



Merimbula Public School



Information for Parents – Regarding Discussion with Students about Tathra Fires

March 19, 2018

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

You would by now be aware of yesterday's events involving the fires in the Bega Valley and Tathra areas. It has been a most unfortunate event for all involved. I am sure that your thoughts are with those affected.

This morning we held a staff meeting to discuss how our school would assist our students as, like we anticipated, most students came to school talking about the alarming events and what they have heard and seen on the media reports. Our meeting ensured that all teachers, and casual staff, would talk to classes with a consistent message.

The message given to students by teachers included that:

- We understand students have more than likely heard about the fires in Tathra and the Bega areas (as even if they did not hear it from home it is likely they heard on the playground this morning).
- We have heard that people are safe but some homes may have been affected.
- It is ok to talk about things like this but we should be mindful to be positive and caring when we do as some people may be/get sad or worried when things like this happen, especially if they know people who have been affected.
- We can always help people in need, or who are affected by events such as these, and as a school community we are helping by collecting donations of goods for those who need them.

The students responded well to this discussion, and teachers/staff monitored students through the day to ensure additional support could be put in place if required.

At around 10.30am this morning a smoky haze crept in around the school. As a safety precaution, and so that the children did not inhale the smoke, we kept the children inside classrooms for their lunch eating/play time. They had free time activities in their rooms. By recess the haze had gone and children went out to play. We will continue to monitor the local fires and smoke and keep children indoors when needed as to not inhale unnecessary smoke. Thank you to the parents of children with severe asthma who kept them home to help keep them safe and healthy. Children with asthma who were in attendance today, as well as all children, were watched carefully to ensure that they were not being affected by the smoke haze.

If you would like to support our school donations collection, we are collecting: clothes, shoes, linen, blankets, towels, food and toiletries. We have lots of children's and women's clothing, but could do with more toiletries and non-perishable food items.

Regards,
Michelle Hulme
Principal

