Welcome to 2015
I hope everyone has had a wonderful holiday with their children. The children have told me of great exciting trips to the beach and the shops, seeing grandparents and family who live away, camping in the bush- some even went overseas on holidays. I did my usual exciting holiday activity- watch the cricket, tennis and finish off the left over Christmas feast, shop for the specials and read…..how boring but very relaxing!

On Monday the children will be placed into their new, 2015 classes. The teaching staff has remained consistent from last year as has the number of classes which will be eleven. However, the school is close to forming a twelfth class.) A special welcome to Miss Natasha Pearson. We wish her the very best in her future career.

Updating Contact Details
Please inform the office of changes to phone numbers, addresses or other details such as a list of responsible adults who will be contacted or will be picking up your children from school. Already this year, the school has experienced some difficulty in contacting parents as the mobile phone numbers have changed. The school will send out an updated information sheet for you to complete.

Council Car Park and Play Area
This is a reminder that parents have the responsibility for their children’s safety when they are in the council play park. Teachers at the school will be on duty at the school gate and will return children who have not been picked up to the school office in order that parents are contacted.

I ask that parents remind their children to be aware of strangers and of the time when they are playing unsupervised at the council play park. Children should be instructed to return home if and when they find themselves alone at the park. I also ask parents to be extremely careful when driving in the car park. Please be very responsible and to be extremely alert for children in the car park.

Please do not use the staff car park to drop off and pick up students. The more vehicle going in and out of the entrance will lead to an accident. The Before and After School Care bus from St Anthony’s has reported that they have difficulty dropping off the children in the morning because parents are exiting and entering the school driveway. Please use the car park in Cawarra St.

Eastern Creek Security
There will be a change in procedure for the school gates. This year, the middle school gate will be the only one open during the day as it has a ramp which enables wheel chairs and walkers to be used.
-all external gates, except for the middle gate mentioned above, will be locked.
-all gates will be opened at 8.00am or earlier if there is a special activity requiring early access to the school.
-the two school driveway gates will be closed at 9.00am- non-staff vehicles, except with
school endorsed approval, will not be allowed entry to the school.

School uniform and the school hat
The wearing of the school uniform is very strongly encouraged as it not only aids to instil school pride, culture and identity but also safety as well. The green and white colour of the uniform stands out clearly in the playground and when the children are on excursions. It makes “head counting” and checking children easier on the supervising teacher. One just has to count and look at the colour to ensure the children belong to the school. In the back playground, when on duty, the green and white reassures the teacher that all the children are in the playground.

Conversely, if a stranger, either adult or another child enters the playground and is not in green it makes them extremely visible to the supervising teacher. Two years ago, the supervising teacher was able to spot a stranger because he was wearing other coloured clothing and engage him almost immediately.

The children must wear the school broad brimmed hat as it protects their little faces from the UV-rays which is a cause of skin cancer. The broad brimmed hat greatly increases the amount of protection over our children’s face. In the media, it has been reported that cancer is now the biggest killer of people and that skin cancer is on the increase. As responsible carers we should all do our utmost to protect our children from getting skin cancer- it’s one cancer that can be prevented just by better protection from UV rays from the sun.

Student Leader Elections 2015
Library, House Captains and SRC elections will be held next week. The student leaders play an important role in supporting the children throughout the school and I wish all candidates the very best.

Swimming Carnival
The Annual Swimming Carnival is on Tuesday 10 February at Mt Druitt Pool. All good swimmers are encouraged to enter the races and Parents are most welcome to come along and support your team. Please refer to the Swimming Carnival note previously sent.

Commonwealth School Banking
Please enquire at the office for a Commonwealth Bank account for your children.

School Text Books
As we do not want students disadvantaged, all text books are issued in trust that parents are expected to make payment on them. Text book payments last year were an improvement on the previous year but still the school had to pay the full amount. The text books nor the student access to online learning programs, are not free. Soon, an invoice will be issued listing the cost of the books, stationery fee and for the online programs, “Mathletics” and Reading Eggs and the Voluntary Contribution Fee.

What is the School Voluntary Contribution Fee?
The Voluntary Contribution Fee of $20 a child or $40 per family is used to purchase school resources such as reading books, maths equipment, sport equipment, music instruments and many other educational items. The fee as you can see is a most valuable contribution. Please consider supporting the school through this fee.

The Anchor Program
This program supports children after parental separation and conflict at home. It is fully funded by the Attorney Generals Department and provides children with strategies that will help them to cope. Please read the attached letter. Application forms to a workshop in Blacktown are located in the office and an invitation is offered for families in the school. In addition a school based program is also being planned.

Before and After School Care
Families in our school have one provider available for before and after school care. It is:
“St Anthony’s Early Learning Centre” at 46-48 Eskdale St, Minchinbury. The telephone number is 9832 7477.

School Newsletters
This year, the newsletter will be published on the odd weeks of term so they will come out in weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. The school assemblies are still on the even weeks.

Wes Chia
Principal