



East Bentleigh  
Primary School

# SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS

## Welcome to our third School Council Newsletter!

This newsletter will be written by parents, to the parents, to create an open line of communication with the School Council and the important work it does.

The School Council is comprised of a mix of members from the Department of Education (ie school staff) and parents. In essence, the role of school council is one of setting the long-term future for the school and maintaining oversight (not management) of the school's operation. It meets about 8 times per year. Included in the responsibilities of the council are; raising money for things that the school needs, making sure the school's grounds and buildings are maintained and creating interest in the school within the community. These and other responsibilities are worked on through subcommittees.

## Who are the current council members?

**Staff** – Maria Shearn, Susan Jackson, Aaron Jones, Michelle Mather,

**Parents** – Rachel Jeffreys, Helen Woodruff (President), Julia Kahan, Leah Moore, Emily Jones, Lisa Vance

## This newsletter will



Provide updates about School  
Council decisions



Provide news on the work of  
Subcommittees



Provide a section dedicated to  
questions & concerns raised by  
parents

## Do you have questions or concerns about general school matters?

We would like to invite parents to send us (the council members) any questions or concerns you have. We will raise any relevant concerns with management and/or at council, and provide responses in the following newsletter!

*Please note – your privacy will be respected, and questions/concerns brought up anonymously unless you request otherwise. These questions should be relevant to general school matters, any personal concerns should be raised with your teacher or the school management.*

You can email Julia, convener of the Communications committee at [julia.kahan@gmail.com](mailto:julia.kahan@gmail.com) or any other members on the emails below.





## Council Decisions and Updates

Council Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023

- **School Review** – The School review is well under way, with the first two parts being completed (VCAA Minimum Standards Accreditation and PRSE\_ Pre-review Self Evaluation). As part of the Pre-review Self Evaluation, the school sent out a survey to parents which had a 17% completion rate, and also spoke to Student leaders and surveyed the teachers. The next stage is that an external reviewer will review the documentation and do a fieldwork review. The School Review will set our School Strategy for the next 4 years.
- **Enrolments** – currently we are tracking to have one Mainstream and one Steiner class for prep in 2024.
- **Parent Opinion Survey** – this is an annual survey offered by the Department of Education and Training that is designed to assist schools in gaining an understanding of families' perceptions of school climate, student behaviour, and student engagement. All families have been invited to participate and should have received an email. We encourage you to take this opportunity to provide your feedback.
- **Sub Committee Changes** – The Fundraising and Initiatives Committee is in the process of changing its structure, to better distribute the areas of responsibility as it is a very large portfolio. One area will be focused on the Farmers market, which is our major fundraiser and one for general Fundraising and Initiatives. Rachel Jeffreys continues to head up the Farmers Market, and Leah Moore has taken on the general Fundraising and Initiatives.



# A Special Note on Payments

You may have noticed a few communications from the school over the last few months about payments for school fees on Compass.

While the School will continue to use Compass as a method of communication and updates, it has been decided to discontinue processing payments through Compass.

Due to the difficulties with Compass payments at the start of the year, it appears that this has caused confusion which has led to families having missed making payments and not realizing!

The school will be sending out statements to families who have outstanding fees in the coming weeks, so please be on the lookout.

We would also encourage families to proactively check if they have completed all their payments.

It's really important that the school receives school fee payments in a timely manner, as this is a significant source of income which the school relies on. Of course, for anyone experiencing hardship, please contact the school to discuss options confidentially.

Being a Government School, funds are always scarce, yet there are many projects, improvements and activities we would all like to implement to improve the experience of our children.

We would like to take this opportunity to clarify a bit about school funding and how it works. The School is funded mostly through enrolments – there is a certain amount of funding allocated for each child enrolled. This funding is limited and does not cover everything.

There are three other primary sources of funding –

1. Grants – specific grants may be available for the school to apply for, and will cover special projects like the recently completed PAC, or for example, improvements for accessibility.
2. Fundraising – fundraising is required for other projects the school wants to run, such as the Kitchen Garden program (some parts, as this is also funded through regular funding and parent payments). Other upgrades and appliances would also come from fundraising such as Airconditioning and new playground equipment.
3. Parent payments – these are divided into two areas
  1. Compulsory – these are for extra curricular activities that are not funded by the Government. In both Mainstream and Steiner streams, we are lucky to have several wonderful extra curricular activities. These **must** be paid for by parents as there is no other source of funding (unless someone wanted to run a fundraiser – speak to Leah!).
  2. Voluntary – Largely, government schools are funded. There is a relatively small contribution that is requested from parents – this year \$370 which is for the entire year. This funding covers a few things such as building maintenance and basic necessities for example, the materials required in classrooms such as exercise books, pencils, pens, gluesticks etc. These items can be funded in two ways – the school can either create a booklist for parents to purchase their own items, or alternatively, which is what East Bentleigh opts for, is to have a collective fund which everyone pays a certain amount to, and the school purchase the materials for the children to share. This is the only payment required from parents, that is not for extra curricular activities, for a whole year of schooling. If it is not paid, it will essentially come from alternative funding, which in turn will mean less money for other things. So in reality, it is essential that every family that can, does make this contribution. Being a voluntary contribution, the school must receive your permission before they can issue an invoice for this amount, so we encourage you to contact the school to provide this permission.





