



Calder Chronicle

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THURSDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY 2026

CALENDAR

Friday, 13th February

School Captain applications due
Scholastic Book Club Orders due (online or at the Office)

Monday, 16th February

School Captain speeches

Wednesday, 18th February

Foundation Day Off (Assessments)

Wednesday, 25th February

Foundation Day Off (Assessments)

Wednesday, 11th March

NAPLAN commences

School Organisation

Dear Parents, Carers and Greater Community,

Welcome to Week 3. By now we have routines in place, with the vast majority our children settling in and doing well. A special mention to our Foundation students who are doing a marvellous job of adapting to school life and classroom routines too!

SUNSMART – NO HAT NO PLAY

We are a SunSmart school and as part of our policy, children must wear a broad-brimmed hat when outside during Term 1 for play or set lessons. Due to this, children need to come to school with their school hat. If you don't have one, they can be purchased from the Office for \$10. Remember to name them so they return to you! If a child does not have a hat, we then have children play in our undercover areas for the day.

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program Literacy And Numeracy will occur in March for our Year 3's and 5's. I have shared information on COMPASS for families of children in Years 3 and 5, so please ensure you read this post to be up to date. I have also printed off the same information (Parent Information brochure) and have copies in our foyer on the noticeboard if you prefer.

STAFFING

Kate Dole will be commencing sick leave today due to surgery. We expect that Kate will be on leave for at least 2 weeks. Tracy Pengelly, one of our regular Casual Relief Teachers (CRT), will be teaching Kate's class during this time. On Monday and Tuesday (16 – 17/2) of next week we also have some staff training occurring, with Ainsley Stanley, Pauline Mulcair and Nicole Peach heading off to the VICTORIAN TEACHING AND LEARNING ACADEMY in Bendigo to work with renown educator Nathaniel Swain. The focus of the two days will be on the VICTORIAN TEACHING AND LEARNING MODEL 2.0 and the latest research on how children learn. The three teachers attending are Unit leaders, so will become highly skilled in this approach and share their learning with colleagues during planning and delivery of learning moving forward. During this time Ainsley will be replaced on Monday by Amanda Bateman and Roberta Mathers on Tuesday. Pauline's class will be taught by Giovanna (Jo) Totta and Nicole's by Lauren Ray. Amanda and Roberta are current part time teaching staff of the school and Giovanna & Lauren regular CRT's of our school. The children are therefore in good hands 😊. Next Thursday, 19th February I will attend the Principals Area Forum with other Principals and Department of Education Corporate Staff – where we will be briefed by our Regional Director, Area Director etc, and updated on changes in the system, policy updates, teaching and learning briefings, wellbeing supports and much more.

SCHOOL CAPTAINS

Jayden, Brett and Kate will be conducting speeches for our new School Captains on Monday, 16th February, with applications due to classroom teachers by TOMORROW, Friday, 13th February. This year students applying will deliver a speech to our Year 3 – 6's answering a couple of set questions. This will be a closed event for staff and students only to ensure a level playing field when presenting. Thanks for your understanding. After this a ballot will be held... and students will vote. Our staff will also follow a similar process as the students, with the successful students chosen based on merit and track-record. Stay tuned as we announce our 2026 School Captains and Vice School Captains to the community in the newsletter or via COMPASS. A badge ceremony will occur in the coming weeks.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC)

The SRC will comprise two students from each class (Year 3-6) and will work with our School Wellbeing Officers three times a term. The group, when chosen, will organise fundraisers, talk about school improvement and on occasion, assist around the school on special occasions etc. The process for being selected will commence shortly, and I will oversee this process which will involve interested students writing a letter at home to present to their teacher and class as to why they would be a good choice to represent their class at our SRC meetings.

Classes will have students read their application letter and then do a closed vote, with the teacher shortlisting a top 5 from the votes. The top 5 will then be considered and a final decision will be made by the class teacher and myself. Please note we endeavour to share SRC positions around, so if your child was on the SRC last year, their application may not be successful this year to enable other students to have this opportunity. Once our SRC are selected, badges will also be presented to successful students. Date to be advised 😊.

