

Thorndon School Newsletter

16/2009

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11 June 2009
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Play is our brain's favourite way of learning.

Action List

Activity fees for Term 2 are \$25:00 and are due now.

Don't forget school banking tomorrow

Junior School Information session on Tuesday.

Have you sent in your donation?

Dear Parents

Kia ora.

Looking at our calendar for the term I am astonished at how short it now is. The end of the term is approaching rapidly.

Tonight is the culmination of weeks of hard work – sweat, tears and possibly even minor amounts of blood – for the Year 7/8 group competing in Stage Challenge. There are not many primary or intermediate schools which take part in the senior competition and we are up against performances of an astonishing standard. Tonight our pupils will be on stage with Wellington College, Wellington Girls College and Wellington East Girls College. Our sixty five 11, 12 and 13 year olds from a school with a roll of 240 will be competing against 16, 17 and 18 year olds from schools with a thousand or more pupils. Activities like these, aligned with but not directly part of the curriculum, are what children remember when they reflect on their time at primary school, and the learning that takes place, again, not directly aligned to the previous curriculum - is immense. Very much to the fore of the new curriculum are the key competencies, thinking, managing self, participating and contributing, using language, symbols and texts, and relating to others and activities like camps, Stage Challenge and school productions are built on these competencies, as much of our adult lives is. Most of the staff will be attending and we are very much looking forward to a performance I am sure we are going to be proud of.

Also this evening we have two of our children contributing to a time capsule being prepared by the Royal Society as they get ready to begin construction of what is a somewhat controversial new building to go up across the road. One of our Year 4 children – Connor Smith – and one of our Year 8 girls- Hannah Saul – have each written a little piece about science and scientists in the future, and these will be placed in a time capsule to be opened in 50 years time. Time and space mean that I won't get these pieces in this week's newsletter but I hope to have them in next week.

Anyone who saw the front page of the Dominion Post yesterday may have recognised the school hall which was the background of a photo of the three girls I mentioned in last week's newsletter, one a past pupil, one a current pupil and one a cousin these two. Looking at the photograph you will instantly have worked out which one is currently at Thorndon School, strutting, pouting and hitting the high notes.

While I am celebrating the achievements of our children, I should mention that Asia Brownlie and Sian Williams-Jones have designed the brochure and registration package for the Wellington Wairarapa Primary Principals Conference using art work from around the school.

There is a common thread running through these achievements and activities with all of them being to do with the arts and creativity, things we believe are important in the broad education we offer to children.

There are a couple of return slips in this newsletter but please feel free to send in your comments and ideas by email rather than on the paper slip. This gives you the freedom to expand on your answers and to give us a little more information.

Bill Sutton

THORNDON SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Board Elections

Everyone should now have received nomination forms for the board by-election. If you have not received one or you have mislaid it please contact Hela, our returning officer.

Nominations need to be received by the school on June 20, just a little over a week away, and it is quite legitimate for someone to nominate themselves.

I put in the newsletter last week the contact details for current board members and those stepping down and they appear below again. I am sure that any of these people will be happy to talk to anyone who has any questions about the board and the way it operates. I am also happy to answer any questions I can.

Mandy Hancock	john_mandy@paradise.net.nz
Carol Weston	carolweston@xtra.co.nz
Carleen Needham	jacnz@paradise.net.nz
Karen Scott-Howman	scott-howman@xtra.co.nz
Anaru Mill	anaru@hingstonmill.co.nz

Contact Details

Most years we send home a contact list for each class which contains the names of children in the class and their home phone number. This year we have neglected to do this but it is never too late!

Parents can elect to be on the list or not and there is a return slip attached to this newsletter which we ask you to return **if you are not happy to have your contact details on this list**. Once we have these back we will provide the list to everyone in your child's class.

If this is not to take too long we will need to set a deadline for getting these forms back and then will act on the information we have received. Please get the return slip back by Monday of next week, June 15 **if you do not want your details on the list**.

