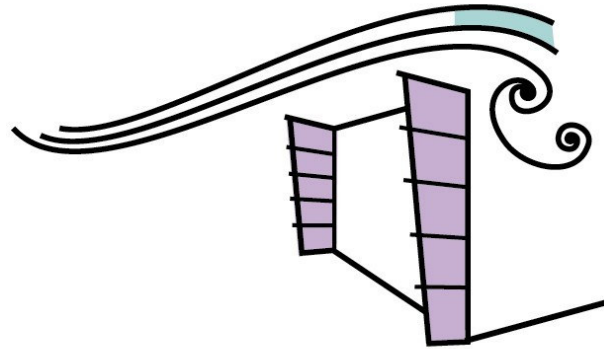




Thorndon School



Te Kura o Pipitea

Developing independent, creative, and confident thinkers and learners

An A – Z of useful information 2011



A

Absences

If your child is going to be away from school please try to phone us by 9:30am.

When there is an unexplained absence and we have not heard by then, the school will phone to find the reason for the absence.

This will help ensure the welfare and safety of children.

Accidents

In the event of your child being involved in a serious accident the school will take appropriate action and will contact you as soon as possible.

Accounts

During the course of the year parents are asked to pay for a number of activities such as after school care, technology at Mt Cook for the seniors, a photocopying levy, swimming etc. It is important for the school's cash flow that all accounts are paid promptly and in full.

After School

After School Care is available each day from 3:00 to 6:00pm at a reasonable cost.

The After School Care Programme is OSCAR accredited and eligible parents are able to get a subsidy through WINZ.

Phone: 472 8183 (3:00 – 6:00).

An answer phone is in operation if you are unable to get through and the programme also has an email address – asc@thorndon.school.nz

A late fee will be charged if children are not collected by 6:00pm.

Arrival Times

School begins at 9:00am, and it is important that children are at school on time. It is equally important that children do not arrive at school too early.

No child should arrive at school before 8:00am except in exceptional circumstances.

Art Splash

Every year the Wellington City Council promotes Art Splash, a celebration of children and the arts, and we participate in a range of the available activities.

Art Week

Each year the school holds an Art Week during which all children and staff are involved in small group art activities between 9:30 and 2:30 each day. This is a feature of the school calendar and parents are invited to assist.

There is very good evidence indicating that strong Arts programmes reinforce the core curriculum areas of Literacy and Numeracy and this is one reason for holding this art week.

At the end of Art Week we invite parents in to see what has been produced.



Assembly

We try to have an assembly fortnightly on alternate Thursdays at 12:00. These assemblies are quite informal and very much child oriented and child directed.

Parents are always welcome but it pays to ring and check that the assembly is still on.

Assessment

Teachers are constantly monitoring and assessing children's progress both formally and informally and the results of these assessments are used to inform planning and further learning.

There is a wide range of tools available to schools and we make particular use of PA Tests, STAR, and asTTle. Results of this formal testing are given to parents and discussed as part of Goal Setting meetings and Three Way conferences.

Attendance

It is a requirement that all children attend a school from the age of 6. Once enrolled, children are expected to attend every day. There will always be times when children are absent for extended periods for family reasons but outside these times it is important for learning that children attend school regularly.

B

Barbecues

Periodically we arrange barbecues as social events for the school. Parents are invited to get involved in the organisation and running of these. They are timed to allow parents to come along after work and are an opportunity for the school community to meet informally.

Behaviour

While we do not have a long list of school rules we expect children to maintain acceptable standards of behaviour and teachers display lists of what is expected. In essence our expectations are built around the idea of respect:- respect for others, respect for the environment and respect for self.

We hope we can count on the support of parents to help ensure that these expectations are met.

Bullying

The school takes a pro-active approach to what can be a real problem in schools, and, by giving pupils strategies and skills to deal with difficulties we have been able to ensure that this has not become a major issue for our children.

If children feel they have a problem they are encouraged to talk with a teacher or with the principal.

Bookbags

Pupils in Junior classes will often bring home school bookbags containing reading material. Please make sure that the reading is heard and that the books and bags are returned to school.

Board of Trustees

The board meets regularly and meeting dates and times of meetings will be published in the school newsletter as well as being on the school website. Parents are welcome to come to meetings, which are held in the staffroom.

Minutes are held in the office and displayed on the school website.

Book Club

Children have the opportunity to buy books through Scholastic Book Clubs about 4 times a year and will bring home brochures and order forms.

