



# Newmerella Primary School

*Learning Excellence Caring Honesty*



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## Principal Report – Sarah Walker

Wuman Njinde Parents, Students and the School Community,  
Welcome to this fortnight's newsletter where we share Newmerella's school journey and achievements.

Thank you to our prep families who have supported the weekly prep testing. I'm so very impressed with the our new preps who are already in a routine and doing plenty of work and embracing school life at Newmerella Primary School.

This year the school's Annual Implementation Plan goal is to 'Maximise the learning growth of every student' with the priorities being to embed a culture of learning and collaboration and build teacher capability to utilise a range of assessment strategies to accurately determine students' needs and evaluate impact on learning.

Compass is the best way to communicate to you what is happening at the school. Please remember to log in and turn on your notifications to receive reminders, notices and this newsletter. The Department of Education requires schools to record attendance/absences of all students, therefore it is vital that we are notified of your child's absence as soon as possible. Protecting the safety and well-being of children through the reporting and monitoring of absenteeism is the responsibility of both parents/carers and schools. **Please remember to update Compass as soon as you know your child will be away, and where possible, please inform us in advance of upcoming long-term absences.**

**If you are using the Compass app**, you will need to select the "shortcuts tab" at the bottom of your screen and then select "add attendance notes".

We had some roadworks completed outside the pickup and drop off entrance to the school and hopefully this will eliminate some of the potholes. Due to the heavy rain, the last remaining fencing on the oval was delayed being picked up. This will be completed by this week.

Just a reminder that the Department of Education has in place a mobile phone ban that requires students who bring **mobiles phones** and **digital devices** to school to have them switched off and securely put away during school hours. The Department of Education requires all government schools to ensure this ban is in place and enforced. This helps ensure that school is a learning environment free from unnecessary distractions and disruptions.

The Victorian Government is committed to continuing to provide free pads and tampons in all government primary, secondary and specialist schools. Sanitary items are a necessity, not a luxury, and this initiative supports tens of thousands of girls and young women in schools across the state. Our dispenser is installed in one of the main toilets and is available for any student who may need to access sanitary products while at school. The aim of this initiative is to:

Provide students with the confidence that there will always be sanitary items at school.  
Relieve female students of the stigma, anxiety and discomfort that can be associated with menstruation and its management so they can focus on their studies.  
Ease the cost of living for families.

## Welcome

Welcome to Newmerella PS 'Valley of Plenty', we acknowledge the ones that come before us and thank the people that teach and share the stories of the past. We acknowledge the Gunai Kurnai elders past, present and emerging and extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students and families.

## Important Dates - March

### 3rd –17th March

Friends For Fun Program 2-3pm

### 13th & 27th March

Assembly

### 16th March

School Council AGM 5:30pm

### 3rd 17th 31st March

Marc Van

### 17th-20th March

Sovereign Hill Camp-4/5/6 students

### 24th March

Stop Work –Union Action school closure

### 26th March

Cluster Curriculum PD Day OCC-No school for students

### 2nd April

Last Day of Term 1-2:15 finish



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Years 3 and 5 will sit the NAPLAN tests on the following days: Writing: 11<sup>th</sup> March reading, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March Conventions of Language and numeracy and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March for catchup tests and for those who miss the scheduled testing will occur on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> the following week.

Thank you to parents who have either paid for the Grade 4/5/6 camp in full and/or have organised a payment plan. A letter detailing what students need and the itinerary will be sent out this week.

## Bell Times

9:00am School commences

9:00am - 11:00am Teaching and learning time

Students have access to fruit and can have brainy bites at 10:00am and toilet and drink break.

11:00am - 11:30am Recess (*Snack is eaten indoors*)

11:30am - 1:15pm Teaching and learning time

1:15 - 2:00pm Lunch (*Eaten indoors*)

2:00pm - 3:15pm Teaching and learning time

3:15pm Dismissal (Last day Term 1, 2,3 and 4 - 2:15pm finish).

As part of their leadership roles, Daniel McF, Ashlea W and Will G are our elected Junior School Councillors (JSC) and this is one of the avenues we have for students to have a voice in the way their school runs. We had our first meeting last week and I am looking forward to working with them and putting together a 'Wish List' for 2026.

Good routines at the beginning of the day can set the tone for the remainder of the day. Children who come to school feeling refreshed and settled are ready to learn and the quality of their persistence and coping skills are usually increased. Children don't understand time the same way as adults, and this can cause pressure on families to follow through on home routines. As children get older revise your routines to assess the skills your children have learnt because good routines help children to grow independent and responsible. If you think you are repeatedly asking your children to do things this is a clue that developing a new routine needs to happen. Routines are helpful when you are trying to make new habits including good personal hygiene, organisation, completing jobs and homework.

## Morning Routine Tips

- Try getting up a little earlier to help the morning run more smoothly.
- Give yourself extra time to get to and from school. Rushing increases stress levels.
- Good moods can be infectious. Tackle the morning as positively and as optimistically as you can.
- The more children can do things for themselves, the easier mornings can be.
- Some children respond better if they have an alarm clock.
- Have children bathe the night before.

