PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

The term certainly began in an interesting way!

Our thoughts are with those who lost their lives and loved ones during this natural disaster.

Overall, the school fared quite well. We had two classrooms with water damage, trees down, minor damage to buildings and of course, no power.

The school had to be deemed NON OPERATIONAL for students due to this lack of power however, staff who could make it to IPS, came in to clean, move furniture, create new classrooms and so on. Staff who couldn’t make it through to our school due to flooding and isolation, attended other schools and worked on programs for your children. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated team of teachers.

I am proud to say that over 30 students, accompanied by staff and families marched with respect and dignity in the Raymond Terrace ANZAC Day march. School leaders, Eden and Caitlyn, spoke beautifully at the service and laid a stunning wreath, created by Mrs Farina. Unfortunately, we had to postpone our ANZAC assembly planned for last week. It will now be held this THURSDAY 30th APRIL at 2.15pm. All are welcome and encouraged to join us.

There will be no Friday assembly this week.

Mrs Farley was due to take leave from week 3 this term however, due to unforeseen medical issues with her mother, she needed to take leave from the start of term 2. We wish Mrs Farley and her family all the very best and look forward to seeing her in term 3.

In light of this, I have been lucky enough to be given the opportunity to take on the role as relieving Principal for term 2. We are all looking forward to a fantastic term ahead.

With warm regards

Stacy Mathieson
Relieving Principal
Irrawang Public School Community are 
safe, responsible learners who show respect in all settings

Welcome back PBL members

(IPS Staff, School Community, Students, Parents)

On behalf of the PBL Team I would like to welcome you all back to what looks like another exciting, but also busy term (even though it has started being somewhat waterlogged. And we know that everyone has been SAFE, RESPONSIBLE Learners who have shown RESPECT towards the weather.)

First of all, we would like to know if you were also a responsible community member by not eating all of the nice chocolate eggs that the Easter Bunny left you, all at once!

Secondly, as you know, we start each term (weeks 1-2) with our focus being on reviewing and consolidating the Aussie 5 and the Behaviour Consistency Chart.

By teaching the ‘Behaviour Consistency Chart’ the children learn about their behaviour and consequences – whether it be in the classroom, playground or community, or whether it be learning or actions they may display at times.

Definition: Consequence – A result of one’s behaviour.

Eg: Following instructions – Gold Face- Aussie 5, Star chart, Deputy BBQ, Caught you being good, dojos etc.
   Refusing to follow instructions – Blue Face – need to think about behaviour.
   Repeatly refusing to follow instructions – Purple Face – white/red form.
   Consistently refusing to follow instructions – Red Face – Red Form.

By consolidating the Aussie 5, we are establishing a consistency, not only within the whole school community, but also our outside community which includes home, general public and businesses that help support our school.

To end on a real positive, the photographers, at the end of last term, commented on how well the classes behaved and how great our school was looking, especially the murals.

SCHOOL BANKING

School banking is every THURSDAY.

Please remember to hand your bank books to your teacher and they will be taken to the office. If you don’t receive your bank book back by Friday please check at the office.
Natural disasters are inevitable but uncommon. Everyone needs some support after being in, or witnessing a natural disaster, but everyone is different so the type or level of support they need is different and changes over time. If you are reading this fact sheet you are likely to be aware that it is important to seek support following natural disasters. It’s great you want to support your child/young person. headspace encourages you to make sure you are also supporting yourself.

**Common reactions and behaviours**

**Grief and loss**

People who have survived a natural disaster often feel a sense of grief and loss, but there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ feelings and they can vary markedly from one person to another.

You may be supporting a child who has lost family members, friends, neighbours, pets, their homes and cherished possessions. Young people sometimes have trouble explaining their feelings, and they may seem ‘cut off’ or bewildered. They might feel they cannot grieve openly, particularly if others seem to have lost even more.

**Confusion, guilt and shame**

Trying to understand a natural disaster can be confusing, especially for young people. This can make them feel angrier and more frightened as the days go by. Sometimes survivors of a disaster feel guilty that they have survived while others have not. Younger children sometimes feel a sense of personal responsibility, as if they caused the disaster in some way. Young people may feel ashamed of how they are feeling, and withdraw from other people or hide their feelings.

**Fear, anxiety and insecurity**

Sometimes people feel anxious, frightened and unsafe for weeks or months after the disaster, despite being physically safe. This is a normal reaction to a frightening event, but it can add to a person’s distress.