We will assume that if there is no return you are happy to be on the list.

Term 2 Calendar

Jun 11	Stage Challenge Y7/8.
Jun 16	Senior Girls Self Defence.
Jun 16	Inter Zone Cross Country.
Jun 16	Junior Curriculum information – Maths.
Jun 16	Wellington High School to talk with Year 8.
Jun 17	Senior Girls Self Defence.
Jun 23	BoT Meeting.
Jun 23	Junior Curriculum information – Assessment.
Jun 24	Invitational Chess Competition.
Jun 25	Dental Caravan on site.
Jun 29	Y 4-8 to performance at Capital E.
Jul 1	Wellington High School Open Evening.
Jul 3	Term Ends.

Discovery Learning Materials

Last week I mentioned that teachers and parents would like a number of items to help with Discovery Learning.

I can be more specific this week about the cooking utensils that would be useful.

- Frying Pan
- Grater
- Mixing Bowls
- Hand Beaters
- Oven Trays
- Saucepans

Secondary School

Enrolment and information processes are now well under way for secondary schools and we now have secondary school brochures available for:

- Wellington Girls College
- Wellington High School
- Wellington College
- Wellington East Girls College

Most secondary schools will have held open days by the end of this term and we have had a visit from the principal of Wellington Girls College and will be visited by staff and students from Wellington High on July 1.

I urge parents to make sure that their Year 8 children are enrolled at a secondary school as soon as possible.

Contact List

Please ensure that my contact details are **not** included on my child's class contact list.

Name _____ Child's Name _____

Room _____

Information Sessions

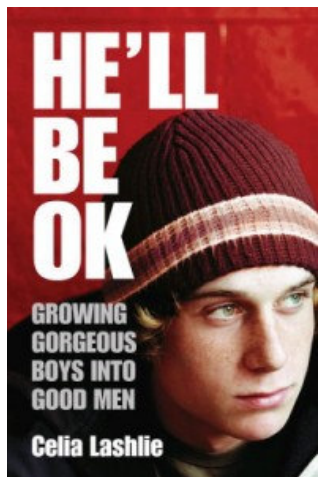
Junior school staff will be holding another parent information session next week, this time on Maths. Last week's session on Discovery Learning was very well attended and one parent commented that it had connected a lot of dots. She is now able to make sense of what her child is talking about. The session on maths should help give you background not just on the Numeracy but also on those other aspects of Maths that we teach.

Tuesday June 16, 1:30pm in the staffroom.

**Waterloo School Presents
Renowned Speaker and Author**

Celia Lashlie

Growing Gorgeous Boys into Good Men



Join no-nonsense, straight talking and often humorous Celia Lashlie as she offers her insight into the world of boys. A must see for all men.

Learn some helpful tips to better understand and relate with our young males delivering them safely to becoming good men.

**WATERLOO SCHOOL HALL
HARDY ST, LOWER HUTT
WEDNESDAY 24TH JUNE
7.30PM**

Tickets may be purchased at:

- Waterloo School office
- Waterloo Bookshop or
- Contact Mandy on 566-1275 or eel@xtra.co.nz

**Tickets
\$10**

Second Language Learning

At the moment we seem to be consulting parents about all sorts of things and it may be time we took a breath so we can take a look at the information we have, analyse it and see what it means for us.

There is another question though that we need to ask you about.

The new curriculum includes a requirement for schools to offer some second language learning for senior pupils – Years 7 and 8 - and I have no doubt that sooner or later this requirement will be extended to other year groups. There is a great deal of work to be done to build capability in schools and among teachers before this occurs effectively and consistently across the country. In the meantime schools manage with whatever skills are available. We have been extremely lucky over some years in being able to offer, in classroom situations, German, Italian and now Japanese. We have also been able to provide parents opportunities for their children to access Chinese language learning, Italian and Te Reo in parent funded after school classes.

