

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with sadness, tears and a heavy heart that I let you know that I have decided to retire from my wonderful Clarke Road School at the end of this year. It has been a fantastic 8 year journey as principal of Clarke Road School and I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved as a school and especially all that our beautiful students have gained. I have been working in special education and for the NSW Department of Education for 29 Years. It is time to have a break and to move onto other adventures, being a nanny is but one part! My last day will be Tuesday 15th December 2020.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the almighty Clarke Road School team- The executive, the teachers, our wonderful SLSO's, the GA and to our incredible office staff. I extend it also to our parents and amazing P&C. To all those who have come and gone before. If I've said it once, I've said it a 1000 times, effective teams are everything! Together we grow our thinking, plan, solve, learn, improve and work together to ensure our students have the highest standard education. In quality teams everyone has a voice and is valued for all that they bring to the team. Quality leadership is second only to the quality of the staff that stand in front of students. We have an incredibly talented team of educators at Clarke Road School and that is no accident. They have engaged in professional learning, collaborated together, built each other's capacity, shared their skills, demonstrated respect for each other and above all given their all to our students.

Dates to Remember

P&C Zoom Meeting

Fri 27th November
9.30am

Chat & Learn Zoom Session

Tues 24th November
9.30-11.00am

Year 12 Formal

Thurs 10th December

P.B.E.L. NEWS

At Clarke Road School, our students practice caring all the time, but this week we're taking extra special care in the gardens.



As a team we have led innovation in teaching and learning for complex students and have gained recognition for your work across NSW, if not Australia. Thank you enormously to the team. You demonstrate everything that is wonderful about the values that the NSW Department of Education holds high. I look forward to hearing about our work on Passport for Learning and In The Zone for Learning, as it rolls out in trials across NSW. To every staff member, know that the work you have led will shape special education for every complex student in the state.

I am honoured to say that I leave Clarke Road School in wonderful hands. Our executives are strong, experienced, reflective and dedicated, our teachers are of the highest calibre and our SLSOs are outstanding. Our office staff demonstrate the values of respectful and supportive communication with our community. In 2018 when Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, NSW Department of Education visited our school for a day of “walk in our shoes”, he commented in his end of year Xmas address that his day at Clarke Road School was the highlight of his year. He could not tell who was a teacher, nor who was an SLSO, as we work as a unified team. He said the school “had a great vibe”. If we are to continue the great work and advocacy for special education we need to continue to open our schools to those that can impact positively and continue to build the resourcing and quality of education provided for our complex kids.

As parents, carers and community members, you know better than anyone caring for and educating a child or young adult with complex learning needs is at times rewarding, difficult, joyous, hard, exciting, challenging, amazing, heartbreaking and at times so very exhausting. Let’s just say it can be a roller coaster! My ride has been all of those words too! I have loved the ride. I am so incredibly proud of our kids and also of you as parents as you navigate your own “ride”. Time and time again I see that when we work together closely the outcomes for our students are so much better and the ride can be so much more enjoyable. As parents I know you look after each other and I will value that aspect of our parents and carer community immensely.

I have always worked to improve the resourcing, acknowledgement of and equity for our specialised schools and our students. Our students deserve nothing but the best. I have taken on roles external to my school responsibility to forge the recognition that our students and schools deserve. It took me away from school often. I thank all of the people who filled in and took on roles so that work was even possible. You know who you are.....thank you!

I wanted to share some of the highlights in my journey to date-

- The completion and opening of our new school in 2014. Now that was a big job! Thank you those parents who walked alongside us to get our school built.
- ***Finalist Special School of the year 2018, The Educator, Australia***
- Received a letter of commendation from Mark Scott, for outstanding results in the NSW People Matters Survey and the NSW Tell them from me survey, external validation as well as my award of Australian Principal of the Year.
- One of the top ***20 Innovative Schools in Australia 2017, The Educator***
- **Australian Primary Principal of the Year** government schools 2018, ***The Educator, Australia***
- **Australian Principal of the Year 2018**, all sectors, ***The Educator, Australia***
- ***Principal in Residence (PIR), School Operations and Performance, Every Student Known, Valued and Cared for, July 2018-Dec 2018***
- ***Deputy President, NSW Primary Principals’ Association 2017-2018, including executive liaison Aboriginal Education Reference Group.***
- ***Vice President, NSW Primary Principals’ Association 2016-2017, including executive liaison Assets reference group and SSP reference group.***

- *SSP Reference group Chairperson, NSW Primary Principals' Association 2010-2015.*
- *National Board (NSW representative) Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA) 2015 +*
- *NSW Special Education Principals and Leaders Association (SEPLA)- Management and conference committee 2011- present*
- *Awarded NSW Social Justice and Equity Award, NSW Primary Principals' Association, 2017*
- *NSW 'Premier's Scholar 2004, "Supporting students with intellectual disability and complex challenging behaviours"- United States of America.*
- *Awarded Paul Harris Fellow, the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International 2019*

Without a great team at Clarke Road School, I would never have had the opportunity to be a part of these experiences, roles and responsibilities. I have been rewarded ultimately by the opportunity to work with your children and young adults. To get to know them, guide school planning to meet their needs and the needs of our community, celebrate them, laugh with them and even give them chocolate frogs (when they've been awesome of course). May my lolly jar continue to provide many chocolate frogs.