**Reactions to trauma**

Young people can ‘act out’ when they are grieving or traumatised. They can become aggressive or irritable, and start having problems at school. Alternatively, they might become withdrawn and ‘clingy’, and find it hard to separate themselves from family members. Children might develop physical complaints like stomach aches and headaches in response to their distress. Some adolescents may self-harm, use drugs or alcohol, or develop eating disorders as a response to their emotions.

**Reactions of parents/families**

Most people, of all ages, recover well from the emotional effects of natural disasters. Families, especially parents, have an important role in the healing process. But parents and families have their own problems to cope with, and you may find yourself juggling your own reactions to the disaster with your responsibilities for your child. Reactions can include:

- Guilt about not being able to shield your child from the effects of the disaster.
- Fear and anxiety about the continuing safety of your child.
- Negativity about the world in general, which you may not be able to conceal from your child.
- Impatience and frustration about your child making a slow recovery.
Supporting your child after a natural disaster

How to help your child

**Provide stability**
Maintain some regular activities and encourage your child to eat, rest and sleep well. Explain what will happen today and the next day, as best you can, and write down a plan to remind them. Provide as much security as possible, by being around, giving your child time to talk, and by developing some comforting routines. Involve your child in choosing new belongings, and perhaps remember old toys and other treasured possessions with a ‘goodbye ceremony’.

**Offer reassurance**
Tell your child about what is being done to help the whole community. When possible, reassure them that their friends and other family members are safe, and contact them if you can.

**Normalise, but don’t minimise**
It can be a relief for young people to know that their feelings are normal, but be careful to acknowledge and respect their emotions. Do not dismiss or minimise the intensity and importance of their reactions.

**Explain gently, create a shared story**
When your child is calm and feeling safe you can talk about how natural disasters are random and unpredictable. Correct any confused explanations of the disaster your child may have.

Give your child the chance to talk about what they miss and what they have lost, but do not push them to talk. Acknowledge that what has happened is not ‘fair’. If you have lost loved ones, tell them enough details so there are no ‘secrets’, without causing extra distress.

Young children might need only a small amount of information, but they do need reassurance that natural disasters are uncommon and they are now safe. Try not to discuss worrying ‘adult’ issues about the disaster in front of young children.

**Use your child’s strengths and likes**
Talk about the strengths you know your child has, and how they can use them. For example, they might like to draw or tell stories, so let them do this to explain what has happened and how they are feeling. It’s quite okay to talk about how the disaster has affected you, and how you are trying to get life back on track.

**Be available**
Make time to be with your child, to do normal things, and to have some quiet time with them. Try to be available emotionally, although this can sometimes be hard when you, too, have a lot to cope with. If you seem anxious, it can reinforce their view that the world is unsafe. At the same time, allow your child some space, and some time to themselves.

**Encourage coping skills**
Encourage your child to step back from their problems or negative feelings and think of ways to reduce their distress. Help them work out ways to solve problems, and find ways to relax and reduce their anxiety.

**Be a role model**
Look after yourself and be true to how you feel. Try to keep your life as structured as possible. If you can, put off big decisions until you feel more stable. Get enough rest, and talk with friends, family and health professionals if you’re feeling overwhelmed. Don’t forget that caregivers need care too.

**Keep in contact with teachers and other carers**
Discuss what your child is feeling and experiencing, and what you are doing to help, to ensure a consistent response.

**When to get help**
You should think about getting help if your child is having difficulties more than about six weeks after the disaster, or is not functioning well in normal activities. Services such as your local doctor, community health centre, school counsellor or local mental health service can provide advice and assistance.

Seek immediate help if you think your child is at risk, for example of self-harm. Call your local hospital, emergency services, Lifeline (13 11 14) or Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800).

[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au) has information about common mental health difficulties for young people, and how you can help.

