Welcome to the start of a new school year. We trust that all families had a wonderful Christmas and 2015 has so far been kind to you. This year at Welton is already shaping up to be a one with plenty of learning opportunities for our students both within the school and beyond. We may be small in numbers, but we are in for a BIG year. Our small class size allows staff to cater to each individual student's needs, learning style and interests. Our students are very fortunate to be offered such a diverse curriculum which focusses on giving them the skills and passion for life-long learning.
School Structure & Staffing

This year, all students have been grouped as one class and Lisa will be their classroom teacher. The students will not be taught in traditional grade groupings, instead being grouped according to their learning needs. This may mean your child is working with two or three particular students in Spelling, then different students when they are studying Place Value. Grouping the students this way ensures that each individual student is learning from their point of need and they are not wasting time practising skills they have already acquired and not being asked to complete tasks that are well beyond their understandings and capabilities. All Welton Staff believe that these type of groupings will maximise each student's learning potential.

Speaking of Staff……

Bruce Taylor is currently on Long Service Leave and will return to work two days a week in April. We are very fortunate to have Rachelle Ramage–Campbell join us for this term to cover Bruce’s two days. Rachelle will work with Lisa in Literacy and Numeracy sessions. Rachelle will also take Science whilst Mr T is on leave. The most exciting news is that Rachelle is going to introduce an Instrumental Music program–beginning with guitar and keyboard lessons for our Year 3-6 students. She will also take vocal and performance based music lessons with all of our classes. It is our hope that with our current student numbers we can have Rachelle join us one day per week during terms 2,3 and 4! Fleur Gilmore, will work this term one day per week to assist Lisa in the classroom and as a Casual Relief Teacher as required.

If you have any questions about the classroom structure, programs or staffing, please contact Lisa.

Swimming

Our annual swimming program will commence on Monday. All students will join students from Gunbower and Leitchville Primary Schools to take part in swimming and water safety lessons at the Leitchville Pool. We will be going swimming on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays until February 25th (Swimming Sports). On these days we will have our lunch earlier than usual and leave at 1.15pm. Parents are most welcome to come along and help out or watch. Just be at school before 1.15pm to get on the bus. Please read, sign and return the attached permission form by Monday at the latest. The cost for swimming (which includes pool entry and travel is $10 per student).

PLEASE NOTE: Due to swimming being in the afternoon, school will be dismissed at 3.15pm EVERYDAY for the month of February. This means the bus will run 15 minutes later than usual. There is a new bus timetable attached.

Open Water

Each year Life Saving Victoria run Open Water Sessions in regional centres. These sessions are designed to provide children with the knowledge and skills in the area of water safety for environments such as lakes and rivers. Our Year 3-6 students will attend on Tuesday February 10th. The session runs from 9:30–11:10am at Merool Caravan Park, Moama. Children will be transported by bus. Lisa will accompany the students. If any parents would like to go along to watch they are most welcome – just contact the school to book your seat on the bus. There is no cost for this excursion. Please read, complete and return the attached permission form by Friday February 6th.

School Fees

Our fees have been set at a very reasonable $25 per child per term ($100 in total). These fees contribute to the cost of the MACC (Art/Craft) MARC (Library) Services, student stationary, class materials and help to subsidise excursions and programs. Families are most welcome to pay fees upfront, term by term or in instalments. Direct Credit facilities are available; contact the school for our banking details. Please be aware that fees are deliberately kept low with the expectation that all families will contribute to our ability to offer a top quality education.
Gardening Gurus

Thank you to those families who volunteered to help with maintaining the school grounds over the holiday period. Everything looks very green. A special thanks to those who put in that extra effort; you know who you are. We really appreciate all of your efforts.
The school vegetable patch will be up and running again. We will start planting in early March when (hopefully) the extreme hot weather has passed.
We are also starting a worm farm—so look out all of you fishermen—we may just have some worms to sell.

Welcome

We welcome a new student and her family to our school. Matilda Fowler is in Year One and is really looking forward to being able to travel to and from school on our bus. Matilda has a younger brother Ashton and her mum and dad are Tanya and Philip. We welcome the entire family and hope they love our little school as much as we do.

Family BBQ

All families are asked to join us for our annual beginning of year BBQ on Monday February 16th. The BBQ is a fantastic opportunity to talk with Staff and other parents. The evening begins at 6pm and all you need to bring is your drinks. We hope to see everyone there, we will send a slip home with next week’s newsletter so we know how many we have in attendance.

School Council

Our first School Council meeting for 2015 will be held after the family BBQ on Monday February 16th—it will begin at 7.30pm. Please be aware that even if you are not an elected member of school council you are most welcome to attend meetings.
Support Welton!

As you would all be well aware, the student numbers at Welton have been decreasing over the past 8 or so years. Whilst we realise there are not many young families in the immediate area—there are families within our Bus Route that may consider sending their students to our fantastic little school. If you know of anyone who may be interested at considering a current or future enrolment, encourage them to make contact with us. The other thing you can do is to promote our school within the community and speak positively about our programs and learning opportunities.

Families will find an updated copy of our Information Booklet attached to this newsletter. Whilst some of the information within this book is not new, there are some changes which even 'long term' families may not be aware of. Please feel free to request other copies to provide interested families or community members.