

16th February 2009



I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to our new students and their families, welcome to Willowbank School.

We also welcome Miss a student teacher from the United States who joins Miss Boniface and Room 25 for eight weeks.

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers,

This year the newsletter will be published on the Monday of every odd numbered school week. We hope that this will make it easier for you to keep up to date and be fully informed of events. This week we re-launch our School Website! It has taken somewhat longer than we envisaged but we are extremely happy with the layout and that teams will be able to post team events and messages easily on it for you to view. Our web address is www.willowbankschool.co.nz The website has up to date information concerning the school including event details and links to other organizations associated with the school. It is our aim to eventually do away with the paper newsletter (it will however always be available to those of you who prefer the paper copy) and have it posted on the website every second Monday. We hope you find the navigation of the website easy to use and the papers informative.

Congratulations to This Year's Young Leaders!

Congratulations to this year our **Awhina Captains**:

We know they are going to be fantastic school leaders.

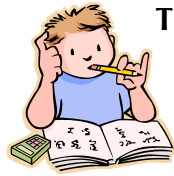
We would also like to congratulate our 2009 **peer meditators** who carry out such an important job in our school. Our peer meditators are listed on the Awhina Notice Board opposite Pekapeka Awhina, on the ICT wall.

We would also like to congratulate Blaine Juddery (Y4, Rm 20) who won the New Zealand Herald's junior summer photo

competition with a fantastic holiday shot of his mum.

Daily Notices

Each day the Awhina captains email the daily notices about events happening around the school to each classroom. The notices are then retrieved either by the class teacher or a class monitor and shared with the class. This year the daily notices will also be displayed in the Awhina Notice board for children to check and for parents to view.



Testing

Each year we use a range of assessments to gather information on the learning needs of each individual child. Some assessments are standardised tests which are completed nationally at set times and others are more informative and are used more regularly to assess ongoing learning.

This week the Year 4 to Year 6 children are involved in **AsTTle** and **PAT** testing. AsTTle stands for *Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning* (He Pūnaha Aromatawai mō te Whakaako me te Ako). It is an educational resource for assessing literacy and numeracy (in both English and Māori) developed for the Ministry of Education by the University of Auckland.

asTTle provides teachers, students, and parents with information about a student's level of achievement, relative to the curriculum achievement outcomes, for levels 2 to 6 and national norms of performance for students in years 4 to 12.

Once the tests are scored, the asTTle tool generates interactive graphic reports that allow teachers to analyse student achievement against curriculum levels, curriculum objectives, and population norms. This information is then used in the preparation and delivery of learning outcomes in each curriculum area.

PAT

Teachers use **PATs** (Progressive Achievement Tests) to assess listening comprehension in years 3 to 9 and to assess reading vocabulary,

reading comprehension and maths in years 4 to 9. PATs are marked according to specific standards, which give three types of results: stanines, percentiles and raw data.

The stanine and percentile marks give teachers a snapshot of the student's progress compared to their New Zealand peers (by age and by class). The raw data helps teachers understand the areas they need to focus on and what students need to learn next.

These are very significant assessments, please may we ask that interruptions to your child's schooling week are kept to a minimum during testing. Thank you.

For more information on the range of assessment tools we use to find out how well students are doing go to: http://www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/parents/at-school-primary_e.php

Meet the Teacher Evening

We are looking forward to meeting with you all on Thursday evening at our *Meet the Teacher Evening*. During the evening you will have an opportunity to learn about the school focus for the year, attend team talks and meet your child's teacher and the team of teachers your child will be working with. We promise to keep it short and informative!

When: Thursday 19th February

Time: 6pm til 7pm

Place: Please meet in the school hall for a brief welcome and then team talks in: Team Kiwi – Kiwi Awhina

Team One –

Team Two –

Team Three –

Team Four –

Team Five –

Team Six –

Next Week.... Next week the leadership team will be involved in a number of Professional Learning days, including an ICTPD conference in Rotorua. This means that the team leaders will not be teaching their classes. We have made every endeavor to keep disruptions to a minimum and have ensured that the release day teacher or a teacher well known to the children is in the class over the week. Mrs Pether will be acting Principal from Wednesday to Friday – great practice for next term when she takes over Maraetai Beach school!

Up Coming Events

This Friday the Awhina Captains and Mrs Johnston have organized a coin trail to collect donations for the victims of the Victorian fires. All funds raised will be sent to the New Zealand Red Cross.

PTA meeting

Just a reminder that the PTA meet this Tuesday in the Staffroom at 7.30pm. Please come along and support our school.

Meet the Teacher Evening – Thursday 19th February 7pm

BoT meeting

The Willowbank Board of Trustees will have their first meeting for 2009 on Monday 23rd February at 7pm in the boardroom. You are very welcome to attend all Board meetings.

WATERWISE SAILING FOR YEAR SIX CHILDREN.

New Zealand is a country with a huge diversity of waterways, and a heritage of sports prowess on and in the water.

Our school has had the wonderful opportunity to join the Howick Schools' Waterwise Society which is a group consisting of four primary schools. The waterwise programme was developed to help promote safety, self-confidence, respect and enjoyment of our waterways, and their use.

Basic sailing skills in optimists, kayaking and water confidence are taught under strict trained adult supervision.

This programme is for year six students in terms one and four each year.

For us to be involved in this wonderful programme we need parents to volunteer to train as instructors. If you would be interested please contact Maureen Agnew by email, magnew@willowbankschool.co.nz

Have a lovely fortnight, I hope you manage to spend some time on our fabulous re-launched website!

Deidre Alderson

Principal