---

This information was produced thanks to the generous support of the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund and has been developed in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Health.
2014-2015
Family Energy Rebate
Apply before Midnight
16 June 2015

$150*
TOWARDS ENERGY BILLS

2 MINUTES TO FILL IN A FORM
* eligibility criteria apply

WHAT IS THE FAMILY ENERGY REBATE?
The Family Energy Rebate helps to cover the cost of energy bills for NSW households with dependent children. In 2014-2015 the rebate gives:

- Up to $150 credit on electricity bills for eligible applicants who hold an account with an electricity retailer
- Up to $165 direct payment to nominated bank accounts for eligible applicants who live in a residential community (caravan or mobile home park) and receive electricity from the park operator.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR THE REBATE?
To be eligible you MUST:

- Be a NSW resident; and
- Have been assessed by the Federal Department of Human Services (DHS) as being eligible for the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) A or B at any time during the 2013-2014 financial year, and have received an FTB payment in respect of that eligibility; and
- Be an account holder of an electricity retailer, or a long-term resident of a residential community (caravan or mobile home park), whose name appears on the electricity account for supply to her or his principal place of residence.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE I APPLY?
Before you apply, here’s a quick checklist. Have you:

- Lodged your tax return for 2013-2014 with the Australian Taxation Office or informed the Department of Human Services (DHS) if you are not required to lodge a tax return?
- Received confirmation from DHS as to your eligibility for Family Tax Benefit A or B for 2013-2014?

HOW TO APPLY

- ONLINE – it takes just two minutes to submit an application. Processing starts immediately.
- PAPER – download a form from the website, complete and submit by email, fax or post. Use this form if you receive your electricity from the operator of the residential community where you live.

FOR MORE INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

PHONE Service NSW 13 77 88
EMAIL fer.program@trade.nsw.gov.au
A message from:
Youyoong AECG President
Hunter Regional AECG Secretary

Local Government Areas declared natural disasters are eligible for Natural Disaster Assistance Schemes. The following schemes are available under the NSW Disaster Assistance Arrangements.

**Personal Hardship and Distress Assistance**
The Ministry for Police and Emergency Services can provide disaster relief grants to eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential household items have been destroyed or damaged by a natural disaster. People with limited financial resources and no insurance may be eligible for assistance for essential household items and structural repairs to the home. Inquiries about the disaster relief grants and the eligibility criteria may be made by calling 1800 018 444. www.mpes.nsw.gov.au/disasterassistance

**Primary producers - Loans**
Loans of up to $130,000 are available (subject to certain eligibility criteria), at a concessional interest rate for those in urgent need. These loans may be used to meet carry-on requirements and the replacement and repair of damage not covered by insurance. The NSW Rural Assistance Authority administers this scheme. Inquiries should be directed to the Authority on 1800 678 593. www.raa.nsw.gov.au

**Small businesses**
Loans of up to $130,000 are available at a concessional rate to small businesses affected by disasters and which meet certain eligibility criteria. This finance is available to those unable to obtain assistance through normal channels. The NSW Rural Assistance Authority administers this scheme. Inquiries should be directed to the Authority on 1800 678 593. www.raa.nsw.gov.au

**Other assistance**
**Motor Vehicle Stamp Duty Relief**
Motorists whose cars have been written off as a result of a natural disaster may be eligible for a stamp duty refund on their replacement vehicle. Refunds are made where the written off vehicle was comprehensively insured and the insurance does not cover duty for a replacement vehicle. The Office of State Revenue administers these refunds and can be contacted on 1300 139 814. www.osr.nsw.gov.au

**Insurance**
If you have a query relating to insurance you can call the Insurance Council on 1300 444 557. This service is available to all.

**Legal Assistance**
Legal Aid NSW helps people with their legal problems. Legal Aid NSW lawyers can provide free legal advice and minor assistance to people affected by disasters on a range of issues including insurance, tenancy and credit and debt problems. You can call LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529 to discuss any legal problems and what assistance may be available from Legal Aid NSW, Community Legal Centres and other free legal assistance services in your area. www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au
Irrawang Public School: Absentee Note

Student Name: ___________________________ Class: ___________________________

Date/s of absence/s __________________________________________________________

Reason for leave: (Please circle)
   * Sick                             * Urgent Family Business           * Other: __________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________________________

Relationship to student: __________________________________________________________

***************Please return with your child to class teacher. Thankyou***************

Irrawang Public School: Absentee Note

Student Name: ___________________________ Class: ___________________________

Date/s of absence/s __________________________________________________________

Reason for leave: (Please circle)
   * Sick                             * Urgent Family Business           * Other: __________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________________________

Relationship to student: __________________________________________________________

***************Please return with your child to class teacher. Thankyou***************

Irrawang Public School: Absentee Note

Student Name: ___________________________ Class: ___________________________

Date/s of absence/s __________________________________________________________

Reason for leave: (Please circle)
   * Sick                             * Urgent Family Business           * Other: __________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ___________________________

Relationship to student: __________________________________________________________

***************Please return with your child to class teacher. Thankyou***************