Dear Parents and Families,

I hope you have had a wonderful start to the year. We are looking forward to many exciting and busy days ahead. We felt our first day back with the children went smoothly and appreciate your support with our work in forming classes this year.

I am looking forward to leading our school with our Executive team in 2016 to enhance the traditions and qualities that make Garran a high performing school, and working with our highly skilled and dedicated teachers to meet the needs of all children in our care. The P & C is organising a welcome BBQ soon so that you can meet new families and staff. I invite you to come along and enjoy the warmth and diversity of the Garran School community.

Following is some general information for your perusal until our first Garran Gazette is published next Thursday. Details of what is happening in your child’s classroom will be discussed at our parent information sessions on Wednesday 17th February.

Bell Times
Please note a small change in our bell times for this year. A warning bell will be sounded 5 minutes before children are required in classrooms. This will give children time to get a drink and go to the bathroom and be ready for class time without losing any learning time. The morning tea break is ten minutes longer and the lunchbreak is ten minutes less than last year. Previously teachers who were scheduled on a morning tea playground duty did not have a break until lunchtime at 1.10pm. This small change allows all staff to grab a coffee and have a short break for morning tea. The children still have the same time in classrooms. Classes still begin at 9am and finish at 3pm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Morning bell to start class</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00-11.30</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.10-1.50</td>
<td>Lunch – children have 10 minutes eating time with teachers, before their playtime</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>End of the school day</td>
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Staffing
During the holiday period there have continued to be changes with staffing and we have several new staff members joining the Garran teaching team this year. It is my pleasure to welcome our new staff. A very warm welcome to Mr Andrew Beit, Ms Natasha Ecimovic, Mrs Mandy Lee, Mrs Lindsay Radburn, Mrs Sally Martin, Ms Natasha Lorkovic and Mrs Jeanette Vincent. Please make our new staff feel welcome as part of our valued teaching team.

Parent Information Evening
Now that your child is starting to get to know their teacher and classmates we would like to provide you with an opportunity to learn more about what will be happening in your child’s classroom. Teachers will present in teams their approach for delivering curriculum and caring for your child’s well-being this year. I encourage you to come along and find out more about what will be happening this year. You are welcome to talk to your child’s teacher at any time to discuss your child’s needs or classroom activities. Our Parent Information Evening will occur on Wednesday 17th February.
Garran Gazette - Communication

School Bulletins are an important part of our school communication practices, with regular updates around school programs and community events. The Garran Gazette will be emailed to you each Thursday. It can be helpful if you organise a place in your child’s bag that they put notes, or keep a folder in their bag (and a system at home to keep up with school paperwork). Hopefully these routines will help you keep on top of things for years to come. The Gazette is available each week on our website and it can also be emailed to you. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please contact the school using the details provided in the letterhead above.

The Garran Gazette is our main avenue for providing you with information so to keep informed we ask that you peruse the information we provide each week. Our first Gazette will be published next Thursday.

Garran Primary School App

The App is a valuable communication tool which provides parents with information about school events or updates on a daily/weekly basis. The introduction of the App was a joint venture between Garran Primary School and the Garran P&C. The App can be downloaded at the Apple App Store or Android Google Play Market and then search for Garran Primary School.

Picking Up Your Child From School

We ask for your consideration of safety when picking up your child in the afternoon. Parking will continue to be difficult at Garran and the afternoon pick up time is especially hectic. Your child is safe in our care, so please don’t rush or panic if you are unable to get a park on time.

The Traffic and Parking Working Group which was formed last year will continue to work with the Department of Education and other ACT Departments to work on improving safety for our students at school. But all possibilities are complex and involve different organisations and it will take time to make small improvements.

We have noticed an increasing amount of parents parking at the Garran shops car park and building independence in children by encouraging them to walk along the path to the shops, and this is very much appreciated. There is also a car park near the Scout Hall with an entry off Kitchener Street, which usually always has vacant car spaces and is only a two minute walk to the school, so please consider also using this area. If you are choosing to park or collect children from the front of the school expect this area to be busy. Please familiarize yourself with the parking signs around the school. The kerb at the front of the school on Gilmore Crescent from 3pm is not a parking area, it is a pick up zone. Please take time to organize and discuss with your child where you will meet them in the afternoon and if possible utilise the different areas around the school to do this.

Expectations for Student Behaviour

This week staff and teachers have been reviewing the school rules so that our language and approach is consistent across the school. We will display these expectations in the foyer next week for your perusal. Our aim is to keep children safe and be proactive so that all children can achieve success and understand what is expected of them.

