Dear Year 3 and Year 5 Parents,

As you are aware, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students is held in May each year. NAPLAN tests assess student knowledge and skills in Writing, Reading, Language Conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and Numeracy. The results of the tests provide information for students, parents, teachers and principals which can be used to improve student achievement.

From 2017, the NAPLAN tests will transition from a paper based test to an online assessment (i.e., students will complete the tests utilising a computer or tablet). NAPLAN Online will deliver numerous benefits including:

- reduced time between testing and reporting, increasing the ability of teachers to use the results to inform teaching practice;
- a ‘tailored test’ design that adapts to correct and incorrect student responses providing a more precise understanding of student achievement;
- innovative use of technology, including a more engaging test design and a wider range of item types;
- improved equity of access, including greater potential to support students with a disability;
- the extension of the ‘test window’ to two weeks, allowing schools greater opportunity to schedule the tests at times that suit them best and increasing student participation.

In Victoria, the transition will involve a 2017 Pilot of NAPLAN Online, with the majority of schools completing the tests online in 2018 and all schools completing the tests online in 2019.

Earlier this year, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), which is responsible for the implementation of NAPLAN in Victoria, asked schools to submit an expression of interest to participate in the 2017 NAPLAN Online Pilot. Our school submitted an expression of interest and was accepted into the Pilot. This means that in May 2017, students at our school will undertake all NAPLAN tests online in place of the pen and paper tests.

We nominated to participate in the Pilot as we wanted to benefit from the advantages of the online test delivery, including earlier feedback on student performance and the flexibility of a longer test window. We also felt the school would benefit from making the transition in a pilot environment that concentrates on supporting a sample of Victorian schools.

In the unlikely situation that there are significant issues with NAPLAN Online in 2017, a range of contingencies have been put into place to ensure that our students are not disadvantaged by participating in the Pilot next year.

As part of our involvement in the Pilot, our school is also required to participate in an Australia-wide trial of the NAPLAN online system. This trial will provide us with an opportunity to provide feedback on the online system and associated processes, as well as confirming our own school readiness for participation in 2017. Following the trial, the VCAA will confirm our involvement in the 2017 Pilot.

This trial will be conducted between 18th and 26th August 2016 and will involve the Year 3 and Year 5 students completing two tests using the online system – a writing test and an ‘omnibus’ test.
The omnibus test will include questions from across the Reading, Language Conventions and Numeracy Domains. Please note that the omnibus test is not constructed to assess curriculum knowledge, but rather to provide students an opportunity to experience the types of questions that will be included in the online assessment.

The omnibus test will also include several brief survey questions for the students to complete (e.g., what device did you complete the test on? how easy was it to type your answers?). Students across Australia will be completing the survey and this provides an opportunity for them to comment on the NAPLAN Online system.

Miss Tomic will administer the tests with the Year 3 students and Miss Hill and Miss Kopciewicz will administer the tests with the Year 5 students. A supervisor from the VCAA will also be present to lend assistance as required. The teachers have advised the students that this test is unrelated to this year’s NAPLAN test and will not affect this year’s NAPLAN results in any way. The reason for their involvement is only to test the process and effectiveness of the online system. The students will be encouraged to try their best but are not to worry if they find any of the test questions hard. All Year 3 and 5 students will be doing the tests on the school laptops that have been uploaded with the NAPLAN online testing program by the school’s IT technician.

Please note that the data collected from the trial will be used only for the purposes of research and evaluating the NAPLAN Online system. No information identifying students or schools will be made publicly available.

I would like to thank you and your child for their participation in this trial, which is a key step to ensuring a successful NAPLAN online experience.

If you would prefer that your child does not participate in the trial, please see your child’s teacher. We will provide additional information about the 2017 Pilot in Term 1, 2017.

For more information about NAPLAN Online, please visit the VCAA website at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au or the NAP website at www.nap.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

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