

Discovery School: Exploration Syndicate

Newsletter Term 1, 2010

Dear Parents/Caregivers

This newsletter is to inform you of what's happening this term in our syndicate. We are delighted to welcome several new children to our syndicate and the school. We hope that we will see you at this evening's "Meet the Teachers: Syndicate Information Meeting" at 8pm to hear about the main features of what we do at this Year 7/8 level each year and this term in particular.

NB: Attached to this newsletter is an Exploration Syndicate Camp Makahika payment form. Please return this form, together with payment to the school office.

Reading: Children will be focusing on personal reading and comprehension. Our Lexile (individualised) reading programme will be underway by Week 3, providing a computer-quiz linked programme to motivate children and reinforce targeted reading skills. We provide a daily silent reading time for mileage practice, and also expect that your child will read (or be read to) at home as part of our homework focus. Library skills are also a learning feature throughout the year.

Writing: As with **reading, listening and speaking**, writing will be integrated into our topic. Writing will also be a focus of our pre and post Camp experiences.

Maths: This term we focus on **Addition and Subtraction, Place Value and Statistics**. We will be using the **Maths Mate** resource (on your child's stationery list) to maintain both previous and new learning.

ICT (Information and Communication Technologies): The use of ICT this term will be supported by class sessions in our Computer Suite, in-class activities, and homework activities.

Thinking Skills: Use of Mind Maps, Ycharts (What does it Look Like; Sound Like; and Feel Like;) and KWLcharts (What I Already **Know**; What I **Want** to Know; **How** will I Learn it; and What I have **Learnt**) are the focus this term in integrated topics.

International Languages: We begin our languages in week 3, with our own classes for the first term and exchanging classes as each term begins. We are offering **Spanish** (Carl McManaway), **Japanese** (Kylie Foot) and **French** (Sarah Jenner), for an hour each week, following the syllabus in each of these languages at Levels 1 and 2 (the Year 7 and 8 levels). Maori Language is taught in Term 4.

Health: "Creating a Positive Classroom Environment" is our current theme, leading to specific syndicate activities at Summer Camp which put the skills developed into practice. Leading up to Camp we will be placing a great deal of importance on our class and syndicate environments - what makes them positive, and how we can ensure that they are positive for all. This will involve aspects of both the children's (and teachers') working and social environments, including such things as not disturbing others in the class or school, encouraging and tolerating others, and respecting the roles and responsibilities of others. We would appreciate any support through discussion and encouragement you can give from home along these lines.

Setting goals - to be written and confirmed at parent interviews later in the term - will also be a focus for skill development and discussion about 'why' we set goals.

"Positive Puberty" Weeks 6 - 9 will be the focus time for this unit. The unit will provide students with the knowledge, understandings, and skills to develop positive attitudes towards the changes that they will experience during puberty. Key concepts are:

- The physical, mental and emotional, social, and spiritual growth and development that occur and the new needs that arise during puberty;
- Strategies to manage the changes they will experience;
- Factors that influence their choices during puberty (including their families, their peers, the media, and religious and cultural beliefs);
- Their own feelings and their rights and responsibilities;
- How to identify instances of discrimination and take positive action in such cases.

Lesson outcomes (in student language) are:

1: I will recognise that rate of growth varies considerably, and be able to discuss my own growth rate both socially and physically.

2: I will be able to discuss some of the changes associated with puberty, and recognise that changes of which I become aware of in myself are to be expected at my age.

3: I can relate external changes that I become aware of, to internal changes that are also taking place during puberty, and I will feel more confident in using proper terms (words) to describe these changes.

4: I can discuss erections and wet dreams in boys, and how boys cope with these.

5: I will develop an understanding of a girl's menstrual cycle, the part it plays in reproduction, and how it affects the everyday life of girls and women.

6: I will be able to describe appropriate daily routines which I can use in taking care of my body's changing needs at puberty.

7: I can discuss positive ways of handling situations where I feel I am treated without consideration, and can describe how people should be treated if they are to maintain a sense of worth and well being.

