



SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Meadowbank School
68 Waatarua Road, Remuera, Auckland 1050

Phone: 520 3739

www.meadowbank.school.nz

✉ principal@meadowbank.school.nz

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Dear Parents and Caregivers

We are now into the second half of Term 1. Easter is almost with us and the swimming programme is coming to an end. I also note with interest that our guest presenter from a couple of weeks back, Nathan Wallis, now has a regular slot on Seven Sharp after the TV1 News.

NZEI UNION MEETING

- The current collective employment agreement for teachers has come to an end & the teachers' union, the NZEI is entering negotiations with the State Services Commission.
- You will be aware of the extreme teacher shortage that currently exists. Amongst the conditions being sought by the NZEI is a substantial pay hike for teachers in an effort to make the job more desirable.
- Unions and union members are allowed to call and attend two paid meetings per year. Teachers who are NZEI members will be attending a meeting to discuss employment condition claims next **Tuesday, 20 March at 1.30pm**.
- The Ministry requires that schools remain open on the days that teachers are attending meetings. HOWEVER for 750 students we have only 10 teachers.
- Effectively lessons cannot be taught and supervision compromised.
- Should parents wish to take their child home for the afternoon, they may collect them from their classroom at 12.30pm and notify the classroom teacher before leaving the school grounds. No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds unless in the company of an adult. Please note that the swimming lessons for the afternoon sessions and the Year 5 EOTC programme will still be going ahead.

National Standards

- ▶ Everyone is aware that with the change of government, the National Standards assessments came to an end.
- ▶ To date we have not been informed by the Ministry nor the Government as to what will take their place.
- ▶ Prior to the inception of National Standards in 2010, Meadowbank School and teachers assessed and reported on student achievement and progress in a very similar way and in fact probably a little more accurately for students achieving highly.
- ▶ For our expectations (and you will be aware that Meadowbank students achieve significantly above national norms), we reported on well above, above, at, below and well below.
- ▶ Our first set of reports for Year 1 to 3 are due to be sent home prior to Easter. In Reading, Writing and Mathematics, our assessments and teacher judgements provide signposts that will give parents, students and families a clear idea where their children are in their learning, as well as indicating what they need to do next.

SCHOOL VISITORS

Meadowbank School continues to host visitors from other schools looking to examine areas of excellence. To date this year we have hosted:-

- New Mandarin Learning Assistants to NZ who were looking at school organisation and in particular the organisation of second language programmes.
- **St. Joseph's School**, Orakei where staff were looking at Environmental Education programmes being integrated into the general curriculum.
- **Mahurangi College**, which was looking at sustainability education and incorporating specific property features in these programmes.
- **Mt. Eden Normal Primary**, which looked at Environmental Programmes, property features and our Club Meadowbank Programme.
- Over 70 teachers from **neighbouring schools** and pre-schools joined our teachers with the teacher specific presentation that Nathan Wallis did for them.
- **40 Junior School and Pre-School teachers** met last week to focus on the transition processes from pre-school into school.
- And this week we have hosted **Makauri School** from Gisborne whose teachers have been looking at our processes in moving to innovative/collaborative learning environments.

DROP OFF ZONE

- ▶ Last week I received an email from a parent who described the Drop Off Zone as a shambles. Yes, she is quite correct.
- ▶ The zone was initiated to improve the ability of parents to pick-up their children from school.
- ▶ The rules and the policing of the zone are in the hands of the Auckland Council and NZ Police.
- ▶ Unless there is a Police or Parking Warden presence, a large number of our parent body demonstrate that the law of the land does not apply to them. What message does that send to children?
- ▶ It is not the role of teachers to enforce the road rules, nor if they try, to be on the receiving end of negative reactions.
- ▶ Therefore the Board of Trustees and Senior Management have decided to leave the policing of the Zone in the hands of the authorities who have actual authority over it. Not the teachers.
- ▶ Teachers didn't monitor the parking area outside the school prior to the establishment of the zone, so it has returned to that.

SWIMMING

Year 3 and 4 classes are now in the midst of their fortnight of lessons with Hilton Brown.

The Year 5 and 6 swimming sports were held last week and the following children have been selected to represent our school at the Zone Swimming Sports next week:-

Billie Schuller, Lucy Gilleece, Callum Nelson, Emma White, Rebecca Lowe, Carol Zhang, Bianca Brdanovic, Fletcher Houghton, Reagan Brookes, Nico Stanley, Andrew Lim, Olivia Kay, Luke Fowler, Annabel McNally, James Rudd, Parker Lewis, Kate Slyfield, Alessandro Bezzina, Mikayla Chung, Conor Roberts.

SWIMMING SPORTS

Year 1* (11am-12.30pm) and Year 2 (9am-10.40am) held at school on Thursday, 29 March (*not Rm1 & 7)
Year 3 (11am-12.30pm) and Year 4 (9am-10.40am) held at school on Thursday, 5 April.

