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Aidanfield Christian School

Latest News - Monday 12th February 2019

Growing in Wisdom and Stature Stand and be Confident

Welcome back

Week one is complete and it has been an excellent start to the year. This newsletter has a range of information that is important to be aware of. Grab a coffee, a place in the sun and spend some time reading this!

As I mentioned earlier in the week, I do hope that your holiday period was excellent and that you start the year refreshed. I know that not all families were able to enjoy the Christmas period for a range of reasons and to you we pray that the Lord's strength and peace might be evident as you continue to walk forwards.

The Richardson's had a great holiday. The wedding day was the most perfect of days on the Kaikoura coast and the holiday with the boys afterwards camping on a beach in Golden Bay was a beautiful time in every way. We consider ourselves blessed even as we remembered and honoured the relationships that both Ruth and I have lost through death while at the same time stepping into new promises and adventures. God is good even when life shouts that He is not! Dark places do not stay dark, time has a habit of smoothing broken paths and most importantly, the hope that we have in Christ means that each day leads us on to new opportunities.

Our staff devotional theme for the first half of the year is, "Finding God". We are reflecting on the promise that God has made that if we search for Him we will find Him (Proverbs 8:17). He is not lost, He wants us to turn to Him, to seek after Him, to be orientated towards Him in all we do so that we are able to fashion our lives around Him and step into the grace and peace that He offers. Can I encourage you individually and as a family to seek after Him with all of your heart as this year unfolds, both in the good times and in the dark places.

So you are aware

I have the opportunity of a Ministry of Education funded sabbatical through part of this year. This means that I will be out of school from mid-March to mid-June. Mrs Lawn will be acting as the Principal while I am away. The purpose of this sabbatical is two-fold. Firstly to do some research that will help our school develop. My focus area is authentic biculturalism in a multicultural Christian school. I am looking forward to visiting a range of schools and places to learn more about how we can meet the needs of all our pupils better. The second focus is rest and refreshment. I plan to make the most of this part starting with a honeymoon! The school will be in very good hands as Mrs Lawn leads and is strongly supported by a very competent and passionate leadership team!

A topic of discussion - Screen Time!

Last year I unpacked my thoughts on bullying in school through the newsletters. This first half of the year I would like you to ponder the issues of the safety and health of your children in relation to their screen time use and that of digital devices. There is no doubt in my mind that this is one challenge that faces parents that is so different to when you were growing up. Our experience here at ACS and listening to many other places that interact with families is that many parents simply do not comprehend the impact and implication that screen time has on children. Many of us are quite ignorant of what our kids are actually up to online. We see so much damage from uncontrolled screen time and it is having an impact on what happens in classrooms, on learning and on relationships. It is timely to have a discussion on these topics so that each parent makes an informed decision within their own family on these issues.

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To this end, we are starting the year by introducing Family Zone. "Family Zone is a complete online cybersafety solution that protects your children at school, at home and when they are out and about. Simple to set up, easy to use, and supported by a team of cyber experts, if your children are online you need Family Zone. The app can remove adult content for safe searching, manage use of social apps and in-app purchasing, set routines for what they can access and when, plus give device sleep times and it works on any device."

The Family Zone presentation will be made as part of the Parent evening on Tuesday 12th February.

It would be great to see you there as we work together to make a difference in this area of family life.

Changing of the Houses

Here is something to think about. You will be aware that all our pupils from year 4 upwards are placed into 'houses'. Currently these are Cook, Tasman and Aspiring. There is great competition between these houses! However, three is no longer enough! We have grown and continue to grow so we need four! What to call them?

At the moment, the four new houses are nameless! They are simply: House 1, House 2, House 3, House 4 and a colour has been assigned to each house as a place holder. So, a bit of a competition! We are inviting the school community to come up with names for these, to last for the next decade or longer. There has always been a theme to the houses. For example, in the past when our school was Kings Christian School, they were named after Bible Characters, then Canterbury rivers. When it became Canterbury Christian College, those names were changed to become the mountains - Aspiring, Cook and Tasman. Looking into the future, we do not need to stay with any of those themes, but all four houses do need to have the same thematic connection. We would like to have the names selected and put out for a vote by Friday 1 March. The staff and Board of Trustees will also be asked to feed into their thoughts around your name selection.