ATTENDANCE

Most days I will be endeavouring to follow up unexplained absences with the help of Janet and Erin. If I feel a pattern is emerging or we don't know why a child is regularly away, we will contact you as directed by the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. Here's some recent research from THE KIDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA about attendance: **Each day of school missed makes a difference, with the effect on learning accumulating over time. From an early age, if children are taught that they need to 'show up' for school and make a commitment, this positive mentality aids academic and career success and brings benefits in adulthood.** With that in mind we go with the motto SCHOOL EVERYDAY IS THE ONLY WAY... meaning that every day counts and the effort is made from families to show up. You can't afford to miss a day, unless you are sick of course! An average student in our school will miss around 8 days for the year (appointments, bereavement and illness) – this roughly equates to two days a term, however if you approach each term with the plan to miss no days, your child will benefit from the development of a positive mind set to set them up for a successful future.

FOUNDATION STUDENTS – WEDNESDAYS OFF SCHOOL IN FEBRUARY

Don't forget that our Foundation students have Wednesdays off in February, with their first Wednesday attending school on Wednesday, 4th March. Catherine and Nicole are testing Foundation students on Wednesdays with mandatory school entry tests. Due to this please do not miss your appointment with the classroom teacher.

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS – Information for parents from the Department of Education

What is a school council and what does it do? All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with their constituting Order and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council? For most primary school councils, there are three possible categories of membership: 1. A mandated elected Parent member category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. DET employees can be Parent members at their child's school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school. 2. A mandated elected school employee member category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members. 3. An optional Community member category – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. Department employees are not eligible to be Community members. Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Why is parent membership so important? Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help inform and shape the direction of the school. Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

Do I need special experience to be on school council? Each member brings their own valuable life skills and knowledge to the role. However, councillors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them. What you do need is an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

Code of conduct for school councillors - School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors must abide by the *Code of Conduct – Employees* issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values and requires councillors to: act with honesty and integrity (be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty), act in good faith in the best interests of the school (work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students foremost in their minds), act fairly and impartially (consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self interest), use information appropriately (respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available), exercise due care, diligence and skill (accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school), use the position appropriately (not use the position as a councillor to gain an advantage), act in a financially responsible manner (observe all the above principles when making financial decisions), comply with relevant legislation and policies (know what legislation and policies are relevant for which decisions and obey the law) AND demonstrate leadership and stewardship (set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability, manage risks effectively, exercise care and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable).

Indemnity for school council members: School councillors are indemnified against any liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by the council or any other person in respect of anything necessarily or reasonably done, or omitted to be done by the councillor in good faith in: the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a council. In other words, school councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by council or others as a result of reasonable actions taken in good faith.

How can you become involved? The most obvious way is to vote in the school council elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant. In view of this, you might consider: standing for election as a member of the school council OR encouraging another person to stand for election.

What do you need to do to stand for election? The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year (*It's included in today's newsletter as part of School Council Elections information*). All school council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister. If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent member category (*forms available from the Office*). Department employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for Parent membership of the school council at that school. Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt via post, email or by hand following the receipt of your completed nomination. If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed. **Remember:** Consider standing for election to school council this year. Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do. Be sure to vote in the elections – if we have more nominations than positions. Contact the Principal (Matt Pearce) for further information.

AN ELECTION IS TO BE CONDUCTED FOR MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL OF BIG HILL PS

Nomination forms may be obtained from the school office and must be lodged by 3:20pm on Friday, 27th February. If a ballot is required (depending on the number of nominations), this will close at 3:20pm on Friday, 6th March. Following the closing of nominations a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school. The terms of Office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

Membership Category	Terms of Office	Currently Held by	Number of Positions
Department of Education	March 2026 – March 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Bath • Jennifer Nicholls <i>(Alice and Jennifer will need to renominate if they wish to continue)</i>	2
Parent	March 2026 – March 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy Haines • Xanthe Clarke • Aaron Fuller • Annette Robinson <i>(Candy, Xanthe, Aaron and Annette will need to renominate if they wish to continue)</i>	4

Please feel free to contact me for further information. Nomination forms are available from the Office or can be organised to be sent home for signing. We are genuinely looking for new members – the commitment is 8 meetings a year, always on a Tuesday night at 7pm.