Tackle potential issues the night before when everyone has time and is less likely to be stressed.

**Infectious Diseases** To help prevent and control the transmission of infectious diseases in schools, a child must be excluded from school if he or she has any of the following:

- Gastro/Diarrhoea - until there has not been a loose bowel motion or any symptoms for 48 hours
- Chicken Pox - until fully recovered and blisters have dried
- Measles - at least 7 days
- German Measles - until fully recovered and at least 4 days from the onset of rash
- Whooping Cough - four weeks
- Hand, foot and mouth - until all blisters have dried
- Hepatitis - medical certificate needed
- Impetigo "School Sores" - until treatment has commenced and sores are healed
- Ringworm - until treatment has commenced. Medical certificate may be required.
- Mumps - until fully recovered

Scabies - medical certificate needed

Importantly, children who have been vomiting should not attend school until 48 hours after the vomiting ceases.

While these are some common diseases, please refer to the Better Health School Excursion Table\* for a comprehensive list and updated information. Please contact the office if your child contracts any of these. Please refer to the Dept of Health for further information-<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion-table>

Until next time.

Sarah Walker



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## **Compass**

Just a reminder that Compass is our first point of call with regards to communication. If you are unable to access this, please speak to office admin.

## **CSEF (Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund)**

The Department of Education administers the CSEF to help eligible families with the costs of camps, sporting activities, excursions and incursions. Payments are made directly to the school of an eligible family or for that student's siblings at the same school. If you hold a valid concession card or are a foster carer, you may be eligible for CSEF. To apply for this, please complete an application form which is available at the general office and/or in your information packages which have been given to families who are currently on our system. For further information about CSEF, please visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund>

## **School Council Elections**

The school has parent vacancies available for a 2 year term of office. We would love to have more parent representation. We meet 2 times per term and it is your opportunity to help shape the future of the school. When a school lacks a formal school council, the principal, in consultation with the region, must establish an interim council to set key directions, budgets, and policies. Without one, the school risks reduced community input, lower engagement in strategic planning, and potential compliance issues regarding legal requirements. Please speak to Di, Wendy or myself if you would like to nominate for a 2-year appointment. School Council is responsible for the policy development and implementation in the school, the financial accountability of the school, the facilities planning, acting as the official "voice" of the school and delivering the long-term aspirations for our community. Please consider.



## **District Swimming**

Well done to Will and Elly who represented our school at the District swimming Thursday 26th February in Orbost. Will came 4th in freestyle and his relay team got 3rd. Elly came 2nd in her freestyle event and her relay team came 1st. Congratulations to Elly who made it through to represent N.P.S. at the Division swimming on Monday 2nd of March in Sale. In both events. Elly came 4th in her freestyle event and 2nd in the relay team. The relay team has qualified for the Regional swimming on Thursday 12th March in Sale. Good luck Elly and the team for your next round.



## **QR Code**

This is our QR code that goes directly to our website. It will be on the front page of the newsletters from now on.





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## **Student of the Week Awards**

The winners for the fortnight were:  
Max, Bern and Lily. Top job kids!



## **Positive Behaviour Raffle**

Students who are displaying positive behaviours that are aligned to our school values which are LEARNING, HONESTY, EXCELLENCE AND CARING in the classroom and/or in the yard can receive a raffle ticket. The winner for the fortnight was Louis. Louis won the award for great work with his sounds. Keep up the great work Louis.



## **Specialist Subjects Awards**

Students that display a positive attitude to their specialist subjects for the fortnight are Brodie, Daniel, Rykah and Todd.

Excellent effort boys.



## **Reading Raffle Awards**

To be eligible for the weekly reading raffle, students must read 5 out of 7 nights. The winners for the fortnight were Max, Louis and Charlotte



## **Curriculum Days**

Thursday 26th Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Aug and Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.

## **School Holidays**

Term 1: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April to Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Term 2: Sat 27<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July.

Term 3: Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Sept to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Oct.

Term 4: Sat 19th Dec.

## **Fortnight School Values**

Honesty and Excellence

We encourage parents to discuss and reinforce with their children what the actions for the weekly values might look like.



## **School Council 2025**

President: Jo Austin

Treasurer: Kalina Mekken

Secretary: Kelly Morrison

Principal: Sarah Walker

Staff Representatives: Nicole Mathers and Janet Munn

Community Members: Elaine Hofen and Pam Beveridge

Parent representatives: Jason Griebenow and Lisa MacFarlane.

## **Every Day Counts**

Please contact the school if your child is going to be away.

## **Bus Travellers**

Please notify the school if your child is being picked up so we can mark them off the roll. Parents are reminded that changes to bus travel arrangements require 24 hours notice and approval by Orbest Community College.