There are now forms available for you to fill in with the house name suggestions you come up with, and a box to collect these in the office. You can do this as an individual, group or ask your family for ideas. It could be a good family meal time conversation.

Dates to be aware of

Part of the relationship between the school and the home is that we enjoy parent participation in the various events in the life of the school. It is a gentle expectation that parents attend parent evenings and support the life of the school generally. It speaks strong messages to our children when they see parents involved in the school.

Tuesday night 12 February

Community hangi (sorry, all tickets are now sold), FamilyWise presentation, PAACCS AGM and primary classroom meetings to find out how your child's class will function this year. Food from 5.30.

Thursday 14 February

Middle School parents night. Introduction to new teachers, vital camp information, service trip sign ups, middle school overview. There is important information here for both new parents and those that have been at ACS for a while! 7pm start in Akiraho building.

Tuesday 19 February

Swimming sports. More information to follow but you are more than welcome to come and enjoy the day with us.

Wednesday 20 - Friday 22 February

Middle School Camp for all year 7 to 10 pupils.

Thursday 28 February

Year 9/10 athletics held at Nga Puna Wai. Come along and support our year 9 and 10's as they compete against pupils from Christian schools in Canterbury. It will be a great day.

Saturday 30 March: School Fair - time to get involved and make a difference for our community.

Thursday 28 February and Tuesday 5 March. Start of year parent teacher interviews. Please plan to set a time with your child's teacher.

Information

Changes to reporting this year

This year we are adjusting the reporting format to better meet a range of needs. One of the key needs that we are looking to address is to reduce the report writing load on teachers so they have more time to plan, teach and assess work that each child is doing in a class. The reports take a huge amount of time away from this most important process. This year we will be doing the following:

- Late February - goal setting interviews with parents and pupils (similar to previous years)
- Early April - a written summary report of the results from the first term. This will help you see where your child is starting the year at once we have done the start of year assessments. (This is different to previous years)
- Early July - parent-teacher and child interviews but no written report! This is different to previous years.
- Early December - a full written report that will summarise the years learning journey and set next steps for the coming year (similar to previous years).

Our goal will always be to give you clear and honest reflections of how your child is going in the school context. Please remember this last part. Our comments can only ever be about what we see and have experienced. School is not all of life, it is a part of life and every child will be much deeper, richer and more complex than we can ever reflect from a school view. Your child is special and blessed to be made in the image of almighty God and nothing will ever change that!

Official communications from the school

The school communicates with the parent community in a range of different ways. Class emails and direct emails from teachers is a prime form of communicating. We use newsletters roughly once every five weeks. We have an official ACS Facebook page. This is the official place that we will communicate. Our website holds a lot of information. Please see the quick links to the right.

The PAACS Facebook page is not a school communication channel. This page belongs to the Parent Association of Aidanfield Christain School, which is a separate group to the school although very closely linked and valued. Because the PAACS Facebook page is run by our Parent Association it is not an official channel of school communication. It is a great place to find out what the Parent Association is doing and to link with other parents and we encourage this. If you have a question that relates to a school function, can I suggest you go directly to the person at school who might know the answer rather than firing questions to those that might not know?

[Quick Links](#)

[School Website](#)

[School Sports page](#)

[School News Page](#)

[Facebook](#)

Official communications will always be on the school Facebook page, Website, newsletter or direct email.

It is the responsibility of each family to read the communications and make note of what is relevant to them. It is very rare that we have not communicated dates well in advance. Often we have done, and will do this two or three times in various ways to help families. Please take the time to stay up to date.

Have a concern?

There will always be times when you do not like something that the school is doing or what someone has said or done. This is a fact of life in any community. Should have a concern, please refer to our school Complaints and Concerns process. A copy should be attached to this email and it is also available on our website under the BOT tab. The basic idea is - go directly to the one with whom you have the issue, talk with them, listen to them and see how that goes. Only if this does not work well begin to seek the help of an appropriate person. Have a look at the process and apply it if you need to.

Finally

2019 is shaping up to be a superb year! I look forward to chatting with you and working with you as each of our pupils grows in wisdom and stature through this year and takes steps towards standing in confidence as the young person they were designed and called to be.

Grace and peace
Mark Richardson