ELECTION TIMELINE

- Friday, 6th February Call for nominations (forms available from the Office)
- Friday, 27th February Closing date for nominations (forms must be returned to the Office by 3:20pm on this date). Nominations assessed and the need for a ballot decided. If ballot is not required, new School Council announced and meet soon after this date.
OR Ballot set up (if required)
- Friday, 6th March Close of Ballot (if required)
- Tuesday, 11th March Counting of Ballot (if required). Declaration of Ballot.
New School Council announced and will meet shortly after this date

FOUNDATION (PREP) BAGS

By now each Foundation student should have come home with their own red “Reach for the stars” bag full of goodies. Please locate this and take note of the excellent free resources inside. This includes: AFL Play Willie Wagtail phonics reader, Healthy Food Fun activity book, Melbourne Renegades Colouring-in Poster, Global Citizenship jigsaw, 5 beautiful softcover children’s books (*Chooks in Dinner Suits, Sharing, Rank’s Red Hat, The Concrete Garden and The Bin Monster*), Understanding Phonics guide for parents, Real Support postcard, Smile Squad tooth brushing chart, Youth MYKI bag tag, Respectful Behaviours in the School Community flyer, Inclusive Education brochure, Primary School Nursing Program brochure and PICK & MIX lunchbox guide from VicHealth. The red bag also doubles up as a library bag for students too, so name it and send to school in your child’s bag for library 😊. If your bag somehow got lost, we found one and it’s located in Nicole’s room. If we have multiple families where their child misplaced the bag, please let Nicole know and we will endeavour to get some more.

CAMPS, SPORT AND EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

DO YOU HAVE A CONCESSION CARD? WOULD YOU LIKE \$400 TO PAY FOR SCHOOL COSTS?

MAKE SURE YOU READ THIS SECTION!

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund helps ensure that no student misses out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government's commitment to breaking the link between a student's background and their achievements. CSEF will be provided to eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities. If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. The allowance is paid to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child. The annual CSEF amount per student is: \$400 for primary school students. Contact the Office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from the CSEF website. Parents / carers are reminded that all CSEF applications are due as soon as possible to enable funds to be used for excursions and camps. We can't apply for this on your behalf – so please make sure you put in an application if eligible. If you received CSEF funding in 2025 at Big Hill Primary School, you don't need to reapply. Please note that there is NO SCHOOL SAVINGS BONUS this year for Victorian students, so applying for CSEF if eligible will be really important if you require the financial support.

STATE SCHOOLS RELIEF FOUNDATION CSEF UNIFORM PACKAGE

The Foundation parents who have applied for CSEF will shortly receive an order form for the SSR Uniform Package. Please complete and return to the Office at your earliest convenience. If you are a Foundation parent but have yet to apply for CSEF, please do so ASAP, then you will be eligible for the SSR Uniform Package.

2026 PARENT PAYMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have not paid for your PARENT PAYMENT CONTRIBUTION (ie: Stationery, iPad lease, subscriptions like Reading Eggs, individual student diaries etc), these can be paid in full or by instalments on COMPASS. Access to resources will possibly be restricted if payment / payment plan is not made on Compass or at the Office. Thanks for attending to this matter, as the school is not funded for these items that help your child in learning.

GEM AWARDS

This year we are introducing **GEM** awards, along with our STUDENT OF THE WEEK awards. GEM is an acronym standing for **G**ratitude, **E**mpathy and **M**indfulness... the three focus areas of our RESILIENCE PROJECT work. Each week one child per Unit (including our Specialist Unit) will be awarded a special GEM CERTIFICATE at assembly. We will present our first GEM awards on Monday at assembly. Congratulations to the winners announced in today's newsletter for showing GRATITUDE. Next week our focus will be on EMPATHY. If you would like more information about THE RESILIENCE PROJECT, Dean, our Mental Health in Primary Schools Leader (MHWL) has set up an informative display in the foyer of the school.