We have plans to extend our 2nd language learning across the school with Japanese – because we have a staff member able to take it and to provide assistance to other teachers.

This is our default position but we would like to know from you what your preference would be for a 2nd language in the school. I will also be asking local secondary schools what they offer but with children going on to so many different schools this may not be particularly useful.

Te Reo we have in a different category, not counting it as being our 2nd language learning requirement. All classes have regular access to Te Reo and Tikanga lessons as part of the school programme and we employ Whaea Lisa and Whaea Kahu for this. The recent release of a curriculum document for the teaching of Te Reo Maori in mainstream schools will help classroom teachers reinforce their work.

Second Language Learning

If the school is offering a second language I would prefer it to be one the following (in order of preference)

Name _____ Child's name and Room _____

Holiday Programme

As most of you will know, we do not offer a holiday programme at the school as a matter of course. There are a number of reasons for this, one of them being that we feel that it is always good for children to have a break from the school. There is also an administrative aspect to it. If we offer a programme as a school activity someone from the office needs to be available to cover off the finances and arrange wages for the workers. Sometimes the YMCA runs and administers programmes at the school and sometimes there are other arrangements made.

These holidays Jude, Jessie and Eric from the After School Care programme will be running a programme from the school hall. You will be making arrangements for this programme directly with Jude and Jessie, not with the office as this is not a school operation. We are making the space available to them for this programme but it is not a school programme and is not OSCAR approved meaning that parents may not be able to get subsidies through WINZ. I should note here that the school does not have OSCAR approval for any holiday programmes though we do for our After School Care programme.

If you are interested in enrolling your child in this programme, which will have limited numbers, please see Jude at ASC and get an enrolment form from her.

WELLINGTON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support on many subjects, including leisure activities and clubs, consumer issues, education, tenancy, employment, legal issues, immigration, neighbourhood disputes, health service and family or relationship issues. Specialist services include free budgeting advice, free legal advice for an initial appointment, a Justice of the Peace service and a consumer advocacy service that advocates on behalf of a client who has an ongoing problem. We have access to an interpreter if communicating in English is difficult.

Your local Citizens Advice Branch is at 7 Beauchamp Street in the Karori Community Centre (behind the Mobil Service Station). Opening hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10 am to 4 pm. and Tuesday and Friday, 11 am to 2 pm. You can contact us by phone **476 4595** or by visiting or by email at cab.karori@xtra.co.nz

Swine Flu

This is the name that seems to have stuck in spite of attempts to have it referred to as the H1N1 flu strain.

Some of you may have seen advice in the media that children returning from affected countries should be kept at home even if they have no flu symptoms.

I have copied below advice to schools from the Ministry which should clarify the current position. Thorndon is not, at present, asking that parents do this. The board will discuss this at its next meeting on June 23 and any change to this position will appear in the newsletter on June 25.

Children returning from overseas

A Ministry of Health letter of 2 June suggested that children returning to New Zealand from affected areas overseas, but who are **not** showing symptoms of flu, should be kept at home for a week.

This was background information for families and **not a directive**. Schools and ECE services are **not** expected to act on this suggestion.

The primary measures remain of personal hygiene and parents keeping students home if they are sick with flu symptoms. The Ministry of Health advises that parents keep children with flu symptoms at home and call their doctor whether they have been overseas to affected areas or not. Schools and ECE services should follow their normal practices in the event of children displaying symptoms of illness at school or in the ECE service.

Staff should also stay at home if they exhibit flu symptoms.

The Ministry of Health advises that all people should of course be aware of and on the look out for flu symptoms especially if they or their families have travelled in affected areas.

We are in an evolving situation and if conditions in New Zealand change, the Government may request that parents keep students at home if they have returned from affected areas overseas, regardless of whether or not they show symptoms of flu. If this eventuates, parents will receive advice from the Ministry of Health through public communications channels.

What would be useful for the school would be for everyone to make sure that all contact information is up to date in the unlikely event of full or partial closure of the school.