Monday 11th February, 2013

What a difference a week makes! The children have all returned to school, new kindergarten students have joined us, along with several other new students from a variety of locations and everyone is happily working away in their new classes. The new kindergarten students are delightful and appear to be settling into the new school routines very quickly.

Each school day is very carefully planned by teachers and it is important that every child is here by 9:00am each morning so that they are a part of the morning assembly then in class to hear the instructions for the first task of the day. Parents are always very welcome to walk to school with their children and be a part of our morning assembly where important information and the activities for that day are communicated to staff and children.

Last week a parent informed me that he had witnessed a very dangerous situation on the road (highway) which involved some of our students. Please remind your children to walk sensibly to and from school and to always stop, look both ways and listen before crossing the road. And most importantly, children are to cross at the designated supervised crossing points on the Oxley Highway and Widderson Street. Your support is appreciated with this important message!

If you have any concerns throughout the year please do not hesitate to contact the school. We are all here to help you and we want all of our students to be happy, safe and enjoy the wonderful learning opportunities on offer at Westport. All staff are looking forward to the year ahead! Best wishes for a great 2013.

The pitfall of using other children as benchmarks (Michael Grose)

Have you ever compared your child’s behaviour, academic progress or social skills with a sibling, or your friend’s children? Comparing your child with others is a stress-inducing and, ultimately, useless activity.

BUT it’s hard to resist as we tend to assess our progress in any area of life by checking out how we compare with our peers. When you were a child in school you probably compared yourself to your schoolmates. Your teachers may not have graded you, but you new who the smart kids were and where you ranked in the pecking order. Now that you have kids of your own do you still keep an eye on your peers? Do you use the progress and behaviour of their kids as benchmarks to help you assess your own performance as well as your child’s progress? Or perhaps you compare your child to yourself at the same age?

Benchmarking children’s progress with that of other children is not a wise parenting strategy. Inevitably, it will lead to parent frustration as there will always be a child who performs better than your own on any scale you use.

Kids develop at their own rates

Each child has his or her own developmental clock, which is nearly impossible to alter. There are slow bloomers, early developers, bright sparks and steady-you-go kids in every classroom. It’s the first group that can cause the most concern for parents who habitually compare children to siblings, their friends’ kids and even themselves when they were in school.

The trick is to focus on your child’s improvement and effort and use your child’s results as the benchmark for his or her progress and development. “Your spelling is better today than it was ago” is a better measure of progress than “Your spelling is the best in the class!”

Gender matters

It’s no secret that boys’ and girls’ brains were developed by different architects. One major difference lies around timing, or maturity. The maturity gap between boys and girls is anywhere between 12 months and two years, and seems to be consistent all the way to adulthood.

Quite simply, girls have a developmental headstart over boys in areas such as handwriting, verbal skills and relationship skills.
Boys benefit greatly from teaching strategies designed for their specific needs. They also benefit from having teachers and parents who recognise that patience is a virtue when teaching and raising boys, as it seems to take longer for many boys to learn and develop. Kids have different talents, interests and strengths. So your eight-year-old can’t hit a tennis ball like Novak Djokovic, even though your neighbour’s child can. Avoid comparing the two as your child may not care about tennis anyway.

It’s better to help your child identify his or her own talents and interests. And also recognise that strengths and interests may be completely different than those of his or her peers and siblings.

Avoid linking your parenting self-esteem to your child’s performance
As a parent you should take pride on your children’s performance at school, in sport or their leisure activities. Seeing your child do well is one of the unsung pleasures of parenting. You should also celebrate their achievements and milestones such as, taking their first goal in a game or getting great marks at school.

However, you shouldn’t have too much personal stake in your children’s success or in their milestones, as this close association makes it hard to separate yourself from them. It may also lead to excessive parent pressure for kids to do well for the wrong reasons- to please you!

The maxim “You are not your child!” is a challenging but essential parental concept to live by. Doing so takes real maturity and altruism, but it is the absolute foundation of that powerful thing known as ‘unconditional love’.

A 2012 UK study of over 2,000 parents of children in the early years had plenty of regrets. At the top of the list was regret for working too hard. The gender mix of those surveyed is unclear but I suspect that more mums than dads would regret working too hard. Maybe not!!! Number two on the list was regret for worrying about the little things. Why am I not surprised? So many of us fret over the minor stuff when raising kids. BUT you often don’t know that it’s minor until much, much later. Hindsight is a wonderful thing. Whoever said ‘Don’t sweat the small stuff” was on the money when it comes to raising kids.

Regrets #3 and # 4 were fairly predictable – regret for not playing enough with kids and regret for not having enough holidays, respectively. Play and holidays are two of the main parent-child connectors at the moment. It hasn’t always been so. In fact, connecting with kids wasn’t as big a priority in the past for parents as it is now. And # 5? Not taking enough photos. In a time when so many moments are captured on mobile cameras I find this a little bizarre. But there you go! What do you make of this list? What regrets (if any) do you have as a parent? What would you add or subtract?

**Principal**
Dean Sneddon

**Westport Public School Award Winners**

**Term 1, Week 2**

**Merit Awards:**
12KB Trey Higham, Isaiah Philip; 12MB Ashley Donohoe, Daniel Foggarty; 12S Brenton Harry, Montanna Brady; 12TF Tamika Cambourne, Tanisha Roggensack.

