



Devonport Primary School

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4 February 2011

Senior Syndicate Newsletter - Term 1, 2011

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to what should be a rewarding and exciting 2011 school year. The first week was a very pleasing beginning to the year and we are delighted with the initial work effort and enthusiasm shown by all the Year 5 and 6 children.

We are certainly looking forward to working with a motivated and responsible group of children and have a varied and interesting year ahead of challenging work and activities.

I would like to extend a welcome to our two new senior school teachers, Miss Abbey-Lee McMahon and Mr Matthew Johnson. We are very pleased to have them as part of our teaching team and I am sure the children in the respective classes will have a tremendous year.

You may be aware that for a number of years we have functioned with two syndicates; Years 1 to 3 and Years 4 to 6. This year we are again having three syndicates, with the middle syndicate being lead by Mr Andy Brown.

The senior syndicate classes and teachers are as follows:

Year 5 Room 3 - Miss Abbey-Lee McMahon

Year 5 Room 6 - Mrs Beverley Booth

Year 6 Room 2 - Mr Matthew Johnson

Year 6 Room 1 - Mr Bruce Tilby

DP Release Teacher in Room 1 - Mrs Debbie Thompson

Beliefs and Standards

Each child in the senior classes will have already received a letter from their classroom teacher outlining their routines and expectations and some of the information in this letter is taken directly from those class letters.

It is important that we share with you our syndicate beliefs and standards for the beginning of the new school year. It is vital that the senior pupils we teach project a very positive and responsible image around the school and all senior class teachers have a similar approach to encouraging this and modelling appropriate standards. This is essential in terms of appropriate work quality and work effort. During the first few weeks we will be establishing classroom routines and where appropriate assessing the children in our classes. In this way, planning and learning needs of individual children can be better catered for.

This is also particularly important in terms of behaviour management and the reinforcement of appropriate manners and courtesies. Thank you to those parents who understood that having the senior children initially assemble in the school hall on the first day allowed for an ordered entry into the classroom for the first time and for a feeling of a fresh, organised start, rather than simply carrying straight on from last year.

School Hours

We often have children arriving at school very early in the morning, so it is important to remind parents that the classrooms at school are not open to the children until 8:30am. Please be aware that teachers are often at meetings or occupied preparing for the day before 8:30am and there is no active supervision. Any children who have to arrive early on a specific day and are not at school for an organised sports practice should report to the school office.

Homework

Homework is set and is related to the class and school programmes. It is usually given from Monday to Thursday nights, with Friday night and the weekend seen as quality time with the family. Extra-curricular activities out of school activities are also valued as educational.

Activities may include spelling, times-tables and short English activities. At various times we will be giving set homework activities at the beginning of each week with a variety of topics and mini projects.

In Year 5 and Year 6 children should have approximately 30 minutes of homework per school night. We are aware that a number of children have other commitments on certain days after school and this is why homework will often be with a completion time of a whole week.

Homework should be done willingly by children, with support from parents often important. It is equally important for parents not to take over and do the work for their children.

Swimming

Swimming is a key part of the physical education programme during the first term and all children are expected to take part. Could you please email, or send a note to the classroom teacher if your child is unable to swim on a particular day.

Curriculum

We have an action-packed term of work ahead. Our concept for the term is 'Learning to Learn.' Many of you will have read Mrs Hardcastle's comments in the school newsletter earlier in the week about the learning concept and we will be focusing on helping children understand what learning is, what affects learning and how they themselves learn. Children are being encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning and the value of 'student-voice' as part of the learning process will be actively explored.

Learning to Learn

Enduring Understanding: **Learning is about making connections and building meaning**

Essential Questions: **What is learning? What affects learning?**

Main Topics:

Literacy and Numeracy

Social Science (Identity, Culture and Organisation) - building a learning culture

Health (Relationships with other people)

Physical Education - focusing on swimming

Bike Safety and Internet Training

This term our Police Education Officer, Constable Julie Brown, is coming to school to provide bike safety training for the Years 3 to 6 children. This will take place during the week beginning 21st February and we will have a definitive timetable in place shortly. Constable Brown will also be working with the Year 5 and 6 children on internet safety, which we think is a very important consideration as they reach this level of the school.

Parent/Teacher/Pupil Conferences

Our first parent-teacher interviews, or more accurately Parent/Teacher/Pupil Conferences are scheduled for the 1st and 2nd of March. The timing of the senior interviews has been changed so that we can discuss initial test results and learning goals as early as practicable. More details will be forthcoming shortly.

Fair on the Hill

The annual school fair takes place on Saturday, 26th March 2011. Each year group will be given specific stalls and games to organise and staff, so please look out each week for key information coming home.

Reminder

Tabloid Sports / Meet the Teacher - Thursday, 16 February, beginning at 4:30 pm.

The programme will be as follows:

4:30pm to 5:30pm - Tabloid Sports

5:30 to 6:00pm - Family Picnic Tea

6:00pm to 7:00pm- Discussion with class teacher in classrooms.

Classroom teachers can be contacted via the school telephone, or by email:

Beverley Booth	-	beverleyb@ devonport.school.nz
Matthew Johnson	-	Matthewj@ devonport.school.nz
Abbey-Lee McMahon	-	abbeym@ devonport.school.nz
Debbie Thompson	-	debbiet@ devonport.school.nz
Bruce Tilby	-	brucet@ devonport.school.nz

Thank you for your consideration and continued interest.

Bruce Tilby

(Deputy Principal)