to handle kids with consideration and care.

Being at the bottom of the pecking order where you are unsure of the rules of the playground is just one adjustment to make. Dealing with more than one teacher, changing classrooms for each subject, reading a timetable, altering eating habits and carrying a load of books around is difficult enough without the added task of meeting new people and making friends.

Some kids take these new experiences in their stride but it is natural to experience some difficulty making the transition from primary to secondary school. Here are some positive ideas to help young people make a smooth transition to secondary school:

1. **It's time for some supportive parenting.** Talk to your child about change and reassure him or her that it is normal to feel unsure and anxious in new circumstances. Let your child know that any difficulties faced will only be temporary. Some kids may brush you off with a 'she'll be right' attitude but don't be fooled by the bravado. Most will be feeling fairly unsure of themselves.

2. **Prepare thoroughly for the first day.** Have the correct uniform and books and familiarise your child with transport arrangements.

3. **Pair them up with a sibling or a peer.** If your child doesn't have a sibling at the school try to pair him or her up with a friend if they walk or use public transport on the first day.

4. **Share some of your own memories of starting secondary school,** but steer away from any horror first-day stories. It can be reassuring for a child to know that you went through a similar experience and survived. Disclosing in this way shows that you understand how they feel.

5. **Confidence is catching.** Children often take their cues from their parents so show confidence in their ability to cope.

6. **Listen to children in the first few weeks of school.** Ask about the new subjects or interesting activities they are doing, and try to shift their focus to the positive aspects of school.

7. **Make contact with your child's year level coordinator** if you have concerns about how they are settling in. Don't wait for a parent-teacher night.

**N.B.** If it is your eldest child who is starting then secondary school will be relatively new for you, too. It will take some time to adjust to the school's culture and communication methods. You can learn a great deal by talking with your child and encouraging him or her to share experiences. In times of change what you and your child need most of all is to communicate with each other.