**LIBRARY NEWS**

**Summer Reading Program**

Congratulations to Caitlin Hicks and Luke Wilcocks who received certificates for participating in the Port Macquarie Hastings Library Summer Reading Program.

**Book Club**

Issue 1 order forms were handed out last week. If you wish to order please return the order forms with payment in a sealed envelope to the Office by **THURSDAY 14**th **February 2013**. Payment can be:

- in cash (correct amount please);
- by cheque made payable to “Scholastic Australia”;
- by credit card over the phone or internet and completing the credit card payment form.

**PRC Certificate Recipients 2012**
Little Bookworms

When: Tuesday mornings 9am – 9.40am starting 12th February 2013
Where: Westport Public School Library.
Who: Preschoolers and their carers
What: Listen to a story, craft activities and borrowing from the library.
Cost: Free. To let us know you are coming or for more information ring the school on 65832944
Bernadette Cassidy

CANTEEN NEWS

Canteen Roster Week 3

- Tues 12/2 – Darren
- Wed 13/2 – Tara
- Thurs 14/2 – Larisa
- Fri 15/2 – Kelly E
- Mon 18/2 – Erin

This week we will have no Wacky Wednesday Meal as we are having our Sweethearts and Pirates Day on Thursday. Please see our notice that has been sent home today. Only $5, a great price for a great meal. We would like to say a BIG thankyou to Graeme and Christine Wienke who donated a brand new popcorn maker to the canteen. Apologies for giving the wrong price for yoghurt last week – it is only $1.20 not $1.50. Also, the new term canteen menu has been issued today, only a couple of price rises. The pies are now $2.50 and lemonade icy poles are $1.50. Our volunteers at the canteen will receive a $5 voucher for use at the canteen for each day that they volunteer.

P & C MEETINGS

The next P&C meeting will be held on 26th February at 6pm in the school staff room. All parents and carers are welcome to attend. Following this, on 26th March, will be the Annual General Meeting where all committee positions will become vacant and will be voted on for the coming year. Joining the P&C gives parents the opportunity to make decisions about how the school is run, where money is spent and be an integral part of the school community. The P&C has a $2 joining fee for the year and gives the ability not only to voice concerns but also to vote on different matters. If you are unable to make the meeting each month, the minutes of each meeting can be sent out to you via email or hard copy with your child.
Ben Hicks - Secretary

BOOK PACKS

Thank you to all families who have already paid for their child’s book pack. This benefits your child by providing valuable resources to assist their learning. Outstanding payments would now be appreciated.

SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Student Report

On Friday 1st February, year 2-6 went to Port Macquarie Pool. There was an increase in participation and everyone enjoyed watching the races and competing. There were some major winners in the Carnival and they are: Junior Boy champ is Ryan Bray, 11 Year champ Travis Pascoe and Senior champ is Brock Larance. The Junior Girl champ is Taryn Vagg, 11 Year champ is Brooke Sheather and Senior champ is Chloe Brock. The students had a wonderful time in the 25m pool. Students also purchased items from the pool canteen.

Madalyn Lack 56A

Michayla Beard

Jack Shoobert

Claudia Spokes

Jackara Vale

“Enjoying the shade”

Fonu, Lily and Emily

Madison and Imogene

Justin, Ryan, Joe, Travis and Jake
PHYSICAL CULTURE

Physical Culture combines basic ballet and modern dance for girls and ladies aged 3 and over. It is inexpensive and great for physical fitness, flexibility, coordination and posture and builds confidence through participation in competitive events. Classes start each year in February. Contact Cheryle on 65854224 (home), 0408231253 (mobile) or email henryandchez@bigpond.com or check out http://www.portphysi.com.au

MILO T20 CRICKET

MILO T20 Blast is a fast, fun and active new sports program that gives kids the chance to play exciting games of T20! It’s for both girls and boys aged 8-12 who know the basics of cricket and want to experience all the action of T20. Best of all, MILO T20 Blast is designed to give everyone a go. You can play MILO T20 Blast at your local cricket club or community centre. So, what are you waiting for? Sign up today at www.t20blast.com.au

Grief Recovery Workshop

Runs for 6 weeks on Monday afternoons commencing 18th February 2013.

Separation and Divorce Recovery Workshop

Runs for 7 weeks on Monday nights commencing 11th February 2013. These are non-religious, self help workshops. Where: Uniting Church Admin Centre, Port Macquarie. When: February and August each year. Enquiries: 6581 2414 (9am-1pm Monday – Friday)

PORT CITY HOCKEY CLUB

Registration Days

Junior Hockey U7’s to High School aged, Men’s and Women’s hockey. Sign up at Port Macquarie Hockey Field (Ocean Drive). When: Saturday 23rd February 9=11am. Saturday 9th March 9-11am. Joining Fees: $100 - $120. Bring your hockey stick. New Junior registrations (U7’s – U10’s) receive a hockey pack (stick, ball, shin pads and socks.) Contact: 0427904746, info@portcityhockey.com, www.portcityhockey.com