AUSTRALIAN  
EDUCATION  
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Victorian Branch

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AEU17

Dear School Council President,

I write to you in relation to recent media that you may have seen, outlining proposed protected industrial action that AEU teacher, education support, assistant principal, and principal class members will be commencing in March 2026.

Pending the outcome of a Fair Work Commission authorised ballot for union members to endorse the action, which is currently underway, members will be able to participate in a range of actions, including bans and limitations on certain work and stopping work for various times, including for full days. To this end, the AEU Council has resolved that in the absence of any offer from the Allan government, a statewide 24-hour stopwork will be held on 24 March 2026.

AEU members are not considering this action lightly. They would much prefer to be doing their job, attending school, and providing a high-quality education and wellbeing support for their students. They understand keenly that stopping work presents difficulties for some parents and carers, and sincerely regret the inconvenience caused.

But as you may know, Victorian public schools are the lowest funded in Australia, with a [Productivity Commission report](#) published on 10 February 2026 showing that in 2023–2024 each Victorian student was funded \$2,325 less than the national average, and \$3,983 less than a student in New South Wales. Since that time, the funding gap and, consequently, the significant lack of resources for students, have grown.

This is despite [Premier Jacinta Allan promising](#), in January 2025, to fully fund Victorian public schools to 100% of the national Schooling Resource Standard, alongside increases by the federal government. As part of this broken promise, the Victorian government has decided to delay any additional funding until 2031, meaning our schools will miss out on more than \$2.4 billion in much-needed resourcing, which would enable every student to receive more individual support. AEU members consider this denial of resources to Victorian public schools to be unacceptable to them and their students. Like members of school councils and the broader parent community in public schools, AEU members are proud advocates for proper investment in public education and expect governments to deliver.

Full and fair school funding, which was originally [meant to be provided to schools by 2019](#), is critical to ensuring that every child and young person can equitably access a high-quality education in their local public school. It is also fundamental to fixing the chronic shortage of school staff. At the heart of high-quality learning is a fully qualified permanent teacher in every classroom, and well supported education support staff and school principals. But right now, this is not the case across our schools. As I write, there are currently just under 900 vacancies advertised across public schools, with 1,378 vacancies advertised each day on average throughout 2025.

It is not possible to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of children and young people unless we can attract and retain school staff. Central to the shortage issue is sub-standard pay and excessive workloads. There has been an exodus of staff from our schools with the most recent [Department of Education report](#) identifying significant ongoing shortages and that teacher attrition rates are almost double those prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activate. Educate. Unite.

This will only get worse unless Premier Allan and her government act. By October 2026, the undervaluing of Victorian school staff will only grow. An experienced teacher in NSW will be 13% – or \$15,359 – better off a year than a comparable Victorian teacher. A Victorian ES employee starting out in a classroom supporting students would be paid \$56,580 – 10.5% behind the same employee in NSW. Similarly, a Victorian school principal new to the role would start on \$156,335 – 18% behind their NSW colleague. At the same time, on average, school staff are working 12 hours per week unpaid overtime during each school term.

The Allan government has had AEU members' pay and conditions claims since July 2025; however, after eight months, negotiations have failed to make progress on key areas, including fair pay and measures to address excessive workloads. In fact, there has not been any offer from the state government at all.

It is in these circumstances that union members consider there to be no alternative but to take industrial action. Teachers, education support staff, assistant principals, and principals would very much appreciate your understanding and support in this campaign.

Supportive actions that your school council and school community can take include:

writing to your state Labor member of the Victorian Parliament to tell them that you expect your school to be fully funded and that school staff receive decent pay and conditions to retain the existing workforce and attract the next generation to the profession

adding an item to your school newsletter outlining the school council's support and explaining to the school community the issues that have led to school staff taking action – please [find a sample newsletter item here](#)

sending an email, as a school council, to Premier Jacinta Allan and Treasurer Jaclyn Symes, calling for full and fair funding, and encouraging parents and carers in your school community to do the same.

Please provide this correspondence to members of your school council as soon as possible. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

**Justin Mullaly**

President

26/02/2026

cc: Minister for Education

# TERM 1 CALENDER

## March/April 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2 Division Swimming Sale	3 Marc Van Newsletter Friends for fun	4 Division Swimming back up day	5	6 P/1 Library visit	7	8
9 Labour Day Holiday	10 Friends for fun 2-3pm	11 Naplan	12 Naplan	13 Naplan Assembly P/1 library	14	15
16 Naplan School Council AGM	17 Marc Van Newsletter Sovereign Hill camp grade 4/5/6 Friends for fun	18 Sovereign Hill camp grade 4/5/6	19 Sovereign Hill camp grade 4/5/6	20 Sovereign Hill camp grade 4/5/6	21	22
23	24 Stop Work Union Action School Closure	25 Parent teacher conferences	26 Curriculum Day. OCC- No students	27 Assembly	28	29
30	31 Marc Van Newsletter	1	2 Last day of term 1	3 Good Friday School Holidays		