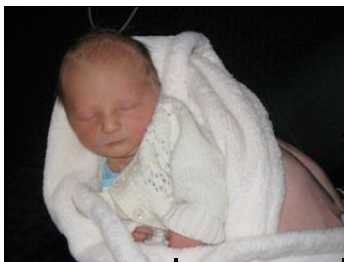


8th June 2009

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new children and their families.

Our Second Baby!

It is our pleasure to introduce Verna and Alex Cameron's lovely baby boy to our community. Riley was born at Auckland hospital on the 31st May. Riley was 11 days early and caught his parents by surprise. However he is just gorgeous (I got lots of cuddles last Tuesday night) and is doing very well. Congratulations to Verna and Alex.



PTA Trivia Night

I'm not one to boast, but it was my team that won the trivia quiz on Friday night. It just goes to show you it's not what you know but who you sit with that makes all the difference (so thanks team for making me look good).

We had a great night thanks to the efforts of Michelle and Sandra on the PTA who did a great job of organising this event. I would like to thank our sponsors:

Warehouse Stationery

SKiDs

Papatoetoe New World

TLC gym

Huge thanks also to David Wilcock for his excellent quizzical questions, James O'Brien for hosting and entertaining us throughout the evening, and Jane Danielson for scoring (even though she didn't accept bribes, we still won!).

Thanks to everyone who came along and made it such an enjoyable evening.

School Hours

School is open from 8.30am until 3.00pm each school day. The best time for children to arrive at school is between 8.30am and 8.45am. This gives them an opportunity to

talk with their peers and the teacher and to be ready for their learning tasks.

Children should not be at school before 8.15am. Although there is staff on site at this time they are not on duty and are often in meetings or preparing lessons, thus your children are not supervised. SKIDS offer a before school breakfast programme ensuring children are safely supervised until 8.30am when all teachers are in their classrooms.

Keeping Our Children Safe

After the events of last week it seems timely to discuss safety procedures in and around our school.

During the week classes went out to the road crossings to practice crossing the road safely. Children crossed both with and without the patrols. One of the main concerns for us is the number of children who need to cross roads that do not have a pedestrian crossing. This is why our *Walking School Bus* is invaluable.

It is our aim to encourage as many children as possible to use the *Walking School Bus* but for it to truly be successful we need your support. Many of you pick your children up after school and walk the route of the *Walking School Bus*. Would you be willing to help out once a week, fortnight or even a month? It takes as little as 10 minutes of your time. Please, please, please we desperately need your support. Please speak with Halina Varcoe in Room 2 if you are able to help. Thank you in anticipation.

Drop Off Zone in the Mornings.

The drop off zone is open to all traffic in the mornings. Please may I ask you to follow the cone line along the drop off zone, moving along as far as you are able before stopping to let your children out of your vehicle. Please do not pull out once your children are clear of your vehicle but continue moving along the 'Zone' with the line of traffic.

Due to the pressure on our staff car park the 'Visitor' car park is now 'Staff Parking' and is closed to casual parking. If you are coming into the school before or after school please park on the road. You are welcome to park in the Drop Off Zone

between 9.30am and 2.30pm (unless closed for buses).

The Drop Off Zone After School

Due to the large volume of afternoon traffic in a short time period and the danger this creates for our students the Drop Off Zone is restricted to parents with children in Year 1 and have young babies or mobility cards. If you have family or friends picking your children up after school please ask them to park on the road and walk to the school. Thank you.

Afternoon permits applications are available from Michelle in the office.

Allergies and Class Parties

We have a number of children at school with very serious and in some cases, life threatening food allergies and this means that we need to be extra vigilant when it comes to children sharing food.

Teachers will notify you at least one week prior to any class party they may be holding. This way we are able to ensure everyone is aware of any allergies in the class and you know that your child will be participating in a class party. Please check with your child's teacher before sending any food to share with the class.

Please remind your child that it is not ok to share their morning tea or lunch with other children. Thank you.

Pandemic Planning

Over the last couple of weeks there has been more and more discussion about the increasing numbers of people worldwide being infected with the influenza A bug. In Australia many schools have closed as many hundreds of people are quarantined at home. Closer to home, last week a Papatoetoe Early Education Centre had a child confirmed with the strain.

In a pandemic situation schools may need to close to ensure the risk of infection is minimised. In the event of Willowbank School needing to close you would be notified through our website. Our website would be kept up to date with day by day notices and home learning activities for the children.

It is vital that our student records are up to date. If you have changed phone numbers recently please let us know urgently.

To help minimise the risk of infection it is important that everyone follows these simple precautions.

1. Hand washing is the best way to limit cross infection.
2. Sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
3. Stay home if you have any flu-like symptoms. Children who present at school with symptoms will be sent home and a doctor's certificate will be needed on their return.
4. If travelling overseas please inform the school of your destination.

During the winter months we get all sorts of bugs, the best cure is being warm and cosy at home.

National Standards

The Ministry of Education has published the draft National Standards and are asking for feedback from both educationalists and parents.

The new standards will be used in all primary and intermediate schools from 2010. An important part of the National Standards is that schools will provide plain-language reports to parents about their children's progress against the standards.

We will be holding a parents meeting on Thursday 25th June to discuss these in full with you all. You are able to view a sample of the draft National Standards on www.teamup.co.nz/ParentsAndCommunity/NationalStandardsReporting.aspx and www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/Consultation/NationalStandards/ConsultationPackParent.aspx

We look forward to seeing you all at this very important meeting.

Have a great week,
Deidre Alderson
Principal