

COMO WEST CONNECTION POINT

by Felicity Preston, Principal

THIS WEEK – Term 1 Week 3

What a wonderful start for our **Kindies!** They have successfully made it to the end of their first full week. Many parents have told me how thankful they are for the 'buddies'. I agree. The buddies are doing a great job. Thank you also to the P&C for donating a labelled hat to every Kindergarten child on their first day - a lovely touch.

Thank you to the parents who have emailed me with some great suggestions to start the year. The first was to have **Staff Bios** come out altogether at the start of the year. So, on the pages following are the bios of all of the teaching staff. Next week will be the bios of the non-teaching staff.

Thank you to another parent who said she would be lost without the [NSW DoE Calendar](https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/calendars/2025) file and suggested I share it with the whole school community who might also find it helpful in staying on top of the term time events. Not only does it help you to know what school week we are in, you can import the CSV file to any calendar service (Google, Outlook, etc). <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/calendars/2025>. Remember, the 2025 school events can be seen in your School Bytes calendar on your portal.

Our **Year 6 Leadership Squad** was finalised this week. They will be organising lunchtime events throughout the year, under the guidance of Mrs Durston. Congratulations to Finn D, Emily D, Ella G, Blaze K, Thea H, Fern S, Patrick S, Rose S and Isla W. They will be getting their badges at our first assembly next week. It will also be the first assembly for our **Student Leadership Team**: School Captain - Kieran H, Vice Captain - Kenta S, Prefects - Bronte T, Harley D, Jade H and Zoey W.

We have set a date for our 75th Birthday week - Term 4, Week 2 (October 20-24). Meg Saintilan is heading up the 75th Birthday committee to coordinate a week of events for the students at school. The week will culminate in a celebration at the **P&C 75th Birthday Night Markets** (reminiscent of our Xmas Night Markets). The P&C would like to have a Night Markets sub-committee to run this event. If you would like to be part of this, or can lend a hand if you are good at event coordination or management, please contact the P&C Fundraising Coordinator, Jen Surplice: jensurplice@gmail.com



NEXT WEEK

- Wednesday afternoon: Stages 1, 2 and 3 Meet the Teacher
- Thursday: Swimming Carnival Years 3-6 (& Year 2 8 year olds)
- Friday: Assembly 2:15pm. Stage 1 performing.

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Felicity Preston



Qualifications: Bachelor of Education (High Dist); post-grad Cert Teaching Dance; Masters of Educational Leadership (Distinction)

Special interests: As a principal, it is helping staff to understand and engage with their moral purpose as educators to ensure every student has the best possible education, with student wellbeing at the core.

Personal interests/hobbies: Spending time with my grown up kids, travelling, trying out different restaurants, hiking, dancing, reading, binge watching political dramas or dystopian or speculative series, and since the passing of my own dog - dog-sitting for my friends and extended family.

What I love about teaching: When you 'see' learning in real time when a child's eyes light up; and knowing that you have had a hand in shaping the future of a child - which sometimes you don't realise your impact until years later when a thank you message from an ex-student comes out of the blue.

Heather Veraguth



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Qualifications: Bachelor of Teaching and Bachelor of Education

Special interests: English, mathematics, sport (particularly the carnivals) and all forms of assessment.

Interest, hobbies: Spending time outdoors, especially at the beach, with my family and also reading historical fiction.

What I love about teaching: Working with students and watching them grow and learn and also being a lifelong learner myself.

Vikki Barford



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - SPECIAL EDUCATION; Inclusive Education Support Unit teacher K-6V (Mon) & K-6T (Tues)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education)

Special interests: I am deeply passionate about inclusivity and supporting students with additional needs, helping them reach their full potential.

Personal interests/hobbies: My grandchildren are the greatest joy of my life, and I cherish every moment with them. I also adore my two pugs and a bulldog.

What I love about teaching: Celebrating student successes, big or small, is one of my greatest joys, and I love seeing their growth and achievements.

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Kate O'Leary



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - STAGE 3; Class teacher - 5/6OM (M-W)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education. Over 20 years of experience in education, including 7 years as an Assistant Principal

Special interests: Nurturing student relationships and fostering creativity through the integration of technology in the classroom.

Personal interests/hobbies: Scuba diving, home renovation projects, and travel.

What I love about teaching: Witnessing the development of students' confidence both socially and academically.

Carly Magee



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - STAGE 2; Class teacher - 3/4MA

Qualifications: Bachelor of Teaching (Primary); Bachelor of Education (Primary); Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood); Certificate of Primary Mathematics Education – University of Sydney

Special Interests: I have a strong interest in Mathematics and Creative Arts, particularly dance.