COMMUNICATION PLAN UPDATE

- ♦ Families who asked not to receive a hard copy of the school newsletters have had their request acted on. They will only receive this Newsletter via the School App or by checking the school website.
- ♦ By now all parents will have been contacted by class teachers introducing See Saw as the replacement for class blogs. This is a much more personalised form of communication and we have received some very positive feedback.
- ♦ We have surveyed new families to Meadowbank seeking their input about their pre-enrolment thoughts, our website and communication.
- ♦ We continue to promote the School App.
 - If you are new to Meadowbank and don't have this on your phone, do it now.
 - If you haven't updated your groups, do that now. I'm sure that you don't wish to receive messages from last year's class.
- ♦ We have established a team who will be investigating the use of social media by some of the 38% of primary schools which already do so. They will prepare a report/plan for implementation.
- ♦ To date we have had two parent evenings, Meet the Teacher and Nathan Wallis. We do have Mike King (Wednesday, 9 May) coming and are in the process of locking in another. There will of course be further updates regarding our journey with Innovative/Collaborative Learning Environments.
- ♦ You will see that the Minutes of the past Board of Trustees Meetings can now be found on the school website (Our People/Board of Trustees/Board of Trustees Minutes).

Standardised Testing

- ♦ Year 3 to 6 students have now completed our annual NZ Council Educational Research Progress and Achievement Tests. If you were schooled in NZ you may well remember PATs.
- ♦ The tests used are:-

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| - Reading Comprehension | - Year 4 to 6 |
| - Reading Vocabulary | - Year 4 to 6 |
| - Listening Comprehension | - Year 3 to 6 |
| - Mathematics | - Year 3 to 6 |
| - Spelling | - Year 4 to 6 |
| - Punctuation and Grammar | - Year 4 to 6 |
| - Standardised Test of Reading (STAR) | - Year 3 |
- ♦ Some test papers are sent off for marking and others are marked internally.
- ♦ Once the results are back, teachers analyse data looking for individual, year level and school wide strengths and weaknesses, as well as trends. This will impact on what and how teachers teach.
- ♦ Teachers will be happy to share results with you at the end of the term at Parent / Teacher Interviews (4 & 5 April).

TOP SCHOOLS

Last Sunday 30 students competed in the annual Rotary Top Schools competition at Churchill Park against 12 other schools.

Congratulations to those students who participated and a huge thank you to the staff and parents who supported and encouraged everyone.

Friends of Meadowbank School FOMS

What's in a name? Last year our PTA rebranded as FOMS - Friends of Meadowbank School. Part of the idea behind the rebranding was to remind the community that our parents are an integral part of our the school - in whatever way you can help.

We are fortunate to have fantastic parental support for a whole range of activities at school - trip volunteers, Walking School Bus volunteers, Road Patrol volunteers, Garden to Table helpers, Waterwise Instructors, in-class helpers and Sports coaches - to name a few.

Whether you come to the FOMS meetings or not, you are 'Friends Of Meadowbank School'. With funding in schools a perennial issue it is perhaps not surprising that school PTAs have fallen into a community fundraising arm for schools. While fundraising for projects has always been a feature of PTAs, it was not always so, especially here at Meadowbank, where we are also fortunate to have other funding arms that help us sustain many of our key programmes.

I think it is timely at the beginning of the year to thank all our Meadowbank friends and supporters and also remind ourselves that our FOMS is as much about fostering a school's community and culture as much as it is about fundraising. I would also hope that this year each family considers what contribution they make to our school culture and community and suggest that one way you can ensure your contribution is getting the biggest bang for your buck, is to touch base with our FOMS and offer your support - either with time, ideas or expertise.

I am sure they would love to hear from you and if you are able to attend a FOMS meeting and contribute more, I am sure they would love that too.

The next FOMS Meeting is on **Wednesday, 4 April** commencing at 7.30pm in the Senior School Staffroom. Have you an hour to spare – that's how long the last meeting was.

MARCH

- 19 Year 5 EOTC Week
Homework Club starts
- 20 Year 5 & 6 Zone Swimming Sports
NZEI Paid Union Meeting - 1.30pm
- 21 BOT Meeting - 7pm - Senior Staffroom
- 22 Kai Club Gathering - 3.15pm
Chinese Family Information Afternoon - 3.15pm
- 23 Room 17, 18, 19 Assembly presentation - 2.15pm
- 26 Year 6 @ Camp until 29 March
- 27 Year 5 Zone Summer Field Day
- 29 Year 2 Swimming Sports @ 9am
Year 1 Swimming Sports @ 11am
- 30 **Easter Friday - school closed**

APRIL

- 2 **Easter Monday - school closed**
- 3 **Easter Tuesday - school closed**
- 4 Parent—Teacher Interviews
FOMS Meeting - 7.30pm
- 5 Year 4 Swimming Sports @ 9am
Year 3 Swimming Sports @ 11am
Parent—Teacher Interviews
- 11 BOT Meeting - 7pm - Senior Staffroom
- 13 Final Day Term 1
- 30 Term 2 commences

**DATES TO
REMEMBER**

CHINESE FAMILIES INFORMATION AFTERNOON

华人家长见面会

Thursday, 22 March at 3:15pm

Mandarin Classroom - Room 39 中文教室

Please come along to learn more about Mandarin programme and cultural activities, as well as to socialise with each other.

Any questions please
Amy Ko

ako@meadowbank.school.nz

"More than meets
the eye."



STEVE HOOD
m:021 911 606

Barfoot & Thompson