



SOUTH FEATHERSTON

Town and Country School

"We're a SMALL school doing BIG things"

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NEWSLETTER

Term 1, Week 8: 27th March 2019

Please remember to notify the school office of any absences before 9am each day.

Please remember to **SLOW DOWN** to 40kms between the signs near our school. Remember you must **SLOW DOWN** to 20kms when passing a stationary school bus!! Please remind your child to wear their High Vis Vest!

Kia ora, whanau. This is a long newsletter: I have to start this week's newsletter off in a negative vein, and it doesn't sit easily with me. . .

'School Gate Gossip': There is a nationwide phenomenon known across education circles as 'School Gate Gossip'. In fact, there is a growing world-wide trend which is exacerbated through social media, and worsened by 'keyboard warrior' actions. This too often proves hugely damaging to schools, their students, their staff and ultimately their communities. Sadly, our school is not immune to this. For the second time in less than a year, I have been made aware that there is much rumour, innuendo, and incorrect assumptions out there in the wider community about our school. Sadly, there is no doubt in my mind that these all start with our very own parent group. If you are one of those who are choosing to perpetuate rumours and spread gossip, come and see me for an honest, face-to-face conversation in order to then base your opinion on fact. If you are concerned about your child's learning, make a time to discuss your concerns with both your child's class teacher and me. If your child comes home with stories about school life that seem at odds with our school's vision and mission statements, ring me so that we can discuss their perception vs the reality of what's going on in our school.

This leads me onto another subject – **inclusiveness**.

The Education Act 1989 and our New Zealand Curriculum document underpins all tiers of education in this country which is defined through legislation, emphasising that all schools provide inclusive education for all learners regardless of race, religion, socio economic standing, gender, sexual preference, physical disability, mental health needs, giftedness or special education requirements.

At South Featherston School we have a group of learners who need our support, not our scorn. They need building up, not tearing down. They need to be celebrated for their diversity, not attacked for their differences. The life lessons that those of us, including your children, learn from working alongside these incredibly vibrant characters are ones of acceptance, empathy, understanding, patience, kindness and (dare I say it) love. The 15th of March showed us all in the most horrific way, how hate, fear and the choice to not be inclusive can be taken to the extreme.

New Zealand schools, and the growing number of diverse learners that we welcome within them, have changed radically and continue to do so at an exhausting pace. Our role as educators and parents is to take responsibility for and support our children as they develop and grow into empathetic, inclusive and caring people.

Remember that our children model behaviours that they see in us.

Please take the time to read the 'open letter' attached to this newsletter, written to parents anywhere and everywhere by Amy Murray, a Canadian early childhood educator.

Term 1 Dates to Remember

Y7/8 Technology: Monday
1 Apr, 8 Apr

Final Assembly: Friday 12 Apr
2.15pm

Last Day of Term 1:
Friday 12 April

First Day of Term 2:
Monday 29 April
"100 Days of School!"

Featherston Book Launch:
Wed 8 May

Week 3: NZ Bullying Free week

2019 School Term Dates

Term 1: Mon 4 Feb – Fri 12 Apr

Term 2: Mon 29 Apr – Fri 5 July

Term 3: Mon 22 Jul – Fri 27 Sept

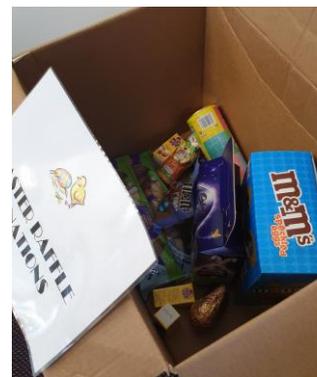
Term 4: Mon 14 Oct – Fri 18

LUNCH FOOD AVAILABLE AT SCHOOL

Ham and Pineapple Pizza	\$3.00
Small Mince Pie	\$2.00
Mince and Cheese Pie	\$3.00
Sausage Roll	\$2.00
Butter Chicken Wrap	\$3.00
Apple Pie	\$2.00
Butter Chicken Pie	\$3.00
Bacon & Egg Pie	\$3.00
Chicken Pie	\$3.00
Potato Top Pie	\$3.00
Vegan Cashew Kumara Pie	\$3.00
Blueberry muffin	\$1.50
Chocolate muffin	\$1.50

NB: We are a water only school.
Please ensure that drink bottles contain water only

Easter Raffle: We are hugely appreciative to those few families (4) that have dropped in offerings for our Easter Raffle. However, as you can see by the photo, the box is pretty empty. Schools across our country rely on school donations and fundraising to provide the extra activities, experiences and resources for their learners and we are no different here at South Featherston School. Please support us to support your children! Any and all Easter themed donations gratefully received!



School Trustees elections 2019: Every three years, elections for school boards of trustees are held, and this year these will take place in June. If you are interested in putting your name forward to be a trustee and finding out about the role that a trustee plays in the governance of a school, please click on this link below. I have also included a copy of a very informative booklet at the end of this newsletter. More information will be sent out to our school community towards the end of March as soon as we receive it. From next week, we will be including a short piece in our newsletters written by some of our trustees, both current and past, about what being a trustee means to them, what they accomplish in their role as a school trustee, and how that supports our school, our staff and our learners.
<https://www.nzsta.org.nz/advice-and-support/information-for-parents/>

'Goals and Aspirations' meetings: These had initially been planned for the last week of this term. However, our teachers have a lot of things going on at the moment so I have chosen to defer these through into early Term 2. By the holidays, your child will bring home their unique learning and behaviour goals that they are developing, with their class teacher's support, to share with you. These will form the foundation of a 3-way discussion with you, your child and their teacher. We hope you will be encouraged to share what your aspirations are for your child, their learning and ongoing development.