## Subcommittee Updates

### **We need YOU!**

*Did you know you can be a part of the important work of the School Council?!*

The School Council has several sub committees that welcome any parents or community members. These subcommittees have the potential to make a significant impact on the quality of your child's school experience. It is really up to us – there is so much we can achieve for our school and children through this work.

### **Farmers Market Committee**

Committee Convener: Rachel Jeffreys - [rachel@heypup.com](mailto:rachel@heypup.com)

The Farmers Market Committee is responsible for managing and improving the Farmers market, which is the major source of fundraising for the school.

#### **Committee Updates**

We have had 2 markets since our last meeting. We had 700 people through at our June market and 800 through at our July market on a gloriously beautiful morning. We are currently well on track to meet our projected budget target this year. The issue of sourcing volunteers remains a challenge.

The breakfast stall is running well and the committee will be looking to improve signage and aprons. The committee will also explore local business sponsorship of the market as a way to bring in additional Funds.

The following decisions were confirmed by the School Council:

1. Reinstate our VMFA membership effective from August.
2. Review and update the BFM Market Manager role & salary and advertise this online and via VFMA network by end August.
3. Purchase of aprons and signage for breakfast stall. Leah mentioned there may be some parents able and willing to assist in making aprons.

Please contact Rachel on the email above if you would like to join the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining.

### **Communication and Engagement Committee**

Committee Convener: Julia Kahan [julia.kahan@gmail.com](mailto:julia.kahan@gmail.com)

The Communications and Engagement Committee is responsible for communications in two areas:



1. Internal communications with school community – providing a Two-way engagement with the school community on issues resolution and ideas generation, messages from school committee; class reps and canvassing of volunteers and support for funding raising and initiatives
2. External communications with school and wider local community to raise awareness in the community about what our school offers and increase interest in the school and the school activities such as fundraisers through promotions at community events, through social media and more, meeting with local government representatives, engaging with local kinders and other organisations. This is key to keep our school thriving!

### **Committee Updates**

Currently, the Communication Committee is focusing on two projects. The first is to update the materials for prospective families, and the second is to work with Janette Grunfelder in increasing interaction with local kinders and their families.

Janette is also setting up social media platforms to engage more with the community, and the committee will assist with providing content for these posts.

Please contact Julia on the email above if you would like to join the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining.

### **Infrastructure Committee**

Committee Convener: TBC

The Infrastructure committee is responsible for making sure the school's grounds and buildings are well maintained. This includes organising working bees, planning and implementing improvements to school grounds, reviewing quotes for works to the grounds and generating new ideas for the improvements of the school grounds.

### **Committee Updates**

Scott Maunders has resigned from the School Council and Infrastructure Committee. He will be sorely missed, after achieving a lot in a short space of time.

The committee has worked to survey maintenance issues around the school and have them rectified, such as new hard dryers, tree cutting and mulching, and new basketball net and more.

It has continued to explore new projects such as creating a new school sign, new school equipment and murals for around the school.

Please contact the School Council if you would like to join or run the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining.

### **Education Committee**

Committee Convener: Sue Jackson – [susan.jackson@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:susan.jackson@education.vic.gov.au)

The Education committee is responsible for settling and reviewing policies (guiding principles designed to influence decisions, actions, that the school makes) and developing, reviewing and monitoring both the Student Code of Conduct (how the schools expect students to behave, how bullying will be managed and the school's approach to managing student behaviour) and the School Dress Code.



## Committee Updates

The Education committee meets 6-8 times per year, and is also looking for new members. This Committee meets during school hours.

Please contact Sue on the email above if you would like to join the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining.

## Finance Committee

Committee Convener: Sue Jackson – [susan.jackson@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:susan.jackson@education.vic.gov.au)

The Finance committee contributes to the development of the strategic plan and to the financial planning and annual budgeting.

## Committee Updates

The School Council ratified the decision to cease using Compass for payments by start of Term 4.

The Finance committee provided a summary of the school fee payments to date, which Council discussed and is outlined in our special note above.

The Finance committee meetings monthly and would love some new members. This Committee meets during school hours. If you have knowledge/experience in Finance, this could be a great way to contribute your skills to our school! Please contact Sue on the email above if you would like to join the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining

## Fundraising and Initiatives Committee

Committee Convener: Leah Moore - [tamjewellery@gmail.com](mailto:tamjewellery@gmail.com)

The Fundraising and Initiatives Committee has **three main areas**:

1. It is responsible for school fundraising and events – including the Thursday Markets. It will also seek to raise funds through other avenues and such as applying for grants and other fundraising activities. The committee will also propose potential uses of the funding raised.
2. Organise school community events to provide opportunities for the school and community to engage with each other, building a positive, enjoyable and inclusive culture, as well as support the class reps in engaging with the parents to participate in school life.
3. Oversee the O.S.H.C program (out of school hours care) and provide recommendations for changes and improvements as required.

The Fundraising and Initiatives Committee has newly started up and needs more members! This committee meets 6-8 times per year and at times by agreement with the committee.

Please contact Leah on the email above if you would like to join the committee or would like to ask more questions about joining





## Your Questions Answered