Personal interests/hobbies: I enjoy spending quality time with my family, supporting my children's dance performances, cricket, and soccer matches, taking relaxing beach walks, tending to the garden, going fishing, and indulging in a bit of retail therapy.

What I love about teaching: I love building meaningful connections with students and fostering a classroom where they feel supported and encouraged.

Meg Saintilan



ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - STAGE 1 & EARLY STAGE 1; Class teacher - 1/2ST

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education (Primary)(Hons); Master of Indigenous Education

Special interests: My special interests include applying current pedagogy and best practice to develop engaging learning activities for all students.

Personal interests/hobbies: I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, reading, going to the beach and enjoying being out and about in nature.

What I love about teaching: I love developing relationships with children and their families and working together to develop a love of learning and growth of the whole child.

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Michelle McAlister



Class teacher - 5/6M

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Special interests: I enjoy being creative in the classroom and have a passion for teaching music, art and drama.

Personal interests/hobbies: I like getting outdoors and going for walks as well as going to the gym.

What I love about teaching: What I love about teaching is that you can make a positive difference in your students' lives by helping them achieve their goals as well as inspiring them to love learning and believe in themselves.

Scott Taylor



Class teacher - 5/6T

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Psychology); Masters of Teaching (Primary)

Special interests: My previous career in statistics and analytics has me leaning towards maths, but (not so secretly) I love teaching writing and creative writing in particular.

Personal interests/hobbies: Will happily try my hand at basically any sport at any opportunity, whilst also known to play a bit of chess whenever I get the chance.

What I love about teaching: No day is ever the same.

Sarah Maddern



Class teacher - RFF and 5/6OM (Thurs, Fri)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education

Special interests: Sport

Personal interests/hobbies: Travelling, socialising with family and friends

What I love about teaching: Building a rapport with students and finding out about their special interests and talents (in/ outside of school).

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Trudy Durston



Class teacher - 3/4 DM (Wed - Fri); Relieving Assistant Principal (Fri)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts; Diploma of Education

Special interests: Maths and English (in fact I love teaching it all!)

Personal interests/hobbies: Reading, bushwalking & puzzles

What I love about teaching: Building relationships with students and witnessing the "Aha" moments of learning.

Linda Mangan



Class teacher - 3/4DM (Mon, Tues)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education - Primary

Special interests: Teaching Creative Arts (Art and Music) and Reading.

Personal interests/hobbies: Spending time with family and friends, playing tennis and bush walking.

What I love about teaching: Being able to make a positive impact in children's lives. Watching students grow, both academically and personally, helping them gain new skills, solve problems and overcome challenges is incredibly rewarding

Rachael Morrison



Class teacher - 3/4MO

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education in Primary

Special interests: I enjoy providing students with opportunities to explore a range of sporting activities to develop their awareness of how they can move their bodies to be healthy, active and have fun with others.

Personal interests/hobbies: Outside of school I play football (soccer), am an avid Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs supporter and spend my free time kayaking, snorkelling, waterskiing, making candles and resin art.

What I love about teaching: As an educator, I absolutely love ensuring all students are supported to achieve their personal best in an inclusive school environment where we learn and grow together.

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Melanie Stewart



Class teacher - 1/2MS

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education Primary, AUSTSWIM Teach of Swimming & Water Safety, Business (Office Administration) Certificate II

Special interests: I have a passion for helping students to learn how to read! It is such an exciting period of learning and growth.

Personal interests/hobbies: gardening, swimming, bushwalking, spending time with family, going to the beach

What I love about teaching: The richness that students bring to every learning experience.

Georgia Luckman



Class teacher - 1/2L

Qualifications: Bachelor of Primary Education (Distinction)

Special interests: Growing up as a dancer, I developed a deep passion for dance and the performing arts, and now I love sharing that passion with the students, inspiring them to express themselves through movement and creativity.

Personal interests/hobbies: I love dancing and playing sports, as well as reformer Pilates and boxing. I also enjoy relaxing with a good book or completing a jigsaw puzzle.

What I love about teaching: Inspiring the younger generation and witnessing their growth throughout the year is truly empowering, especially in those lightbulb moments when a student finally grasps a concept – a powerful reminder of the joy of learning. I also highly value creating a safe, supportive and happy environment for the students to thrive in.

Jacqueline Parramore



Class teacher - KJ

Qualifications: Bachelor of Primary Education

Special interests: Phonics, dance and organising fun events for the community.