Cheques should be made out to the school.

Banking

School banking is available through ASB. Specific details will be published in the newsletter.

C

Camp

Senior children have the opportunity to participate in an EOTC cycle which gives them the chance to experience a camp at least once in their time at Thorndon.

We strongly urge parents to support these activities which are always a highlight in a child's time at school.



Cellphones

We are happy for children to bring cell phones to school but require that children from NE to Year 6 hand them in at the office before school and to collect them at the end of the day.

Year 7 and 8 children are allowed to keep their phones with them as they are able to make some use of them for curriculum work. This is seen as a privilege and misuse of phones will result in loss of the privilege.

The school will take all reasonable care but it needs to be clear that children bring these to school at their own risk. The same applies to iPods and other MP3 players, as well as to any other electronic equipment or valuables.

Chess

The school has a very strong chess club and we enjoy considerable success in local and regional tournaments. In 2009 our senior team represented Wellington in the National Championships and in 2010 our junior team did the same. Each year the school holds a chess tournament and numbers participating grow year by year. In 2010 almost a third of the school took part.

Choir

Each year the school forms a choir to participate in the Artsplash festival run by the City Council.

Numbers are limited.

College

The secondary schools in Wellington send out prospectuses and enrolment forms in the middle of the year.

If you have a child in Year 8 it is important to make sure that he or she is enrolled early.

Please note that entry to a zoned school is dependent on where you live, not on the location of this school.

Communication

We communicate with parents in a number of ways. Every Thursday a newsletter goes out, either as a hard copy or – our preference – as an emailed link to the website. Teachers use group and individual emails to keep in touch with parents and the office will from time to time send out an email notice. We also have the capability to text everyone and this is an approach we use from time to time.

All classes have a blog or ning (a closed social networking site) though these have been less successful as a means of keeping in touch with everyone.

In 2011 we are intending to explore the use of Facebook as a means of communication.

Computers

The school has a ratio of about 1 computer to every 5 children and is committed to maintaining or improving this ratio.

The computers are used to enhance and support all areas of the curriculum.

Children are not allowed to bring games disks from home to use on the computers.

The school is networked and all classrooms have access to the internet through a high speed fibre optic link.

During 2010 we began discussions on the idea of having a digital classroom where every child has a netbook. These discussions will continue through 2010.

Curriculum

From time to time staff will organise and present evenings or lunchtime sessions on aspects of the local and national curriculum, especially when new material is introduced.

By attending these sessions you can become better informed about the school curriculum.



D

Dental Clinic

The Dental Service bases two nurses at Thorndon for a period each year and children from the school are examined at this time and referred for treatment at another clinic. At other times parents can contact the dental service on 027 241 8755.

Digital classroom

During 2010 we began discussions on the concept of a digital classroom. Essentially this would be a classroom in which every child has a laptop or netbook computer. We would enter an arrangement with one of our suppliers to enable parents to buy or lease computers supplied to the school's specifications at a favourable rate. There are a number of questions which need to be addressed before we can progress this idea, not the least of which is that of equity of access. These discussions will continue in 2011.

At the same time we are exploring the concept of developing co-operative learning approaches using large screens to enable groups of children to work together using ICT.

Both these initiatives have considerable cost implications and need careful consideration.

We are also working with the Wellington Loop to see what possibilities exist for accessing teaching expertise from other schools across the net. Language learning for the senior school is one area of particular interest.

Donation

The school asks every parent for a donation each year.

This is an extremely important part of the school's income and, while it is classed as a voluntary donation, we rely heavily on it.

We are more than happy to have these paid in instalments. We had a very good return rate on donations in 2010 and in 2011 we are hoping for a 95% return.



E

Earthquake/ Emergencies

In the event of a major earthquake or other civil emergency, children will be held at school until collected by a parent or other adult authorised to collect them or until other instructions have been given by Civil Defence authorities.

As part of our procedures for such an event, we ask that you send in a list of up to four adults authorised to collect your child.

Children are given instruction at school on what to do in the event of an earthquake or fire and these procedures are practised from time to time.

Email

Each teacher has a school email address and parents may contact teachers using these. We will do our best to make sure that any queries are responded to within 24 hours.

It is extremely useful to the school if we have parent's email addresses and we encourage you to include these with your contact details. Teachers send out newsletters and class notes by email and we also email a link to the weekly newsletter to about 80% of parents rather than sending home a hard copy – which may not arrive at its intended destination.

