Welcome everyone to Grade Prep and One 2013
I hope you have all had an enjoyable holiday and are looking forward to getting back to school.

There are so many things that happen at the start of the year and this newsletter is to help out with many organisational aspects of how our class operates.

If you have any questions about the program or school issues, please ask. Make sure you read the school newsletter that comes out on Tuesdays for more whole school information.

Getting to Know You
My name is Wendy Renshaw and I have been teaching at Buln for 4 years now. I have lived in the district of Lillicio for many years with my husband Trevor and 2 children, (Sarah 22 years and Lance 20 years) They all attended local schools. I have taught many grade levels over the years, been a support teacher as well as the Reading Recovery teacher. For the last 2 years I have taught Preps and Ones with Teresa Martyn.
This year we look forward to having 3 grades of Preps and Ones making the class sizes considerably smaller than in previous years where we have only divided the classes into 2. Anita Weber is the 3rd teacher. Anita worked at Buln in 2012 as our support teacher in 2012. We will work as a team. This means we will plan together and many lessons will be similar across the 3 grades Once we have settled the classes some lessons will be done in like needs groups with the other 2 teachers.
As Anita only works 4 days a week on Fridays we will operate as two classes instead of three. The classes will be divided as Preps and Ones. This gives us opportunity to complete programs that are specifically designed for the two levels. One of these programs is Buddies where the Preps are paired up with a Grade Six child. There are many incidental times when this relationship will develop, but on a Friday class time is set aside for dedicated activities.

Diaries
Every child has a diary. This book is used as a parent/teacher communication book and travels to and from school in the large pencil case satchel. The diary has the names of books taken home as well as spelling words and any other notices. Parents are encouraged to write in the diary if teachers need to be informed of events. It is the childrens’ responsibility to put the diary in the basket every morning. Children are supplied with the diary and the satchel. You are welcome to cover it to make it last longer.

Returning to school.
The Prep and Grade One years are an opportunity for young children to become more independent. We would like the children to be responsible, organised learners by remembering things and be encouraged to do things by themselves. Obviously they will need your guidance and supervision, and they become very proud when they can do tasks themselves. Please encourage them right from the start to carry in their own school bags and unpack their belongings needed for the day. This will be explained to the children as routines are established. Hats are a necessary part of our uniform. If your child forgets their hat they will be encourage to play in a covered court-yard. Each child can leave their hat in their bag locker if parents prefer. Then the hat is always at school. Some children may need the hat for after school care too, so for them it should just stay in their bag.

Specialist Program
Specialist teacher programs will operate on the following days. Specialists teach the children programs to enhance the school program and it gives the children an opportunity to work with other teachers. This time is used by classroom teachers to plan. The children may mention other teachers they work with.
Music with Jennifer Nelson on Thursdays
Physical Education with Janine Coghlan on Thursdays.
School Library will be with Mrs Clark on Friday.
Marc Van with Mr Bucknall: Tuesday fortnightly.
Art with Mrs Harford, on Thursday
Christian Religious Education (CRE) TBA

Each student will need an Art smock – this way we can protect uniforms and it gets the children ready for Art. No Art smock, no exciting messy activities. Your child will be given alternative activities for sessions without smocks. Appropriate footwear is required for Physical Education. If the children are not prepared with correct footwear they will also be given alternative activities. If you don’t want them wearing their runners to school encourage them to bring them and then change their footwear beforehand.

Fruit Friday
Fruit is encouraged everyday, and Friday is a sharing day. On Fridays children can bring along a piece of fruit that we slice and share. We have found with younger children they tend to eat more fruit if it is cut up. It is also an opportunity to try something new if they wish. If it is suitable, you can cut the fruit before it comes to school, that saves time, (watermelon for example, but not bananas or apples.) A basket will be provided to put fruit in.

Parent Helpers
We are looking for parents to participate in classroom programs such as Reading, small group work, Perceptual Motor Program (PMP), word practice and Spelling. Individual reading is done daily at approximately 9am. Spelling tests are conducted on Friday 9 - 10 am for Grade One and parent helpers are needed to help this program run efficiently. Our Perceptual Motor Program will operate for half an hour 3 days a week. This involves supervision of a small group of children through a physical activity. PMP will start later in the term. Let me know if you are interested in helping on any day with any program and more detailed information will be provided. Many parents are unable to help in the classroom, but there are many other ways you can participate in other school events. You may have something suitable to add to our themes or know of a good resource for us to use in the classroom. Just let us know. If you have toys or dress ups that you are wanting to remove, our classroom may appreciate your seconds. We appreciate any support and assistance you are able to give. Please note that it is school policy that all parent helpers have a current working with children check and you must sign in and out at the office when you are staying to help with a program.

Homework
The children are encouraged to read most nights. And it is an expectation that parents will read to their children every night too. In their take home satchel for Term One, every child will have a levelled reader as well as a book to share with parents. The books are levelled from 1 to 30. Moving up through levels is a process and linked to the child’s own personal development and not a competition. If necessary read the book with your child and encourage them to read it after you. Children are rewarded for nights of reading milestones. We use the diaries to keep records of nights read. So it is important to write the title of the child’s book read in the diary whenever you read.

Modelling the correct reading behaviours helps to improve the reading skills of children. There will also be another book. The second book to share is not to be read by the child. It is intended for parents to read to the child. Try to read a variety of books, visit the library and choose other books together. It is a good opportunity to spend some time together.