THE SMILE SQUAD FREE SCHOOL DENTAL PROGRAM IS COMING TO OUR SCHOOL

The Smile Squad team from Bendigo Health is coming to our school soon. Smile Squad is the Victorian Government's free school dental program. This means *all* students can receive a free dental check-up, preventive services, and treatment at school.

How to access free dental care

We need your consent before we can provide services. Consent is usually provided by a parent or guardian.

Sign up to Smile Squad at: <https://bit.ly/smilesquadvic>

OR use the QR code below:



Paper copies of the consent form are also available. Please contact the Office if you would like one.

The electronic consent form can be translated into more than 100 languages, and the paper form is currently available in 13 languages.

Smile Squad oral health packs

All children deserve a healthy smile, and the Smile Squad free school dental program is working hard to help make this happen.

Your child(ren) will soon receive a free oral health pack to bring home. The pack contains a toothbrush, full-sized toothpaste, and an oral health brochure. Please take a moment to read the brochure—it is full of useful tips to help your family eat well, drink well, and clean well for life.

Standard strength toothpaste

Smile Squad provides standard-strength fluoride toothpaste, which is generally recommended for ages six and over unless advised otherwise by a dental or trained health professional.

If your child is under six, please speak with a dental or trained health professional to determine whether this toothpaste is suitable. Alternatively, you may choose to put the toothpaste aside until they turn six or give it to another family member.

Do I need to attend my child's appointment?

No, you do not need to attend your child's appointment. You are welcome to attend if you wish, and you can choose to take your child to a community dental clinic if that suits your family better.

ANAPHYLAXIS

We have three children in our school who are anaphylactic to nuts. This certainly isn't a new thing, and the school has the required processes and policies in place to ensure children with anaphylaxis at school are safe. It's important too to understand that whilst broad banning of nuts is not the way to go (ACSIA) we do suggest trying to avoid sending your child to school with nuts in their lunchbox, including sandwiches that contain peanut butter. Nuts of particular concern for our students are peanuts, walnuts and pecans. As a precaution we encourage families to speak to children about never sharing food or drink bottles for this reason, as your child could be sitting next to someone who has an allergy. If you could reinforce this at home, it would be much appreciated. Reminding children to wash their hands always before eating is also another wonderful topic to review. If you would like to know more about how we manage anaphylaxis, our policy is available on the school website. Finally, to the families of children who are anaphylactic and have an EpiPen – please ensure you are working closely with the school and your child's teacher/s to ensure everything is in place at home and at school. It's also good to review with your child the importance of not sharing food/drink, washing hands and talking openly of their allergy etc, so others are aware.

MCKERNS FRESH FRUIT

With thanks to McKerns and sponsors, for our beautiful selection of fruit this week.

Here are Jack & Layla with their orange & apple!

BIRTHDAYS

Happy birthday to Zelda L & Prue M.



As we approach Week 4 we will continue to review and revise our expectations in the class and the grounds. Our students are taught systems (ie: processes) to follow, like how we sit and eat our lunch / snack, how we go to the toilet (Quick, Quiet, Clean) or how we line up – to name just a few examples. Throughout the year we will continue to review and reteach expectations as children often need to hear things many times and need reminders, but for now it seems our students are fast learners and are doing the right thing.

A cooler Friday tomorrow will be a welcome relief, and the weekend too may be a chance to get to some of those jobs that seem impossible to do in the heat. Until next week...

Kind regards,

Matt Pearce, Principal

FOUNDATION NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For getting along during developmental play:

FC *Olivia H*
FN *Piper C*

GEM AWARD

For Gratitude: Evie O

Catherine, Nicole & Nick

JUNIOR UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For being a great role model in the classroom:

JAR *Logan E*
JJ *Eli Q*

GEM AWARD

For Gratitude: Mannie C

Ainsley, Roberta & Jen

MIDDLE UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For using our lining up system after each break:

MED *Henry M*
MP *Bonnie E*
MWA *Atlas D*

GEM AWARD

For Gratitude: Sienna D

Emma, Dean, Pauline, Wendy & Amanda

SENIOR UNIT NEWS

STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

For showing gratitude by thanking others and appreciating support in the classroom:

SB *James W*
SJ *Kayden M*
SK *Eden M*

GEM AWARD

For Gratitude: Otis M

Brett, Jayden & Kate

SPECIALIST GEM AWARD

For Gratitude: **Sienna D**

SECOND HAND UNIFORM NEWS

At the Office foyer we have our Second Hand Uniform rack with items for sale for only \$2.