The process to identify a new principal will begin early next year. In the meantime Rebecca Saunders will be Acting Principal and she will be supported by a very capable executive team of Mel Adderley, Catherine Treay and Shanaya Dubash.

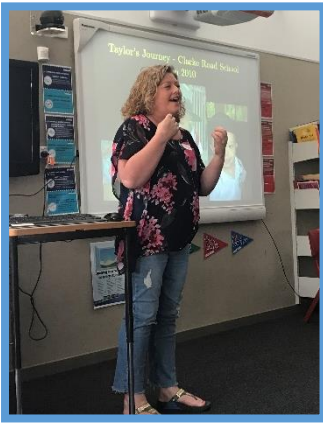
Thank you for your friendship and support. I'm sure our paths will cross again.

I will miss our students immensely!

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Dear Parents and Carers,



Our new student parent orientation was held this week and we had the opportunity to welcome the Tan, Saleem, Ma and Wang families to Clarke Road School. These events are always a wonderful opportunity to share information about our fabulous students and staff as well as some of the key programs and practices that underpin our great school. It was also lovely to have a chance to hear from two of our Clarke Road families - A special thank you to Kati Herrington and Karen Sheather who shared their school experiences with our new parents.



Use of data to inform practice

Clarke Road School (CRS) is currently undertaking a process of school planning and has been using the 'What Works Best' themes to inform their planning. These themes include: high expectations, explicit teaching, effective feedback, use of data to inform practice, assessment, classroom management, wellbeing and collaboration. This week, I wanted to write about the theme of the ***Use of data to inform practice***. At Clarke Road School, data is collected through students Passport for Learning assessments. These assessments capture each students' skills in cognitive, expressive and receptive language and social areas at the beginning of each year. In the Zone checklists also provide staff with a greater understanding of the supports students need to be in a calm yet alert state; a state that is optimum for learning. The information gained from these assessments provides meaningful data to staff about the skills a student has developed as well as provides important information about what skills staff need to target next. Students' programs are personalised with instructions and visual support adjusted to their Passport for Learning 'colour' group. When students are learning a new skill they work with a staff member 1:1 to build their knowledge and understanding. Activities that build these skills, are monitored and adjusted according to students progress. Once a skill has moved to the established stage, students are given opportunities to practice this skill as an independent skill. Students progress and growth can be captured in Passport for Learning assessments later in the year. These gains are reported to parents in both mid year and end of year reports. These reports provide detail about the progress their child has made in specific areas and skills and those they are working towards.

Chat & Learn & P & C

Next Tuesday, the 24th November we will be hosting a Zoom Chat & Learn from 9.30-11.00 on the topic of co regulation to self regulation. This is a wonderful opportunity to grow our understanding together about 'Passport for Learning' and 'In the Zone' so please consider joining us. Details of the Zoom have been sent via email to all parents today. Also, please note that our next P & C meeting has been changed to the 27th November at 9.30 am. Both these events are opportunities to connect with the wider community, we look forward to seeing you online.

Have a lovely weekend everyone,

Rebecca

Some of our amazing learners this week:



Creating a Voice (CaV) Project

This term we have been focussing on developing students' social skills using the Passport for Learning framework (also known as the Communication Passport). The social skill that we are focussing on this week is engagement with others, particularly looking at the question: 'Can the student play and interact with others?'

A blue student is not always aware of attempts of others to interact. They rely on a familiar communication partner to interpret their signals and assign meaning to them. A blue student is working towards intentional communication and attending to people and real objects. To support the development of this skill focus on developing joint/shared attention skills by engaging the student in an activity with a familiar communication partner such as blowing bubbles. You could also give opportunities to request 'more' of an activity if they show an interest in a particular item or activity e.g. they may look at the bubble container when you stop blowing. You would then assign intention to the look by saying "You want more".

A purple student sometimes responds to familiar people's attempts to interact. They recognise familiar voices and respond to their name. They are becoming aware of others in their environment and are engaging in the here and now e.g. a familiar person in front of them. A purple student is beginning to shift their attention from objects and toys and intentionally requesting an item. To support the development of this skill for a purple student provide opportunities for them to request 'more' of a highly preferred activity or item. You would also continue to develop joint/shared attention skills by providing opportunities for students to engage in preferred activities with a familiar communication partner such as reading a familiar book.

A red student mostly engages in solitary play/interaction. This student can show enjoyment in very simple social interactions such as cause/effect games or games initiated by others. To support the development of this skill for a red student provide them with opportunities to develop joint attentions skills including eye contact and a shared interest such as reading a book or taking an interest in a toy together.

A brown student observes others but doesn't join in (i.e. engages in on-looker behaviour). For this student on-looker behaviour can lead to them engaging in parallel play/interaction (i.e. students playing /interacting with the same equipment but not interacting with each other). This student is likely to be possessive of their own items and particular toys/equipment. To support the development of this skill for a brown student facilitate opportunities for them to engage in parallel play with others. Turn-taking and sharing skills could be developed by providing clear and structured routines around taking turns such as use a 'whose turn' board. Turns would need to be brief.