Personal interests/hobbies: I love dancing, swimming, going to the beach and spending time with my dogs.

What I love about teaching: I love seeing students' confidence in their themselves and their abilities grow as they learn new skills throughout the year.

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Kristy Popplewell



Class teacher - KP

Qualifications: Bachelor of Design in Architecture; Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Special interests: I am passionate about Visual Arts and Maths

Personal interests/hobbies: I love my family, being outdoors, playing sport, travelling and cheering on the St.George Dragons.

What I love about teaching: I love imparting knowledge in a way that is fun and inspiring with the aim to instill a lifelong love of learning.

Emily Henderson



Class teacher - Inclusive Education Support Unit - K-6H; relieving Assistant Principal IESU (Fri)

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education (Birth to Twelve); Post Graduate Certificate in Special Needs Education

Special interests: I am passionate about inclusive education, working to create learning environments where every student can thrive at their own pace.

Personal interests/hobbies: I love spending time with my family and creating memories together.

What I love about teaching: getting to see students growth and success, and being able to foster learning through an inclusive and supportive classroom environment.

Ellen Thatcher



Class teacher - Inclusive Education Support Unit - K-6T

Qualifications: Bachelor of Primary Education

Special interests: I have a deep passion for teaching phonics, helping learners build strong foundations with clarity and confidence.

Personal interests/hobbies: Spending time with my young family is my number one hobby and is a journey filled with endless curiosity, learning, and love.

What I love about teaching: I love seeing students grow as they master new skills, gain confidence, and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

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Vanessa Sabljak



Class teacher - Inclusive Education Support Unit - K-6V

Qualifications: Bachelor of Primary Education

Special interests: I am committed to designing learning experiences that align with students' individual needs, interests, and intrinsic motivation, ensuring meaningful engagement with the curriculum.

Personal interests/hobbies: I enjoy kayaking with my children, appreciating both the challenge and the opportunity to explore nature together.

What I love about teaching: I find the greatest joy in teaching when students engage with reading and storytelling, developing both an appreciation for others' ideas and the confidence to express and refine their own.

Yasmin Casaceli



AKA Mrs Casa. Classroom teacher - RFF various classes & Library

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education; Certificate of Psychology

Special interests: I have an affinity for Literature and the Creative and Practical Arts!

Personal interests/hobbies: When I am not mothering my boys or mini dachshunds, I enjoy going to the theatre/concerts, visiting new restaurants, spending time in nature and keeping fit with boxing or pilates.

What I love about teaching: The idiom is 'never work with kids or animals' but I beg to differ... Both may offer frankness, inventiveness, humour, challenge, appreciativeness and keep me sentimental! However, in short it is an amazing privilege to witness growth that I have contributed to. If I can help a child realise a passion and feel confident within themselves, then I have done my job!

Courtney Dale



Classroom teacher - RFF various classes

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education; Bachelor of Marine Science

Special interests: My teaching philosophy is centred around reading and writing and being able to teach this well to future generations to facilitate productive and confident participants in society

Personal interests/hobbies: They revolve around the ocean and fitness.

What I love about teaching: I consider being a teacher a good investment of my time where I hope to be a positive influence on students and impress on them the value of education and the self believe they can always improve.

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Lyn Young



Class teacher RFF - KJ (Thurs); KP (Fri)

Qualifications: Diploma in Education

Special interests: Literacy and promoting a love for reading books and writing.

Personal interests/hobbies: Spending time with family, travel, reading and my dog Luna.

What I love about teaching: Teaching provides me with the opportunity to share in the growth of each student and celebrate their achievements with them.

Jen Galli



Librarian

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood, Graduate Certificate Teacher Librarianship

Special interests: I have a love for reading and getting into character with the students when we read together.

Personal interests/hobbies: I love spending time with my family and being mum.

What I love about teaching: I enjoy being involved in students learning journeys and they often teach me along the way too.

Tara Gannon



Classroom teacher - about to take Maternity Leave

Qualifications: Bachelor of Primary Education

Special interests: Teaching dance is one of my greatest passions as a primary school teacher, and nothing beats the pure joy of seeing students shine at Schools Spectacular and music festivals—it's a highlight that never gets old!

Personal interests/hobbies: I love playing team sports like Oztag and touch football- it's a fun way to stay active and enjoy some friendly competition!

What I love about teaching: I love teaching because it gives me the opportunity to make a real difference in students' lives, helping them discover their strengths and watch them grow with confidence and enthusiasm.