Dear Families & Friends,

Welcome to the 2016 School Year at Riverside.

As quickly as 2015 flew by, I just have a feeling we should make the most of every opportunity in 2016 as it will probably prove to be just as swift to pass. We welcome you back to this new school year at Riverside knowing that there are exciting adventures ahead. With our families growing closer together as a community and some new faces to welcome, we pray that you will enjoy the journey that this school year takes us on.

We have new approaches, new and returning staff members, key changes to some of our programs and a strong curriculum focus in mind for 2016. Our new, student Service and Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.) will be active in supporting the program and the Home & School Committee is hoping for more Mums and Dads to join us for meetings here at Riverside once per term, in the Library.

This year is a critical year for our school as we have the Non State School Accreditation Board visit for our 5 yearly cyclic review. We will be keen to survey our community on various issues and ideas through the school year as we constantly strive to improve in every area of our school business at R.A.C.S.

The staff began the year on a special Staff Retreat, over at Magnetic Island, where we established goals, highlighted areas for improvement, rededicated ourselves to Christian education and bonded as a united team. It was a refreshing and memorable retreat and we hope to make this an annual event for staff. We have already seen God’s blessings flow from the decisions and ideas generated from that weekend together.

Your child’s education is so important to all of us, so please remain connected to Riverside throughout 2016. There will be challenges, successes, fun and celebrations. Let’s work together wherever we can to prepare, support, stimulate and nurture young minds for whose learning this school exists. We will need to trust one another, assume the best in all circumstances and speak well of each other in the hearing of our students.
Please know that your family is regularly prayed for and that the School Management Council is keenly supportive of the growth and improvement of our school. My office is always open for anyone to share their joys or concerns. Hopefully, you will find Riverside to be the safest, most caring and most connected school you could dream of in 2016.

Riverside Way Day – The staff have been working on the “Riverside Way”, a kind of mantra or set of home rules and values that maintain and improve the culture and safety of our school. Teachers have worked with their students in each room today on fine-tuning what it is we stand for, and how we can create a “way” that future students and staff can follow and live by. We hope to be able to publish the “Riverside Way” early this term and have it displayed in every room here. Watch this space!

Newsletters – Riverside produces a detailed newsletter each fortnight, usually in the even numbered weeks – starting in Week 2 each term. These are emailed to the email address we have on file for your family. Please, take the time (less than 15 minutes really!) to read through the newsletters and keep informed about what is happening in the present and what is coming up soon. Teachers take the time to take photos and report on events and it is really nice to hear that a parent has read something that was in the newsletter.

ELC – Our Early Learning Centre is operating daily and there are spaces available. Please tell your friends about our centre as the program out there is just so perfect for growing young minds. The way our ELC students from 2015 have so comfortably settled into our Prep class this morning demonstrated to me just what an amazing program Miss Reini is running. As word spreads about the facilities and excellent Kindergarten program for 4 year olds, we hope to fill the centre through the year – which is just 20 students, another advantage our small centre has over the competition.

RACS Calendar – Last year, at Presentation Night, we distributed the 2016 Riverside Calendar, a double-sided A3 calendar you can hang on the fridge at home. It has all the key dates your family needs for 2016. If you haven’t received your yet, please pop into the office and pick one up!

Communication – I encourage all parents to keep us ‘in the loop’ with your child’s development. That could mean medical information, incidental changes in their lives or anything that might impact upon their learning. Carpark whispers about inevitable teacher (or principal) error will do as much good as would staffroom sulking over student behaviours. Please treat our staff as approachable. They are very willing to help. When confusion or dissatisfaction arises, step one is always speaking to a teacher. Only when such an approach has proven repeatedly unfruitful is it wise to ask for help from my office. Most issues never become an issue when we are open and willing to listen to each other. If you have any suggestions for helping us to communicate better with parents, please talk to me anytime.

Parent Information Night – Next Monday evening, February 1st, we will hold an Information Night here at Riverside. It will begin at 6 pm in the Library and should conclude by 7:15 at the latest. If you are keen to know what your child will be learning about, how homework works and key ideas for ensuring your child’s learning is optimized, please come along on Monday evening.

Uniform – The office has plenty of uniform in stock presently. Again, Sports Uniform should be worn on Mondays and Wednesdays. The Riverside Formal Uniform needs to be worn in full on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
Uniform Reminders – The word ‘uniform’ is clearly suggesting sameness or uniformity. The purpose of establishing and policing the uniform policy is to create an ‘even playing field’ for all families. We intend to ensure all students are treated respectfully and equally in maintaining our uniform policy this year. Please have your child’s hat clearly labelled inside or under the brim and replace discoloured items. Sports shoes need to be mostly white – especially the tops. We intend to resend the guide photographic guide for uniform soon to make it easy for families replacing old shoes. Long hair, for safety, needs to be tied up with blue, black or white hair-ties – boys and girls. Socks are to be ankle length and should cover the bone of the ankle without reaching more than a five or six centimetres above the shoe. This year, if your child comes in incorrect uniform 3 times without a note, a notification will be sent home from the teacher to remind you of our policy and uniform expectations.