One of our expectations is that children do not play on any play equipment before or after school. The playground equipment near the entry to the Kindergarten rooms is a drawcard for our young children and we ask for your help in talking to your child about only using the equipment during the morning tea or lunch break, and not before or after school. Thanks for your support with this.
Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)
As part of the school’s on-going commitment to supporting the learning of all students an ALP stream is offered to students at Garran Primary School. Accelerated Learning is not for all children and students in this program typically require less teacher repetition and learn more quickly than their peers. The ALP program does not exclusively offer extra curriculum activities that mainstream students would also benefit from. All students at Garran Primary School have the opportunity to be involved in such activities. These include ICAS competitions, choir, band, recorder, chess, Rostrum, maths competitions and challenges, sports carnivals and sport representation. In 2016 we have 7 ALP classes. These classes are not labelled as ‘ALP’ within the school. This decision has been made to ensure that all children feel valued regardless of their class placement.

Mathematics Groups
All students from Years 1-6 will again be involved in streamed maths groups this year. This is to ensure that we can reduce class sizes where possible as well as catering for individual student needs. Maths groups are structured based on academic achievement. These groups are flexible and will change according to student need. Maths text books have been purchased through the school with the book pack levy funds. Teachers will ensure students have the correct text book should they change groups. Maths groups will begin in week three this term.

Book Packs and Learning Resources
Thank you to all families who have already organised payment for books and supplies, this is greatly appreciated. All students have received book packs if the school received payment for these. All children will have a range of supplies and books that they need each year for their learning. If you have not made payment for the book packs and would like to do so, forms and information are available from the front office.

Specialist Programs and Learning Support
Next week our school specialist programs begin. All children will have specialist lessons each week. Our specialist teachers are Mrs Suzanne Prowse-Music, Mrs Sally Martin-Indonesian, Mrs Fiona Quigley will lead our Kindergarten Indonesian and Music program, Mrs Marina Fowler Drama and Ms Jodie Lawson-Santos Science.

Assemblies
Assemblies will continue to be held each fortnight, during even weeks on a Friday from 11.30am-12.30pm, starting in week four. There will be some occasions where we need to hold an assembly in an odd week due to inflexibilities on the school calendar. Aussie and Effort Award assemblies will occur each month where specific students in classes are acknowledged for their hard work and citizenship. For students receiving an Aussie or Effort award parents will be contacted by their child’s teacher to notify them of their upcoming award. Students who are receiving a merit certificate will be named in the Garran Gazette the week prior to when the award will be presented. This will allow parents and carers who would like to attend to make arrangements to do so.

Bounce Back
Bounce Back is our social, emotional, well-being and resilience school program. It provides children with practical strategies to help them engage positively in school and in life. It promotes positive mental health and resilience and is taught across the school. At our school assemblies there will usually be an item or lesson given to the children that the teachers may build upon when they return to their classrooms. This program was highly valued by the school community last year and we are happy to be able to continue with this in 2016.

Food in School Updates
In line with the ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015, we continue to review and refine school procedures. Teachers and staff have all contributed their ideas to how we can enhance our focus on providing an environment which fosters a healthy approach to eating as well as supporting all children with their health care needs. Attached is a summary of our discussion and expectations for particular events and happenings involving food at school.

Instrumental Music Program
Our school provides student access to two music programs delivered by the ACT Education and Training Directorate’s Instrumental Music Program (IMP). This program is a self-funded entity which provides band and recorder programs to students in public schools on a cost recovery basis. For over twenty years, Garran has
offered students access to a Year 5 and Year 6 brass band program. Since 2011, we have participated in a Year 3 and Year 4 recorder program based along similar lines to the band. Students accepting a place in either band or recorder do so as a two-year commitment. The process for both programs will be beginning in week two term one.

**Library**

All children at Garran Primary will have the opportunity to borrow from our school library. Children may choose to do this in their allocated class time or during lunchtimes when the library is open. All children require a library bag to borrow a book. Children can have books at home for up two weeks. Thanks for your help with this.

**Money and Notes**

If your child has money for any school activities or is returning a note, please place it in the “mail box” in the front office area, before school begins. Please do not hand to the class teacher. Your receipt will be given to the classroom teacher to give to your child to take home.

**School Board Updates**

School Boards work in partnership with the principal and have responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the strategic directions and priorities of the school. School boards include elected representatives from the school and wider community and play a vital role in representing the views of constituent groups. There are currently two vacant parent positions on the Garran Primary School Board. Nomination forms for anyone interested are available at the front office. Nominations close 11.00am Monday 22nd February with voting opening 7 days following the close of nominations.

A big thankyou to our wonderful teachers and staff who committed themselves for the weeks leading up to school starting, participating in professional learning and engaging in discussion to establish our priorities and goals for this year. Our professional learning focus this year is Differentiation. This means designing learning experiences that enable every child to be learning every day. Our teaching team is highly committed and the level of expertise is such that the delivery of curriculum and pastoral care is the absolute best.

Warm regards,

Jenny Priest and the Executive team