

Thorndon School Newsletter

10/2008

www.thorndon.school.nz
office@thorndon.school.nz

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principal@thorndon.school.nz

There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction

Winston Churchill

Action List

Have you sent in your email address for the newsletter?

Have you paid your school donation?

Have you paid your activity fee?

Dear Parents

Kia ora

During the holidays I had an email from a parent which made me think. She had noticed that many newsletters seem to mention how busy and tired we all are, and that it doesn't sound as if we are having much fun. I went back to have a look and she is quite right, there is a lot of brief comment on time, time pressure and busy-ness. So, a new leaf for this term. We will take it as a given that it has started with a hiss and a roar, that it will be busy and that it will go past very quickly. That done I won't mention it any more - except to say that this has been a very intense week with ERO in the school! She also suggested that perhaps I could put a box in the newsletter listing particular ways in which parents might be able to help and I will explore this more with the staff. There are always things to be done but I am conscious that everyone nowadays seems to be pressed for time.

The face of the school has changed this week with two new staff members having started. I would like to welcome Heather Courtney and Rebecca Nicholls to the staff. With ERO having been in the school for the first three days I feel as if I have hardly spoken to them and I might have to go and introduce myself today. Heather is working in Room 1 with the Year 5/6 class previously taught by Diana Evans. Heather has a great deal of experience with this particular age group and will be a valuable addition to the middle school team. Rebecca, who is in Room 4 with a Year 3/4 class has come to us from Birchville School where she has been teaching similar classes for the past two or three years. New teachers always bring a slightly different dynamic to a school, and with a different set of skills and experiences they can help add a little charge to the existing staff. We look forward to working with Heather and Becca and I am sure they will both make a valuable contribution to the school's operations.

In other staff news, Natasha Jackson who manages our extension and enrichment programmes, gave birth last week to a baby girl. I am sure you will all join us in sending our best wishes to Tash. We expect to see her back later in the term to help with Japanese, and she expects to return to part-time part-time work in the new term.

The last piece of staff information is the departure of Nadine Humphrys from her accounts position as I mentioned last term. I cannot thank Nadine enough for the commitment she has shown recently. Nadine was planning to finish up at the end of last term but we had been unable to appoint a suitable replacement so she volunteered to carry on through this first week while we had ERO here. She has set us up for the rest of the term and has made life so much easier than it might have been. Her farewell has been somewhat over-taken by the retirement of Diana Evans at the end of last term and the arrival of ERO this week but we hope to be able to celebrate next week - though I don't really feel that celebrate is the right word! Nadine's contribution to the school has, as I have already said, extended far beyond the responsibilities of her accounts work and we will miss her enormously. The fact of her departure does not seem entirely real and the real impact will not hit us until after she has gone. We all wish her the very best for whatever she does next and genuinely hope that she will stay in touch.

THORNDON SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Term 2 Calendar

May 13	Junior School to Karori Reserve.
May 14	School Cross Country
May 19	Author visit to school.
May 20	Central Zone Cross Country
May 20	Group of Y5/6 to Writers Workshop at Museum of City and Sea.
Jun 2	Queen's Birthday – school closed
Jun 3	Senior School to Te Papa for Matariki
Jun 5	Storylines performance at school
Jun 10	Wellington Girls College – School in Action – Open Day
Jun 25	Class Act Opera at school
Jul 4	Term Ends – 3:00pm

Please note a couple of date changes. I had the wrong date for Queen's Birthday weekend and the date of the cross country has changed.

New Pupils

We have two new children this week. They are:

Jorja Wilson	Y1	Room 8 - Harakeke
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James Gooch	Y8	Room 6 - Manuka
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James was at Thorndon way back when he was in Year 1 and has recently moved back into the area.

We welcome James and Jorja and their families and look forward to our association with them.

While we are welcoming people I should say that we are delighted to see the return of Seb Black who gave everyone such a scare last term.

Apart from a brace around his neck which will have to stay there for some considerable time he appears little the worse for wear.

It is fantastic to see him back.

Maori Language Classes

We are still pursuing this so do not despair. Something will almost certainly happen later this term and we will contact those people who have expressed an interest in these classes.

We are still happy obviously to hear from anyone who is interested but has not let us know.