An orange student engages in associative play/interaction (i.e. playing/interacting, at times, with others at the same activity or game). At the early stages of orange, this student plays/interacts with 1 other peer or person. As they move towards this skill being more established they would play/interact with 2 peers. They can share for a short time with adult supervision. To support the development of this skill for an orange student establish clear rules with consistent language around sharing and play, with visual supports if possible. Use familiar topics to encourage engagement in conversation. Use waiting and an expectant look to encourage interaction.

A yellow student engages in co-operative and constructive play/interaction (i.e. able to plan games and activities with others. They can interact with others as well as the game/activity). This student can play/interact with 2-3 other students at a time. In activities/play, they can respond to peer requests and make requests of peers. At this stage, the students are starting to see others as potential partners for achieving the same thing in play/interaction, making it possible to do things they couldn't do alone. To support the development of this skill for a yellow student provide opportunities for them to play with peers in structured games where clear rules for playing are established. Adults can facilitate sharing toys in play with visual supports. Chat mats and chat books could also be used to encourage turn taking in conversation.

A green student engages co-operative and socio-dramatic play/interaction (i.e. able to assign roles, pretend they are in different locations etc.). This student may require assistance to resolve arguments. They can exclude others from play/interaction. This student can play games with rules. In conversation they are able to talk on a variety of topics and extend conversations by asking questions and giving additional information. To support the development of this skill for a green student practise conversations with visual supports such as a conversation ladder. You could also facilitate and encourage sociodramatic play with toys such as dress ups and tea sets. Visual supports to allocate roles such as the cook putting on an apron can also help.

Awareness

Anticipation

Intentional

Imitation
First – Then

Categorising

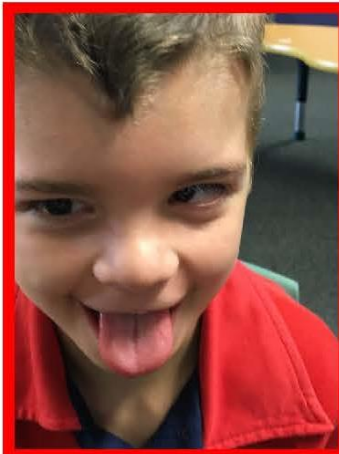
Problem Solving

Critical Thinking

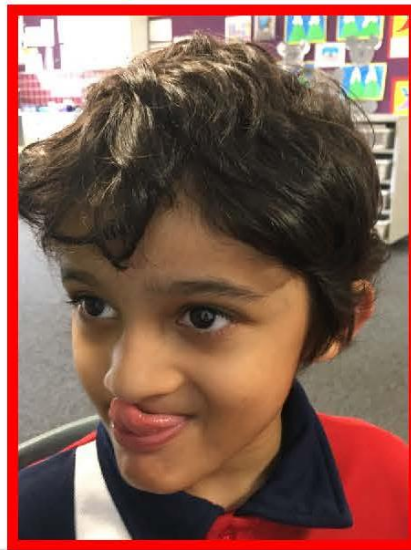
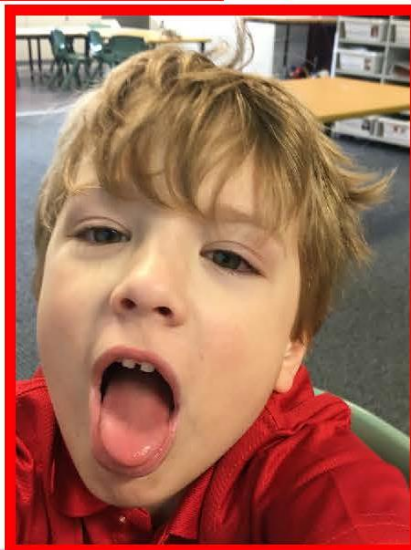
Bunya's Geography

This term Bunya have been learning about Maori culture in geography. Here are some of the fun things we have been doing.

A Moari Greeting



These are
our scary
Haka faces.



Maori Clothes



Maori Games



Compulsory School Attendance

Information for parents

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

What are my legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age. The *Education Act 1990* requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards for homeschooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

The importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Gives students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An *Application for Extended Leave* may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.



My child won't go to school. What should I do?

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?

It is important to understand that the Department of Education and Communities may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department

may apply to the Children's Court for a *Compulsory Schooling Order*. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- Prosecution in the Local Court
- School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

What age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

Working in Partnership

The Department of Education and Communities recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

If a student misses as little as 8 days in a school term, by the end of primary school they'll have missed over a year of school.

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

Policy, information and brochures:

Please visit the Department of Education's *Policy Library*

The school leaving age:

Please visit the Department of Education's *Wellbeing and Learning* website

Do you need an interpreter?

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 131 450. You will not be charged for this service.

For further advice and questions contact your educational services team

T 131 536

Learning and Engagement

Student Engagement & Interagency Partnerships

T 9244 512

www.dec.nsw.gov.au

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