When you are reading together try to:

- Always browse through the book first. (Parents can read the book first and then the children read it back, especially to begin with.)
- Always remain positive.
- Aim for success.
- Beginner readers may memorise the text, this is okay and is part of the beginning reading process.
- As you read the book together discuss the pictures/what is happening/ask opinions or feelings about the story if possible.
- Encourage them to retell the story in their own words.
- Reading is expected to be an enjoyable experience. It is never a test of word recognition.
- Please do not cover the pictures as these give the children cues.
Try to remember to Pause/Prompt and Praise when children are reading to you.

The Grade One students will also have spelling words to learn to write each week. To begin with, these words will come from the 200 most used words lists or a spelling program called SWIST. Grade Prep students will have words to learn to read. These start with the 12 most used words, called the ‘Golden Words’ and continue until they can read the 100 most used words. This is quite an achievement. Children are rewarded with certificates when a level is achieved.

**Supplies**
The children are supplied with most of what they need, but are welcome to bring along stationery of their own. I would appreciate a box of tissues per child as these seem to always run out. They will also need a library bag for school library and the cloth bag (Given to children at the start of their Prep year) is usually the Mobile Library (Marc Van) library bag.

**Show and Tell**
Below is a table of the days of the week and when your child will have a short time to talk to the grade for ‘Show and Tell’. It isn’t always necessary to have something to show, children can tell. It is a good idea to help prepare your child for their talk: ask them what they think they might talk about and help them to choose something that will be of interest to others. This is an opportunity to practice public speaking and all the skills required to speak to a group as well as being a good audience.

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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adelle</td>
<td>Toby</td>
<td>Cheyenne</td>
<td>Charli</td>
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<td>Tanisha</td>
<td>Jake</td>
<td>Laticia</td>
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<td>Tyson</td>
<td>Travis</td>
<td>Mackenzie</td>
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<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Max</td>
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**Themes/ Curriculum Term One**
All Australian schools start using a new curriculum for 2013 called AusVels. It is part National curriculum for English Maths, History and Science. The Victorian Essential Learning Standards guidelines is used for other subjects. Basically this is a guide for teachers to use to know what is expected to be taught at each level. The first level is the Foundation level and the next level is Level 1 and the next is Level 2 and so on. Children are expected to move up one level per year.

Our school follows a social skills program called Program Achieve. This program focuses on 5 main social skills: Organisation, Getting Along, Persistence, Resilience and Confidence. Every term is devoted to one main skill and smaller components of each skill are taught along the way. The importance of these skills is recognised formally in fortnightly awards given out at Monday morning assemblies. The social skill focus for term one is Getting Along.

Physical Education sessions will have a track and field focus, with the interschool athletic sports taking place on Friday March 15th.

Our major focus will be on Personal Learning. This includes understanding the school rules, getting along with others, following routines, developing friendships and how to be a good learner. Our Humanities theme for the term is me and my family with a special persons day at the end of the term. (Date TBA) One of the first activities I would like children to put together is a box (like a shoe box) with some items about themselves in it called a ‘Me Box.’ The box could have about 6 or so things in it and they can bring it along to school and talk about themselves using the box as a prompt. For example it might have favourite doll, car, game, photos of special places or people, uniform for an activity they do and so on.

Language skills will have a focus on the alphabet and sounds, learning the THRASS chart, handwriting, story writing and reading development.
Mathematics will involve number recognition, counting, patterns, basic processes (addition and subtraction), measurement, time and shape recognition.

The first few weeks will be revision for Grade One to consolidate their skills and to make them feel confident.

**PMP**
PMP stands for Perceptual Motor Program. "A Perceptual Motor Program aims to develop a child's perceptions and understandings of him/her self and his/her world through movement and motor experiences"

A Perceptual Motor Program aims to give the child experiences in seeing, hearing, touching, processing, making perceptual judgements and reacting though carefully sequenced activities which children enjoy doing like running, hopping, skipping, jumping, balancing, crawling, climbing, throwing, catching, bowling, sliding, etc., using a variety of common and specially designed equipment. We aim to run this program for our Preps and Ones for half an hour on days a week later in the term. (TBC) We must have parent helpers for this program.

**Interviews**
A more formal time set aside for discussions is at Parent/Teacher interviews after school on Tuesday 28 February for Grade One parents. Prep parents will have their interview on another arranged time within the first few weeks of school on Wednesdays. The Prep children all have an assessment on literacy and numeracy skills. This helps us identify a starting point for your child’s learning. It is conducted by the classroom teacher on Wednesdays with your child. The Grade One students will be assessed during school sessions in the first few weeks of term.

**Wednesdays**
Feb 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th are days off for the Preps. On these days we will do interviews with the prep children and a parent/guardian. The grade ones will be together with either Teresa/Anita or myself. The normal school program will operate for Grade One on Wednesdays. On the last Wednesday, the 28th, a ‘get together’ of Prep parents and children is traditionally organised at Civic Park in Warragul.

**School Newsletters.**
Every Tuesday a school newsletter in published and this is a communication about issues that are important to the whole school community. The newsletter is distributed to the oldest person in the family. Please make sure you read it.

**Spare Clothes.**
Sometimes accidents happen. If a spare pair of underwear and shorts etc are available in bags the children can easily change without being embarrassed. If you have any spares we would appreciate them.

**Names**
Please ensure all articles of clothing are named. If your child misplaces hats etc that are named they eventually find their way back. This includes lunchboxes, drink bottles, library bags and art smocks please.

We are looking forward to a year where the children develop as responsible class members and good learners. It will also be a great opportunity to develop new friendships both for the children and parents and build many skills. It is exciting to work with each of your children, to help them and see their development.

If you have any concerns or questions please make a time to see me.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Renshaw (Classroom teacher).