Chatback

Dear Parents / carers,

We have a wonderful school and generally our children are kind, respectful, good learners and friendly to others. However, sometimes, we need to remind every child of their right to be safe and happy at school. Last Monday I spoke with all the school about being a positive bystander. If they know someone is not being treated fairly, if they are being bullied then they need to speak up and tell an adult they trust. We always encourage students to Speak Up against any behaviour they witness or experience that is not Safe, Responsible or Respectful. We do not tolerate bullying at school and students have support from our school staff to report bullying. There is a range of support for all students to help stop bullying and to get support and I have pasted a link below that is for the Bullying No Way website with a link for children 13 and younger. Visit the site with your child which gives helpful ideas about dealing with bullying. http://www.takeastandtogether.gov.au/under13/index.html


District Swimming Stars!

Congratulations to our zone swimmers! Not only did you represent your school with speedy swimming and excellent behaviour, but we now have 7 students who will proceed to the next level and represent our zone at the Regional Carnival. Thanks to Mrs Empeigne and Miss Hardaker who accompanied our swimmers and sent us updates throughout the day. Particular congratulations to Justin who broke a 13 year record in the 12yrs 50m Freestyle! – obviously a swim star to look out for in future Olympics!

Harmony Day – Celebrated at Smithfield Monday 21st March

Harmony Day is celebrated in Australia on 21st March. Students will be engaged in learning about cultural diversity, whether during class discussions, visiting websites on computers or via our IWB’s and iPads, displaying art work or perhaps listening to music, or watching video clips about other cultures. If students would like to acknowledge Harmony Day in 2013, they are invited to wear the colour ORANGE in place of their normal school uniform (e.g. orange t-shirts, hair ribbons or bands, arm bands etc) – this is the only out-of-uniform colour permitted. Students may choose to wear their normal uniform but just wear orange coloured accessories. Normal hats and school shoes or joggers are required – no thongs or sandals. I’m sure they’ll enjoy learning about Harmony Day and I invite you and our students to visit the official website – this link will take you to the section for students: http://www.harmony.gov.au/schools/students/

Reading with your child at home

When your kids see you reading and writing in everyday life – whether reading for pleasure, sharing a story with them or making a shopping list – it teaches them that they are useful skills. Here are some things you can do at home to help your kids with reading.


continued on page 2
Removing head lice and nits
Mention head lice and most of us instantly develop an itch. While head lice and nits, (the eggs of head lice) are certainly annoying and persistent, they're not dangerous. Here's everything you need to know to rid your kids of head lice and nits. Find out more: http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/health/removing-head-lice-and-nits

Everyday I see students making the most of learning and their life here at Smithfield P.S. Some students find learning more challenging, some students look to assist others because they find learning easier. I leave you this week with this quote from Lou Holtz. It's about being the best you can be everyday, no matter who you are or what age you are...

“You were not born a winner
and you were not born a loser.
You are what you make yourself to be.”

Hope you make the most of who you are and what you can be everyday...
...until we meet again at the next Smithfield Echo.

Anne Page
Principal

BlogEd

With so many great things happening at Smithfield PS over the last week it is a bit hard finding where to start!
The Anti Bullying performance last Monday was a big hit with our students. The performers managed to deliver strong messages about how to handle situations and deal with bullying. Strategies that we keep building on each year. We also had representatives from our swimming carnival swim at zone level with phenomenal success, as Ms Page has pointed out.
Mrs Goulder has also started an ‘Art Club’ during lunchtimes with overwhelming success. Over 100 interested boys and girls turned up to join in during their lunch time! Have a look at the Champion local paper story at: http://bit.ly/15yUxSG
I understand that Preschool will have a visit from ‘Henny Penny Chicks’ over the next 2 weeks. Those chicks will hatch just in time for Easter!
Wonderful things happening at our school!

Coming home with this newsletter is a copy of our school policy on ‘uniform’. The policy outlines the expectations when wearing our uniform to and from school as well as during school.

Finally, students need to be aware of pedestrian safety and safe routes to take on their way home. Please discuss these with your children. I have been informed that some of our students are crossing the Cumberland Highway in the afternoon. There is an overpass located near the Smithfield RSL which is a much safer way across the Cumberland Highway. Use the opportunity to talk with your child about:

- Where it is safe to walk and cross the road.
- When it is safe to walk and cross the road.
- The need to stop and wait at the side of the road before crossing.
- What to look for.
- What to listen for.
- Why they have to keep checking until they are safely across the road or the driveway.

Vincent Albanese
Deputy Principal
Confirmation 2013
Enrolments for the Sacrament of CONFIRMATION will be accepted at the 6pm Saturday Mass and all the Sunday Masses in the Smithfield Parish the weekends of 23 March and 9-10 March, 2013. Enrolment forms are available from the Scripture Teachers or in the Parish Churches, or phone Halina or Maureen on 9725 4317.

St Gertrude’s Parish
Smithfield
6 Justin St, Smithfield NSW 2144
Tel 9964 1199 Fax 9609 6885
Email office@stgertrude.org.au
ANXIETY IN CHILDREN
by: Michael Grose

Currently, around 11% of children have problems coping with anxiety. And around 3% experience some form of depression.

As reported in Kidspot, Macquarie University psychology lecturer Dr. Carolyn Schniering stated that anxiety problems are the most common emotional disorders that children experience.

It’s important to understand that anxiety is not something to be afraid of. As Dr. Schniering says, “It’s a normal emotion and an important part of how we engage with the world.”

I agree. Experiencing some anxiousness in new social situations or some specific situations such around water is quite normal and, in some regards, healthy.

