It has been a very busy start to the year, as I am sure you will all agree!

Last Friday, we farewelled Anthony Hutumo, and his mum, Romona, who has been posted to Brisbane. We wish them the best of luck.

I am writing just to update you on a couple of matters:

**NOWRA HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL WEBSITE**

If you get a chance have a look at the school’s website at: [www.nowrahill-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/](http://www.nowrahill-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/). DCO has recently updated their brochures and I have uploaded them to the DSTA section of the site. These brochures provide information about the Defence Family Helpline, DCO, Education Assistance, the REDLO, Posting and relocation, DSTA’s and DTM’s. I have also uploaded the Nowra Hill DSTA Newsletters and there are many photos on the site of the students undertaking various activities at school.

**DSTA LEAVE AND CHANGES TO THE DSTA FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

I will be taking the last 2 weeks off at the end of term 1 and the first Thursday of term 2.

As a result of a change in the funding arrangements for the DSTA Program, the number of hours I work at the school has been reduced from 400 hours per year to 361 hours. This equates to approximately 8 working days. Rather than cutting back the number of hours worked each day, Mr McCann and I have agreed that it is best to take 8 whole days off throughout the year, hence, my leave in April. I hope this won’t be an inconvenience.
DEFENCE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Defence Community Organisation, or DCO, offers a broad range of programs and services to help Defence families manage the military way of life. The DCO website is full of helpful information for Defence families relating to deployment, relocation, education, special needs and emergency and crisis support. The DCO website is: [www.defence.gov.au/dco/](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/).

To access any of DCO’s support services, contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on: 1800 624 608.

SDFA AND KOOKABURRA RETREAT

The Shoalhaven Defence Families Association (SDFA) is a non-profit organisation which was established to bring fun and friendship to Defence families in the Shoalhaven and surrounding areas. SDFA is managed by Rachel Birkmyre, Co-ordinator and a Committee of volunteers who come together each week (during school terms), to run activities such as playtime, scrapbooking and craft groups. These activities are run at the SDFA’s community house – Kookaburra Retreat, which is located at Flats 1 & 2 Canberra Drive, Nowra Hill.

SDFA also publishes the quarterly magazine, Time Out, which contains lots of information about activities being undertaken for Defence families in the Shoalhaven area.

If you would like any information about SDFA, or you would like to be placed on their email list, please contact Rachel on phone: 4421 5766; or by email: shoalhavendfa@gmail.com; or visit the SDFA website at: [www.shoalhavendefencefamilies.com.au](http://www.shoalhavendefencefamilies.com.au).

NOWRA HILL FRIENDSHIP TREE

We are in the process of creating a Nowra Hill friendship tree. Every student has painted their own leaf for the tree. Each leaf identifies the name of the student and the year in which he/she started at the school. The tree will be placed in the hall and will continue to grow as new students join the school community.

Finally, please remember to advise me of any current or future deployments so that I can support your child at school. I can be contacted by email at: leanne.millard1@det.nsw.edu.au or by phoning the school office on 4421 5671.

Leanne Millard
DSTA
Nowra Hill Public School