EOTC

The school is committed to the practice of Education Outside the Classroom in its broadest sense. Because of our location we regard the city itself as one of our major resources and will make frequent use of opportunities to visit the central city area.

Over the course of their time here children can generally expect to go on a camp in the senior school, do an overnight stay away from the school in Years 5 and 6 and, in Years 3 and 4 experience an overnight Noho Marae in the hall. Circumstances change each year however and there is no commitment to an annual school camp.

Enrolment Scheme

The school roll has grown hugely over the past few years and the school's small site has made it necessary to put an enrolment scheme in place. This allows the board of trustees to manage the school roll to prevent overcrowding.

Children who live within the home zone have an automatic right to attend the school regardless of the roll. Details of the scheme are held in the office and are also on the website.

EnviroSchools The school has been involved in the EnviroSchools programme since 2007 and has achieved the full bronze award. We are now working towards the silver award. You will hear more about this during the year and you may see members of the Enviro Group, one of our enrichment groups, around the school in their T Shirts.

Extension The school operates a comprehensive extension and enrichment programme which gives children the opportunity to experience activities not generally available in a regular classroom programme as well as allowing enrichment in specific curriculum areas. Some of the activities are run by interested parents. If you feel you have something you could offer please let us know.

Entertainment Book As part of our fundraising programme we sell the Entertainment Book each year and per head, we are one of the most successful selling groups in Wellington. Information on this will come through the newsletter.



F

Fair The school's major fund raising event is the **Thorndon Fair**, which is held on the first Sunday in December. Tinakori Road is closed off and the school, in addition to having stalls of its own, lets out stall space to more than 300 other stall holders, some of whom come from as far away as Auckland and Christchurch.

There is a huge amount of work involved in the organisation of the event and there is an expectation that every parent will commit some time to the fair either in the lead up or on the day itself.

Fundraising While the fair is our major fundraising activity we do have a small programme of other fundraising activities and you will be informed of these through the school newsletter. We are always keen to have parents involved in the organisation and running of these activities. In 2011 we hope to repeat what was a very successful Art Auction held in 2009.

G

Goal Setting

In 2011, following the completion of the formal testing we carry out early in Term 1, we will be holding Goal Setting meetings. These meetings with child, parents and teacher will be to establish learning goals for the first half of the year. These goals will be reported on and discussed at the Three Way Conferences held later in the year. We hope to have all parents come to these meetings.

H

Hats

As part of trying to make the school 'sunsafe' we require children to bring hats to school and to wear them whenever they are outside between 10:00am and 3:00pm.

We face a battle each year, particularly with senior pupils, to ensure that they are wearing hats and that the hats will achieve what they are meant to achieve – beanies don't! You can help by making sure that children bring **suitable** brimmed hats.

Healthy Eating

The school tries to encourage healthy eating habits and we ask parents to reinforce what we are trying to do by providing healthy lunches.

Holiday Care

During the four main holiday breaks, a holiday programme may be run at the school. Notice is given through the school newsletter.

Homework

Research evidence indicates very strongly that formal homework is of little value to primary school children and may even have a negative effect. Our policy is to set very little homework beyond reading, spelling – to a particular level - and the learning of basic maths facts. We take the view that it is of at least as much value for parents to help their children by encouraging reading for pleasure and information, by listening to their children talk about matters of interest, by providing them with the opportunity to help at home, and by encouraging them in the pursuit of worthwhile interests. As a matter of interest there is research which indicates that one of the strongest indicators of later academic success or achievement is families sitting down at the table to eat together.

Hours

School begins at 9:00am and finishes at 3:00pm. Morning tea is from 10:30am until 10:50am and the lunch hour begins at 12:30pm and finishes at 1:30pm.

I

Illness

The school does not have the resources or the facilities to care for children who are unwell. When children become unwell at school parents will be phoned and asked to collect them.

Please do not send children back to school before they are well enough to take a full part in the classroom programme.

IEP

An IEP is an Individual Education Plan and all special needs children have IEPs which are developed by parents, teachers and specialists.

L

Lateness

Lateness is sometimes unavoidable, especially for those families who travel a long way to school but we ask that everyone makes a real effort to get their children to school on time. Every time a child arrives in the room late they disrupt not only their own learning but that of the rest of the class.

Lunches

The school has an arrangement with outside providers to supply lunches.