It’s not healthy when anxiousness stops kids doing things they want or are able to do or interferes excessively with their school or pre school experiences.

Genetics plays a part

Macquarie University research shows that children from a young age who display high levels of anxiety, and who have a parent who is excessively anxious or depressed, are seven to 11 times more likely to develop anxiety.

This finding supports my experience that anxious parents beget anxious kids. But it’s not that simple.

Some children are simply more prone to experiencing excessive anxiousness than others. These kids are typically classified as worriers, shy types and more sensitive souls who wear their hearts on their sleeves. (I’ve parented one of these types and I learned first hand that some situations needed to be handled with some parental care and attention!)

I want to stress that these children are not necessarily going to experience debilitating anxiety, however they do benefit from a parenting style that is empathetic but at the same time empowers them to tackle their fears.

It’s worth noting that if you are overly anxious or experiencing depression, then self-care needs to be your first priority before you can assist your kids.

When should I worry

Dr. Schniering says, “As a rule of thumb, parents should be more concerned if the fears or worries they experience become excessive and their child is unable to deal with every day life.”

I would also add that when children become overwhelmed by their fears then it may be time to seek professional help. A first port of call may be a General Practitioner or your child’s school. (Our research shows that parents are more likely to seek help from their child’s school than their GP, however my experience has been that local doctors often have a good handle on these issues as well as knowledge of local providers.)

Helpful (& unhelpful) parenting practices

Before looking at helpful practices, let’s quickly list some practices that are unhelpful for parenting anxious kids:

• Fixing kids’ problems. Jumping in too soon only increases anxiety and doesn’t enable kids to build their capabilities.

• Allowing avoidance. Letting kids escape new or fearful situations validates their fears.

• A ‘Get over it’ attitude. There’s a difference between “You can do this!” and “For goodness sake, get over it!” The latter often comes from parent impatience and stress.

Okay, now for the helpful parenting practices for kids who are anxious. These include:

1. Skilling towards bravery: Help kids face their fears by skilling them up. (“Look around for a friendly face when you go to scouts.”) You need to put your coaching hat to build skills and self-confidence, which defeats anxiety.

2. Scaffolding towards bravery: Rather than avoidance allow kids to face their fears in stages (“Let’s go to the party for an hour, then I’ll pick you up.”) By breaking things down into smaller stages kids feel that they are more in control. Lack of control is behind a great deal of anxiousness in adults, as well as kids.
3. **Be empathetic, not sympathetic:** There is a difference. Empathy shows you understand how they feel; however, sympathy can be maudlin, leading you to pay excessive attention to the fear as well as and letting them off the hook. Kids need a supportive adult who says (but not necessarily in these words), ‘I know how you feel but I also know you can do this.’

4. **Creating opportunities for independence:** Competency is the enemy of anxiety. Building children’s self-help skills and their independence outside of the home has a snowball effect on how they feel about situations that they usually fear.

5. **Model bravery:** Okay, you knew I was going to mention this. But if you want kids to be brave then you go first. Your calmness, patience and willingness to methodically work your way through new situations has a calming effect on kids (*good leadership is basically about staying calm in stressful situations*), as well as showing them how fears of unknown, new social situations, and even specific fears such as going to the dentist, can be handled positively.

It’s worth noting that most kids grow out of their anxiety given attentive, brave parenting.

As a general parenting strategy I recommend that you take a strength-based approach (*which is what I’m banging on about all the time*) and focus on building children’s strengths and assets to help them overcome fears...at the same time recognise that some children may need some extra assistance from time to time as a result of their anxiety.

**CLO NEWS**

Below is a list of events that parents can attend in Term 1.

**11 March** - P&C Meeting 2pm in the Community Room (M Block)

**18 March** - Meet the Principal Morning Tea 9.30 till 10.30 in the school Hall

**03 April** - Reading Workshop 14.00 till 15.00 in the Community Room (M Block)

**08 April** - Naplan Information Session 9.15 till 11.00 in the Community Room (M Block)

Personal Computer and Technology Tafe Course (FREE) - Term 1 and 2 Thursdays 12.30 till 2.30 Community Room (M Block)

Mother's Group - Thursdays 9.15 till 11.00 Community Room (M Block)

Please keep an eye out for all the notes. If you have any questions about any of these events. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school office.

We would like to thank the school community for collecting all the stickers and making the program such a success.

Jacqui Ranera-Griffin
CLO
HORSLEY ZONE SWIMMING CARNIVAL

What a successful day it was at the Zone Swimming Carnival. Even though Mrs Fox was not there, her cheers and support were there in spirit! The students all did a terrific job representing Smithfield Public School. Mrs Empeigne and Miss Hardaker were not only proud of all the fantastic achievements from all competitors, but for the support they showed each other by cheering their peers on and congratulating them on their efforts!

A big congratulations to everyone for their excellent swims! A HUGE congratulations to Justin who broke the Zone record which was held for 13 years in the 12 years 50m freestyle!!

We have now 7 students representing Smithfield Public School at Regional on Tuesday 19th March! What a fantastic effort! We wish these competitors all the best in their upcoming races!

Thank you to all the parents and grandparents for coming along to support the students and teachers!

Finally, congratulations Smithfield Public School on coming 4th out of 16 schools! We wouldn't be there without all our hardworking, motivated swimmers!

Mrs Empeigne and Miss Hardaker

It's not just about 'reading'. There are so many other skills involved.

Ask your child about the 'Super 6' and have them explain what the strategies mean.

Reading for lifelong learning.