Donations are gratefully accepted, just please no tracksuit pants as they don't sell. Thank you.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB

Issue 1 was handed out last week. You can order online via their LOOP platform, or by cash or card at the Office. Every purchase helps the school library 😊.

ORDERS DUE ONLINE / OFFICE TOMORROW.

PARENTS & FRIENDS NEWS

EASTER RAFFLE

We are holding our annual Easter Raffle again this year and are requesting donations. If you are able to donate something, please leave it at the Office.

Suggestions:

- 🥚 Eggs
- 🐰 Bunnies
- 📄 Cellophane
- 📖 Activity/sticker books
- 🍬 Non chocolate Easter goodies

Thanks for your support

COMMUNITY NEWS

HUNTLY FAMILY FUN DAY

FREE ENTRY

SUNDAY FEB 15, 2026

10AM @ 1PM

Proudly sponsored by Agnico Eagle Fosterville

Mother's Day Classic

Kids Go FREE

UNTIL 1 MARCH, 2026

WALK OR RUN FOR BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH

MOTHER'S DAY - SUNDAY 10 MAY, 2026

REGISTER ONLINE: MOTHERSDAYCLASSIC.COM.AU

Bendigo Triathlon Club – KIDS ONLY event!

22nd February 2026

Distances for all ages and abilities
Prizes, treats and a personalized bike number plate for all
Coffee van for the cheer squad and a BBQ breakfast for all!

https://triathlonaustralia.justgo.com/Workbench/i/r/public/EventsAndBookingsPublic/details/6516C8601F009836172BB53D7AE1BCC95DA00151/?fbclid=IwRIRTSAP2mOxleHRuA2FlbOIxMOBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZAo2NjI4NTY4Mzc5AAEejFXSF2xCEuNXs_51j8lpdchD0EMDphU0jtxWcaA4ao9VAkK035axOTTaZNo_aem_Nt8sjXc5vT3zi_sOO_WXag



Below is an updated flyer with a change of venue

FOOTY FUN JUST FOR GIRLS

nab AFL Auskick

GOOD CLEAN FUN

PLAY.AFL/AUSKICK

BENDIGO ALL GIRLS TERM 1 AUSKICK

Thursdays 4:00pm starting 19th February at Ewing Park Oval

Girls aged 5-12 years old
\$55 per person (includes a football!)



Do you have a health care card? You could be eligible for Saver Plus.

For every dollar you save, you'll get a dollar from ANZ to spend on educational costs, up to \$500.

To join, you need to meet all of these requirements:

- ✓ Be 18 years or older
- ✓ Have a current Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card
- ✓ Have a child in school, starting school next year, or be studying yourself
- ✓ Get a regular income (can be you or your partner)
- ✓ Agree to join in free online financial education workshops



1300 610 355 saverplus.org.au



BSL:875-25



Enrol for before and after school care now ...so you're ready when life happens!

Whether you're working, have an appointment, or something unexpected comes up, TheirCare supports parents with outside hours school care that's easy to book, inclusive and fun for kids.

- * Welcoming educators that your kids know and trust
- * It costs nothing to enrol, you won't pay unless you book a session
- * Care can cost as little as a few dollars per session (after CCS)
- * Flexible care to support busy families
- * Fun, engaging activities and nutritious snacks
- * Social interaction and time spent with friends
- * Part of your school community, contributing over \$20M to schools across Australia

Enrol today - it takes just a few minutes. Click [here](#) or scan the code to get started.



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OUR WEEKLY FREE FRESH FRUIT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:



Celebrating
10 years

Delivering
1,000kg of free
fruit to Bendigo
school children
every week

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Made possible thanks to our Foundation Partners



THANK YOU TO MCKERN STEEL FOUNDATION & SPONSORS

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO BE A PART OF THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM 🙏