On Fridays children can order from Subway and from Tuesday to Friday they are able to order lunch from Wholly Bagels.

Menus and price lists are available from the office and a copy is attached to this pack.

Children bring their order to school in a sealed envelope which has the correct money inside and has the child's name, room number and order on the outside. **No change will be given.**

Orders are to be taken to the office when children arrive at school and must be in by 9:15am.

Children are also able to order online from Urban Harvest.

Children are generally not permitted to leave the school grounds to buy their lunches

Library

The school has a well stocked and well equipped library which relies heavily on parent help and donations. Some senior and middle classes make use of the Wellington Public Library on a fortnightly basis.

Lost Property

Each year the school collects an astonishing amount of lost property. This is kept in a container in the hall. From time to time items are displayed so that children can identify their property and reclaim it. Once or twice a term unclaimed clothing is collected and taken to one of the charitable organisations.

Parents can help reduce the problem by making certain that clothing is named.

M

Manual

Year 7 and 8 pupils travel to Mt Cook School for technicraft once each week. This programme involves the children in various aspects of technology education – Cooking, sewing, woodwork, metalwork (in the old language) and film-making. A charge is made to cover some of the costs of this programme.

Medicine

Please try to avoid sending medicines to school for teachers to administer. It is possible for doctors to prescribe medicines which do not need to be taken during school hours.

Some children need to keep inhalers or other emergency medication at school and these should be taken to the office.

Money

We discourage children from bringing money to school unless it is absolutely necessary.

When they do bring money they should give it to their teacher or hand it in to the office for safe keeping.

N

Netball

The school has netball teams which play on Saturday mornings at Newlands College during the winter terms. Parent help is essential to allow us to continue this.

Newsletter

A newsletter is sent home every Thursday. This will keep you up to date with school activities as well as community events. We will try not to send notices home on other days though this is sometimes unavoidable.

Parents are welcome to send in items and notices for the newsletter. If your child does not give you the newsletter on Thursday – **ask for it**.

Spare copies are available from the office.

We encourage parents to give us their e-mail addresses so that we can send out a link to the newsletter which is posted on the school website. The address for the website is www.thorndon.school.nz

New Children

Parents intending to enrol their 5 year olds at Thorndon are invited to bring them in on Tuesday mornings, either from 9:00 to 10:30 or from 11:00 till 12:30 for the three weeks prior to enrolment. This can help ease the transition for the child.

Parents are expected to stay with their child during this time.

New Parents

Each year we host new parents at an evening where they can meet with school staff and board members. We do this twice a year and it is an opportunity for new families to meet each other and to talk with teachers from across the school. Parents will receive an invitation to these events.

O

Office Hours

The office is staffed between 8:30am and 4:00pm each day. If the phone is not answered please leave a message on the answerphone.

P

Parking

Parking is at a premium in the area and people often park in the driveway. Please try to avoid this as we need to keep the entrance clear in case of an emergency. We ask also that you do not park in the Speech/Language Clinic parking area at 27 Hobson Cres. Any parking there is for staff or for parents bringing their children in to see a therapist or resource teacher. The Resource teacher Literacy itinerates round some 26 schools in Wellington and it is important that she is able to get in and out of her office area.

If you are dropping your children off at the Murphy St entrance please try not to block the pool parking area.

Phys Ed

Children are involved in regular PE and we ask your assistance in making sure that they have suitable clothing and footwear.

Parent Support

The school welcomes parents, and if you would like to spend some time helping in your child's room, helping with reading programmes, preparation of materials or in the library, please let your classroom teacher know.

Parent Tutoring

Every year a number of parents volunteer their time to help with a reading programme as parent tutors. Training is given by the RT: Lit and we need people for a block of 1½ hours each day.

Please consider offering some time to this programme. In 2008 we also had parents coming in to provide support in maths for a number of children. This proved very successful and we intend to carry on with this in 2011 if we can get parents to help.



R

Reporting

During the year teachers report to parents in a number of ways, often informally. You are welcome to phone at any time to discuss your child's progress. Please be aware that teachers are busy and have many commitments outside classroom hours.

Each child will have a goal setting meeting in Term 1 after our formal testing has been done and late in Term 2 there will be a three way student led conference. A written report is sent out late in Term 4. A more detailed explanation of the reporting system is available from classroom teachers.

RT: Lit

The school has a Resource Teacher of Literacy attached to the staff. This teacher provides assistance in the area of literacy learning to children and schools in the northern suburbs. Referrals to the services come from schools within that area. The clinic is located at 27 Hobson Crescent.