Successes

At Anzac weekend Brianna Anglesey entered the Matamata Red Star awards, winning the song-writing section with a song she wrote after 3 guitar lessons with Andrew. This win gives her entry into the Entertainer of the Year competition in October where she will be competing with adult songwriters.

Wonderful stuff Brianna, and we look forward to hearing the song in an assembly.

School Fees/Money

Over the holidays we have done an analysis of the payments we have asked for there seems to be a lot outstanding.

We have asked for the following amounts:

School Donation – and please be aware that this <u>is</u> a donation.	\$200 or \$330 for 2 or more children
Activity Fee – Term 1	\$40
Swimming – Terms 1 and 4	\$20
Photocopying	\$10
Tech (Years 7/8 only)	\$15 per term
Junior Stationery (R8 only)	\$7 per term
School Camp (Y7/8 only)	\$250

We will be sending out invoices shortly and would be grateful if outstanding balances could be paid as soon as possible.

Activity fees for Term 2 have been set at \$30.

This seems a lot of money I know but without it we are unable to offer many of the programmes and activities that we have available. The school donation plays a significant part in our ability to provide 10 classroom teachers and unless we do this we have even more problems with class sizes than we do at the moment.

I am always hopeful at budget time and perhaps with a substantial surplus and an election looming schools might get something significant this year. We live in hope.

Art

Neal Palmer is starting up his lunchtime art club again next week and we would like to collect some shoe boxes for his programme.

If you have bought shoes recently and don't need the boxes we would love to get them.

Health Curriculum Consultation

One of the activities we are supposed to undertake every two years is to consult with the community about the Health Curriculum.

I neglected to do this last year and so I have attached a questionnaire to this newsletter.

I would be grateful if as many of these as possible could be returned to school in the next week or two.



Health Questionnaire

Health and PE is one of the eight essential learning areas identified in *The New Zealand Curriculum* and we are required to consult with parents on this. Could you please fill out this form and return it to school as soon as possible.

The curriculum statement identifies seven key areas of learning, four of which are more closely related to Health Education than to PE. These four areas are *Mental Health*, *Sexuality Education*, *Food and Nutrition*, and *Body Care and Physical Safety*.

Can you please rank these four in order of importance to you.

<input type="text"/>	Mental Health
<input type="text"/>	Sexuality Education
<input type="text"/>	Food and Nutrition
<input type="text"/>	Body Care and Physical Safety

What, in each of these four areas, do you consider important for students to learn and why?

Health Areas	Comment
Mental Health	
Sexuality education	
Food and Nutrition	
Body Care and Physical Safety	

Name _____ My child is in Year

The other 3 strands in the curriculum statement relate to PE, Sports and Outdoor Education. The table below shows, very broadly, what is currently covered by our PE programme.

Annual PE Programme			
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
FITNESS			
Swimming	Large Ball Skills	Gymnastics	Swimming
Summer Sports Skills	Winter sports Skills	Winter Sports Skills	Summer Games Skills
Skipping	Minor Games	Cross country	Skipping
Athletics			Athletics
Team Skills			

Can you please comment briefly on what you see as the most important aspects of a PE programme and on any modifications you believe we should make and on what sort of weighting we should give to the various activities listed above.

We have a quite comprehensive range of Outdoor Education and, in its widest sense, our children have many opportunities to participate in Education Outside the Classroom

The following table shows, again, very broadly, the range of activities we intend children should take part in over the time they are in each of the three areas of the school – Junior, Middle and Senior. This is an ideal and these activities may not necessarily take place each year. This is dependent on other curriculum and time pressures and the skills and interests of teachers

EOTC			
Junior		Middle	Senior
Years 1/2	Years 3/4	Years 5/6	Years 7/8
In school activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Scavenger hunts. o Problem solving o Making shelters 	In school activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Noho Marae in the hall. o Problem solving o Orienteering 	Out of school activities within Wellington <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Over night stay at a marae, the zoo, the Botanical Gardens. o City based adventure Learning – kayaking, rock climbing, outdoor cooking, roller blading, cross curricular activities 	Out of School activities away from Wellington. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Senior Camp experience rotation – week long camp, swap with a rural school, marae stay, tramp – e.g. Abel Tasman,

Can you please comment briefly on how important you think an Outdoor Education Programme is, and on the sorts of activities you think children should be engaging in.