Dear Parents and Caregivers,

On Wednesday 20th June Risdon Park went through their second Validation process. DECD’s school throughout South Australia are focussed upon the continual improvement of student learning. Validation is a process conducted every three years to gauge how well a school is going in 5 major key areas outlined in DECD’s Improvement and Accountability framework, known as DIAf.

Risdon Park undertook its first Validation process in December of 2011. In 2012 we were invited to undergo the trial of revised Validation process, which meant that we only needed to address the 2 newest areas included in the process. This means that we will not need to go through the Validation process until 2015.

The Validation process included a team of regional office personal and two school principals within our region spending a full day at Risdon Park, meeting with the leadership team, other staff members in focus groups and observing in class rooms. The Validation panel also went through Risdon Park’s policies, procedures, data and plans.

The Validation process aims to provide constructive feedback to the staff and the Risdon Park community for continual improvement. The Validation report was shared with Governing Council and now I aim to provide you with key points from the

The Validation report was documented under 5 main domains for the DIAf document and they were:

- Self Review Processes and Improvement Cycle
- Quality Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum Coherence
- Learner Outcomes
- Leading Improvement

The panel congratulated Risdon Park community on the significant change in school culture which has been achieved through a rigorous focus on learning. It was noted that a high level of professional trust and collaboration was seen throughout the school, with a focus of improved learning for staff and students alike.

Professional learning for staff was seen as successful and matched to Risdon Park’s improvement priorities of Literacy and Engagement for Learning. The panel commended Risdon Park staff for engaging with key research into Literacy learning and developing collaborative teams to support each other to learn and evaluate plans and programs. The panel was impressed with the manner in which we are implementing the Australian Curriculum in the areas of Science (2011) and History (2012). Many of you would have attended Guided Inquiry presentations in which student learning in Science and History has been presented and celebrated. The panel was also impressed in the high level of documentation of our programs and whole school agreements of chosen programs such as Jolly Phonics, Guided Reading and Wilson McCaskill Play is the Way program.

Particular attention was given to the work that we have done this year in the Early Years with the implementation of Jolly Phonics and our work with Deslea Konza from Edith Cowin University in the area of reading.
It was so great to read the lengthy commendations the panel noted in their report which reflected positively upon our school, our programs and achievement levels.

A few recommendations were made by the panel and they focussed around the need to build upon our success in reading in the early years and extending into the primary years. Intervention for students with special needs was also mentioned as an area for future development as was the continued work in developing a common understanding of writing levels of students from reception to year 7.

The report was exceptionally positive, which gave our staff cause to pat ourselves on the back for a job well done! The report also gave us some areas to ponder upon for improvement. At our last leadership meeting we began to look at how we can incorporate the Validation report recommendations into our current Site Improvement and Action plans. This was not a difficult task as most of the recommendations were already identified and included in our planning.

If you would like more information on the content of the validation report please contact me.

Regards,
Carolyn Clinton

Green & Gold Day is celebrating and supporting Australians that are making a difference to those in need.

To coincide with the 2012 Olympic Opening, the Mary MacKillop Foundation is inviting you to wear Australia’s national colours and to join in the celebration of the Australian spirit of helping those in need.

Thanks, Kids Co
Wilson McCaskill Visit

On Thursday of last week we had a visit by Wilson McCaskill. He is the author of ‘Play is the Way’ which enhances pro-social behaviour through the use of physically interactive games. This program has been at Risdon for the last 4 years and has supported students/teachers to:

- build up relationships within class groups
- create a common vocabulary based upon shared experiences
- help students understand themselves through physical activity
- allow time for discussion about behaviour and organisational tasks
- share positive experiences from play

The day involved 4 classes being led through games by their teacher and Wilson and then feedback given to staff who were observing.

Useful tips which can also be used at home include:

If you observe a behaviour:

- Start with a closed question eg ‘Is that the right thing or wrong thing to do?’
- Acknowledge the answer eg ‘I’m pleased that you know that’.
- Children then start understand their behaviour eg ‘If it was the wrong thing to do is it a strong thing or weak thing to do?’

Try this with your students at home as the more you use the language the more the students/child will learn to take charge of their own behaviour.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Volunteers are still needed for Breakfast Club. With about 50 students attending every Wednesday, the job is too big for 2 adults.

If you can spare 1/2 hour from about 8:15am on a Wednesday, we would love your help cooking toast or serving hot chocolate.

Thanks in anticipation,

Carolyn Clinton

BOOK WEEK Performance

Next Monday The Splash Theatre Company are presenting ‘Champions Read’ to our students.

Actors are: Julia Mayer, Jesse Butler, Eddie Morrison,

Director: Chris John

The books this year include:

- Beetle Boy by Lawrence David
- The Adventures of Isabel by Ogden Nash
- That Pesky Rat by Lauren Child
- Kick It To Me by Neridah McMullin
- The Anteater by Roald Dahl
- Mulga Bill’s Bicycle by Banjo Paterson
- The S.S. Gigantic Across The Atlantic by Peter Selgin
- Madeline by Ludwig Bemelmans

The cost is covered by the school.

CENTRAL/RISDON NETBALL CLUB

Bottle green jumpers are unavailable from suppliers so we will wait for next season.

Sorry Guys

Presentation Thursday 13th Sept
(Please add to your diary)