Ngā mihi nui

Tana Klaricich

Kia Kaha Hockey Club junior trials this Saturday 30th March at Clareville.

10am-11:30am

All 11aside players are very welcome to come along. Please remember your gear including a mouthguard.

BBQ provided.

Any questions please contact club president Dave Murray 027-5558785

Teacher to parents: About THAT kid (the one who hits, disrupts and influences YOUR kid)

Dear Parent:

I know. You're worried. Every day, your child comes home with a story about THAT kid. The one who is always hitting, shoving, pinching, scratching, maybe even biting other children. The one who always has to hold my hand in the hallway. The one who has a special spot at the carpet, and sometimes sits on a chair rather than the floor. The one who had to leave the block centre because blocks are not for throwing. The one who climbed over the playground fence right exactly as I was telling her to stop. The one who poured his neighbour's milk onto the floor in a fit of anger. On purpose. While I was watching. And then, when I asked him to clean it up, emptied the ENTIRE paper towel dispenser. On purpose. While I was watching. The one who dropped the REAL ACTUAL F-word in gym class.

You're worried that THAT child is detracting from your child's learning experience. You're worried that he takes up too much of my time and energy, and that your child won't get his fair share. You're worried that she is really going to hurt someone some day. You're worried that "someone" might be your child. You're worried that your child is going to start using aggression to get what she wants. You're worried your child is going to fall behind academically because I might not notice that he is struggling to hold a pencil. I know.

Your child, this year, in this classroom, at this age, is not THAT child. Your child is not perfect, but she generally follows rules. He is able to share toys peaceably. She does not throw furniture. He raises his hand to speak. She works when it is time to work, and plays when it is time to play. He can be trusted to go straight to the bathroom and straight back again with no shenanigans. She thinks that the S-word is "stupid" and the C-word is "crap." I know.

I know, and I am worried, too.

You see, I worry all the time. About ALL of them. I worry about your child's pencil grip, and another child's letter sounds, and that little tiny one's shyness, and that other one's chronically empty lunchbox. I worry that Gavin's coat is not warm enough, and that Talitha's dad yells at her for printing the letter B backwards. Most of my car rides and showers are consumed with the worrying.

But I know, you want to talk about THAT child. Because Talitha's backward B's are not going to give your child a black eye.

I want to talk about THAT child, too, but there are so many things I can't tell you.

I can't tell you that she was adopted from an orphanage at 18 months.

I can't tell you that he is on an elimination diet for possible food allergies, and that he is therefore hungry ALL. THE. TIME.

I can't tell you that her parents are in the middle of a horrendous divorce, and she has been staying with her grandma.

I can't tell you that I'm starting to worry that grandma drinks...

I can't tell you that his asthma medication makes him agitated.

I can't tell you that her mom is a single parent, and so she (the child) is at school from the moment before-care opens, until the moment after-care closes, and then the drive between home and school takes 40 minutes, and so she (the child) is getting less sleep than most adults.

I can't tell you that he has been a witness to domestic violence.

That's okay, you say. You understand I can't share personal or family information. You just want to know what I am DOING about That Child's behaviour.

I would love to tell you. But I can't.

I can't tell you that she receives speech-language services, that an assessment showed a severe language delay, and that the therapist feels the aggression is linked to frustration about being unable to communicate.

I can't tell you that I meet with his parents EVERY week, and that both of them usually cry at those meetings.

I can't tell you that the child and I have a secret hand signal to tell me when she needs to sit by herself for a while.

I can't tell you that he spends rest time curled in my lap because "it makes me feel better to hear your heart, Teacher."

I can't tell you that I have been meticulously tracking her aggressive incidents for 3 months, and that she has dropped from 5 incidents a day, to 5 incidents a week.

I can't tell you that the school secretary has agreed that I can send him to the office to "help" when I can tell he needs a change of scenery.

I can't tell you that I have stood up in a staff meeting and, with tears in my eyes, BEGGED my colleagues to keep an extra close eye on her, to be kind to her even when they are frustrated that she just punched someone AGAIN, and this time, RIGHT IN FRONT OF A TEACHER.

The thing is, there are SO MANY THINGS I can't tell you about That Child. I can't even tell you the good stuff.

I can't tell you that his classroom job is to water the plants, and that he cried with heartbreak when one of the plants died over winter break.

I can't tell you that she kisses her baby sister goodbye every morning, and whispers "You are my sunshine" before mom pushes the stroller away.

I can't tell you that he knows more about thunderstorms than most meteorologists.

I can't tell you that she often asks to help sharpen the pencils during playtime.

I can't tell you that she strokes her best friend's hair at rest time.

I can't tell you that when a classmate is crying, he rushes over with his favourite stuffy from the story corner.

The thing is, dear parent, that I can only talk to you about YOUR child. So, what I can tell you is this: If ever, at any point, YOUR child, or any of your children, becomes THAT child...

I will not share your personal family business with other parents in the classroom.

I will communicate with you frequently, clearly, and kindly.

I will make sure there are tissues nearby at all our meetings, and if you let me, I will hold your hand when you cry.

I will advocate for your child and family to receive the highest quality of specialist services, and I will cooperate with those professionals to the fullest possible extent.

I will make sure your child gets extra love and affection when she needs it most.

I will be a voice for your child in our school community.

I will, no matter what happens, continue to look for, and to find, the good, amazing, special, and wonderful things about your child.

I will remind him and YOU of those good amazing special wonderful things, over and over again.

And when another parent comes to me, with concerns about YOUR child...

I will tell them all of this, all over again.

With so much love,

Teacher