8: I can recognise ways in which the media, particularly advertising, may try to influence my behaviour and decisions.

If you have any questions about this programme please contact your child's teacher. If you wish your son or daughter to be withdrawn from the class while a specific activity is being taught, please make this known in writing to the Principal by Monday 8th March.

PE: "Run, Jump and Throw" is the first topic this term. These activities will prepare the children well for our **School Athletics Day** on **Tuesday 16th March**. Cricket is also a topic during the term. Please ensure that your child's footwear is suitable for daily exercise and remind them that sunhats and sunscreen are a daily must for all of term one.

Education Outside The Classroom/Summer Camp: Exploration Syndicate will be staying at Camp Makahika in Levin from **Monday March 1 - Thursday March 4**. This is our third Camp at this site and we are excited about the opportunities available to us. We will have more information about Camp Makahika at the Exploration Syndicate Camp Information Evening, as indicated in our separate newsletter. To further enhance the learning opportunities while on camp, we will begin a **River Safe (science)** programme in class which will be completed by the camp instructors when we go to Makahika.

Technicraft: We travel by bus to Brandon Intermediate in Driver Crescent, Porirua each Wednesday, starting in Week 2, with classes running from 9am till 12.20pm. The specialist programme offers food technology, materials technology, workshop technology (wood and metal), visual art and music. Kylie Foot, Carl McManaway and Sarah Jenner accompany the children on the buses and remain at Brandon with them. These teachers also share playground duty with the Brandon teachers while we are there. If it is wet, Brandon reserves their school hall for our children to use at morning tea time. **The bus will leave Discovery School at 8.45am!!!** - with an expectation that NO-ONE will miss it!! -it is not possible to arrange another staff member from Discovery to transport one late child at that hour of the school day. Your child will be encouraged to take responsibility for being at school on time.

Science: Science Awards (one per term) will be a component of homework as usual this year as the children work towards their Science Award at this level. The RiverSafe programme is integrated into our Camp programme.

Kio Kio Visit: During Term 2, approximately 34 Year 7 and 8 children will be here for a week, as billets of children from our syndicate. Kio Kio is a wee country school just outside Otorahanga and they have had billeted visits to our school for many years. We will probably return the visit later in the year, taking 30 (volunteer) children from our syndicate to billeted stays on farms in their area. The visit includes a trip through the Waitomo Caves, a farm "at home" day, and activities with Kio Kio School.

A notice requesting help with billeting (one or two of the Kio Kio children staying in your home for the week) will be sent home in the next week or two, as soon as we know the confirmed dates of the visit.

Reminders:

- Please remind both sons **and** daughters that wearing jewellery is not permitted at school (for safety reasons) unless it is the agreed stud earring/s. Other jewellery will be confiscated until a parent can pick it up from Mrs Francis.
- Makeup is not permitted.
- Clothing: The rule for our girls is: if bra straps can be seen, then clothing is not appropriate and a covering top is required.
- Sunhats (not hoods, beanies, and the like) are a **MUST**.
- Cellphones are allowed **IN** schoolbags, for after school use only. Otherwise they are confiscated, to be picked up from the school office by a parent. This also applies to other items such as Ipods.

Please feel free to visit or contact any one of us at school if you have any concerns about your child - or any great things about them to share!

Regards

Natalie Francis
Kylie Foot
Carl McManaway
Sarah Jenner

11.02.10.

**Discovery School
Exploration Syndicate
Camp Makahika 2010 Fees**

Please return this form to the school office, together with payment (\$270.00)

I enclose camp fees for
(Child's Name)

Class Teacher:

Cash / Cheque for \$ is enclosed

or

Please debit my credit card: *Visa / MasterCard* *(delete one)*

Number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry Date: _____ / _____

Amount:

Name on Card:

Signature:

Please note that payment can be made over time by arrangement. Please contact Kathy Wall at school if you wish to discuss this option.