Phone: **472 0168**

S

Science Fair

Every few years the school holds a science or technology fair for all pupils. For some Year 7/8 pupils a science fair is held more frequently. Parents can play a valuable role in helping their children. A number of the Year 7/8 projects go forward to the regional science and technology fair and we have enjoyed considerable success with these.

Scooters

Scooters have become very popular over recent years, and, while we do not object to children riding them to or from school if parents are agreeable, we do not allow them to be used in the school grounds because of the lack of space.

There is a rack on the wall of the hall for children to hang their scooters during the school day.

Skateboards/ Rollerblades

We ask that children do not use skateboards or roller blades at school as space is at a premium and the risk of an accident is too great.

- Sport** One afternoon a week, Y5– Y8 children take part in sports activities either at school or with other schools. We often ask for parent assistance with supervision and transport for these activities.
- We also have a number of teams playing sport outside school hours. Netball teams play every Saturday during Terms 2 and 3 and Waterpolo teams compete at Kilbirnie Pool on Monday evenings during Terms 1 and 4 while 3 junior girls football teams take part in a Sunday competition during the winter. We also have teams competing in a summer netball league. While teachers are involved these teams are very much dependent on the involvement of parents as coaches and managers.
- Stage Challenge** Every two years the senior school takes part in Stage Challenge, competing against secondary schools from across Wellington. This is a huge undertaking for a relatively small school and an immense amount of learning takes place.
- Staff Meetings** The whole staff is involved in staff meetings on Monday afternoons and in team planning meetings on Tuesday afternoons.
- On Thursdays teachers may be attending IEP meetings for special needs children.
- Please keep this in mind when phoning or trying to make appointments. It is not always easy for teachers to free themselves.
- Stationery** The school now carries only a limited stock of stationery and, apart from junior classes, children will need to buy their stationery outside the school.
- New Entrant children are asked to pay \$7:00 per term and this will cover all their stationery needs. Parents will be invoiced for this.
- Stationery lists are available by visiting the School Supplies website www.myschool.co.nz .
- Sun Hats** The school has adopted a policy of requiring children to wear a suitable sun hat when they are outside between 10:00am and 3:00pm. Children not wearing a sun hat will have to stay inside during morning interval and lunch times.
- Please make sure your child has a suitable hat – one with a brim.
- Sweets** Please make sure that you child does not bring sweets, gum or canned drinks to school.
- Swimming** During the summer, swimming at Thorndon Pool is a major part of our PE programme.

All children are expected to take part unless there is a medical reason for not doing so.

There is a charge for using the pool and you will be invoiced for this.

T

Taxis

Children from Kimi Ora School are collected by taxi at the end of the school day. As a result Turnbull St can become quite congested. Please bear this in mind if you are collecting children from there. This situation will change during the course of the year when Kimi Ora relocates.

Telephone

Please remember if you are phoning the school, that teachers are not generally available to take calls during class time.

Pupils are not encouraged to use the phone unless it is for school or class business.

The school is classified as a business so all outgoing calls are charged for.

Three Way Conferences

Over the 2nd and 3rd terms parents are invited to pupil directed three way conferences involving the pupil, the teacher and the parents. At these conferences children will talk about their learning, showing examples and presenting evidence, and examining how well they have done in terms of meeting the goals set in Term 1. At these meetings new goals will be set for the remainder of the year.

Parent participation is vital if these meetings are to be worthwhile.

Touch Rugby

Touch Rugby teams will play in after school competitions during the first and fourth terms if there is sufficient interest and parent help is available.

Traffic Lights

There is a lights controlled crossing in Murphy St outside the school and children on Road Patrol manage this crossing before and after school. This is a difficult job which asks a great deal of the children. Your cooperation in making sure you do not cross against the lights will make their job a great deal easier.



V

Valuables

The school cannot guarantee the security of valuable items children may bring to school. Please make sure that they do not bring along expensive toys or jewellery.

Visitors

Visitors to the school should report to the office as the first point of contact.

W

Waterpolo

Each year a number of children from Y5 up are given the opportunity to play waterpolo for the school in a competition run at the Kilbirnie Aquatic Centre. The competition takes place on Monday evenings during the first and last terms.

Website

The school has its own website and the newsletter is put up on this each week. If you have ideas for the site or for links, please let us know.

The address is:

<http://www.thorndon.school.nz>