Swimming Program – Having rescued drowning children as a teacher from the surf about 15 years ago, it is my strong belief that every Australian student should be taught to swim in primary school. Swimming classes start in Week 2 of this term, on Wednesday. Please ensure that your child has the appropriate goggles, towel, clothing and swimming gear. We understand your child may have a fear of water but if we plan to avoid swimming lessons, the fears will only be prolonged and enlarged. Some parents choose to accompany us to the centre to ensure their child is safe and happy during the first weeks. Please discuss this further with your child’s teacher if you have any questions.

Tuckshop – We will continue to have Pizza order day on Tuesday (from Dominos). Families can order whole pizzas or a specified number of pieces. The choices are vegetarian pizza or margherita pizza. Thursdays will be Pasta order day and we have two toppings available for the pasta dishes. Orders need to be clearly written on a paper bag or similar with money safely inside the bag. Contact the office if you are interested in contributing in any way to the operation of tuckshop.

Volunteering – We not only need help in managing the tuckshop, we also have need of parent help in cutting up the fruit for the students and reading with groups in some classrooms. Let your child’s teacher know if you are available to help in any way this year.

Bullying & Discipline – Our new discipline system worked well, by all reports, last year and we intend to only make small changes in 2016. Bullying, from verbal, to psychological, to physical bullying, will not be tolerated. Inevitably, students will make mistakes or cross boundaries this year, but we have systems and processes in place already that will help students to own their behaviour and learn from warnings and consequences that their behaviour is not appropriate or respectful. Parents will receive written notification if their child receives a ‘timeout’ during a break. Accountability is essential if we plan for our students to grow and mature through primary school.

Lateness – Of course, we would love to have every student on time each day but, in the real world, there are sometimes going to be things that necessitate late arrivals or early departures. It would greatly assist us if, where possible, students come to school with a note explaining the reason for arriving late or leaving early. The process is that when your child arrives later than 8:50am, they need first to visit the office for a late slip before walking to class. Teachers will not let a child walk into the class without a late slip, so that our records of absences remain accurate.

Homework – There will more details shared on Parent Information Night about homework. As your child gets older they will need to begin preparing for the increased demands of secondary school learning and one of the major factors is organising themselves to complete homework.
assignments. All primary homework should take between 20 minutes and an hour per weeknight – four nights per week.

**School Times** – The finishing times of each school day have changed this year. Please note the changes as it will affect drop off and pick up routines for some families.

- Earliest Drop Off – 8:15 am
- Line Up For Class – 8:45 am
- School Start – 8:50 am
- Lunch – 11:00 – 11:40 am
- Recess – 1:40 – 2:10 pm
- School End – 3:10 pm
- Duty End – 3:40 pm

No student has the permission of the school to be on the school grounds outside of these hours. Without supervision children are not safe and their care is not a small matter to our staff. We appreciate your adherence to the above times - unless a special circumstance arises. Written, parental permission is essential if special supervision is needed.

**Lunch/Fruit Policy** – As a part of the school’s fruit policy, fresh fruit is provided to students at recess each day. The fruits vary according to seasons. This means that you will only pack food for the main lunch break. We will speak more about this at Parent Information Night, next week, but the “Lunch List 1,2,3” is an excellent guide for ensuring your child has energy, without the high blood-sugar spikes some processed foods can produce.

**Music/Guitar Lessons** – Riverside offers private music tuition on Mondays (individual or group guitar lessons). Group guitar lessons will be $120 per school term or $240 for individual lessons. Classes are conducted during regular school hours and students are expected to catch up with any work missed in their own time.

**Pick-up and Drop-off Changes** – For safety reasons, we have adjusted the way students are dropped off and picked up each day. There are new lines marked in the Riverside “roundabout” and the following map and dot points should explain to you how it works. The main goal was to stop students from occupying the same space as moving cars, so there are clear boundaries now, for students and for the way parents need to park. You have 2 options now.

- **Pick-up & Drop-off Lane** – To pick up your child without leaving your vehicle, please use the left lane which follows beside the hedge. Once your vehicle is in the first three in line (after the ‘STOP’ mark) the duty teacher will send your child or children out to your vehicle. Please don’t leave your vehicle in this area. You must stay in your car and wait until you can move to the front. Once your child is in their seatbelt, move off slowly when it is safe to do so.

- **Park and Enter School** – If you wish to come into the school in the afternoon for any reason, or you want to personally walk your child out to the carpark, please park in the new carparks over on the other side of the roundabout, facing away from the school, and walk along the front of the ELC to the gate, following the new yellow pathway near the school. Students will not be permitted to walk across to that parking area without an adult.

- No parking in staff carparks or in the middle of the roundabout (under trees), please.
As Riverside looks towards its 50th year next year we are planning for 2016 to be the perfect stepping stone; a year where good becomes better and better, best. We look forward to sharing time and space with our precious school family again!

Christian Regards,

Ian Humphries
Principal
Riverside Adventist Christian School
Nurture For Today | Learning For Tomorrow | Character For Eternity