Principal Appointment

On Friday afternoon I received a phone call from our Assistant Regional Director, Colin Allen-Waters, to officially offer me the permanent position of Principal at Woody Point Special School effective from 1 Jan 2015. I was delighted to accept this offer.

I want to acknowledge Jan Baildon who has officially informed the department of her intent to retire, therefore allowing the appointment to be made. As always Jan has put the needs of the school before her own and I thank her for her contribution to our community over such a long period of time.

So, onward and upward. I look forward to next year and well beyond, and continuing to work closely with the entire school community as we together continue to create an environment where every student succeeds.

Lions Children of Courage

The annual Lions Children of Courage awards were held on Saturday 18 October at Woody Point Special School. I was very pleased to be in attendance and am happy to congratulate Gene, Paige and Zara who were all recipients of an award this year.

Excursions and Camps

Over the next few weeks a number of our middle and senior students will be participating in a number of camps and camp activities. The camp program is designed to meet the individual needs of each student and allow enough flexibility to maximise engagement.

Dates to Remember

P & C Meeting.

Monday 17th November, 2014, in school staff room at 9.30am. All Welcome!

Term 4

- Last Day Term 4 - 12th December, 2014.

Term 1 – 2015

- First Day for students - Term 1 – 27th January, 2015.

Toy Library Visit to School - 25th November, 2014, PLEASE NOTE THIS IS FOR RETURNING TOYS ONLY, NOT BORROWING. IF ANY TOYS ARE NOT RETURNED ON THIS DATE THEY WILL HAVE TO BE RETURNED DIRECT TO THE TOY LIBRARY. THANK-YOU.

Assembly Dates – All Welcome!

Undercover Area 2.15pm

Week 4 – Friday 31st October
Week 7 – Friday 21st November
Week 10 – Thursday 11th December
I want to acknowledge staff not only for their long hours of planning, but for the time they sacrifice away from their own families, so that our students get the opportunity to enjoy the experience of camp. I look forward to hearing all the camp stories (and seeing all the photos).

Class Groupings for 2015

It is about this time of year that I start to field questions from parents and staff alike about class groups for the new school year. Below is a brief description of the process we use to develop class groupings and school structures.

Stage 1: Confirming the total student population

Each year we have a graduating class that finishes year 12 and a group of students who move to Redcliffe Special School. We also have some students whose families may or may not request an extension and these may or may not be granted. We also have some additional students who move for family reasons.

Balancing that, we have new students enrolling in Prep, and the early years, as well as other students who might enrol as their family has moved into the area. Within the next week or two we will start to get a pretty good idea of who our students will be, but it will usually change as the year draws to an end, and again in the new year as families often move over Christmas.

Stage 2: Number of Classes and School Structure

Once we have a clearer picture of how many students we have, the leadership team then identifies how many classes we will need in total, and how many in each sector of the school. Given the nature of our school this is never an even spread. Our numbers in the junior school are always much higher than our senior school student numbers.

Stage 3: Students in sectors and classes

The leadership team will look at the age and educational needs of each student, and assign them to a ‘sector’. Teachers then meet in teams and construct a draft of class groups based on educational needs and program focus. Typically, this process takes some time as we draft and redraft trying to achieve a good balance. At this point each class is drafted based on students’ needs (staff are not matched to classes at this point). We do however start to look at the most appropriate room for each class, considering the physical and educational needs of each class, as well as striving to keep sectors together in the same area as much as possible.

Stage 4: Assigning Teachers, and Teacher Aides

From term 3, through to the end of the school year, teachers and teacher aides may receive transfers out of the school while other teachers transfer in. We also have teachers who relocate, retire, take family leave and some who are on contract whose contract simply comes to an end. Although it would be great to know early, it is often very late in the year (and sometimes even the following year) before we know exactly our full workforce. Next year we will have a higher than usual staff turnover.

Once we have a reasonably good idea of our staff, we ask each staff member to submit an expression of preference as to which area of the school they feel is the best match to their skills and experience. Not all staff get their preference of course, but we try to ensure we create the best fit for each class group.

How can parents and families help?

Firstly, prepare for change. With a higher than usual staff turnover for 2015 I’m expecting many students to experience changes in their teacher and or teacher aides. I know that change can cause disruption and anxiety but there are also many benefits.
New teachers, new staff and new classmates each year is an important part of the school journey as our young people build resilience, learning to work with a wide variety of people (as they will in other areas of their life), build their network of familiar adults, and learn to make new friends. Special schools are often smaller and at times you may end up with some familiar classmates, teachers, teacher aides and staff. That’s nice too, but can’t be guaranteed for any length of time.

As you can see, there are a great many variables, most of which cannot be controlled. We ask for your patience and support. We will endeavour to get all this in place to be able to distribute class groups in the last week of school but I cannot guarantee there will not be changes in the new year.

Once school starts we have a final staffing confirmation after day eight of school. At that time we review all our decisions and structures and sometimes, if need be, we will make adjustments.

The most important thing that our families can do is make a positive connection with new teachers and teacher aides each year. While we have processes to share information, it is your unique knowledge of your child that we cannot replicate. Please take the time to get to know your child’s new teacher, pass on any information you see as most important and start to build that positive partnership that will support your son or daughter to have the best year they possibly can.

Ric Day
Principal

P & C News


End of Year
The End of Year Raffles are almost upon us, any donations of goodies, biscuits, chocolates, etc. would be greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at School Reception. This will be a multi draw raffle as usual and all money raised benefits the students of our School.
I read about this particular family with three small children who were determined to have a puppy. Mom protested because she knew that somehow or other, she would end up caring for the critter. True to form, the children solemnly promised that they would take care of it.

Eventually, she relented and they brought their little puppy home. The children named him Danny and cared for him diligently - at first. But, sure enough, as time passed, Mom found herself becoming more and more responsible for taking care of the dog.

Finally, she decided that the children were not living up to their promise so she began to search for a new home for Danny. When she found one and broke the news to the children, she was quite surprised that they had almost no reaction at all. One of them even said rather matter-of-factly, "We'll miss him."

"I'm sure we will," Mom answered, "but he is too much work for one person and since I'm the one that has to do all the work, I say he goes."

"But," protested another child, "if he wouldn't eat so much and wouldn't be so messy, could we keep him?"

Mom held her ground, "It's time to take Danny to his new home." Suddenly, with one voice and with tears in their eyes, the children exclaimed, "Danny? We thought you said Daddy!"

This story reminded me of a very old proverb:

"Teach life in such a way that others will remember it.

I think the challenge for all of us, is to teach life in such a way that others will remember it. It’s most often not our eloquent words or powerful thoughts that are remembered, but our actions.

It does help if you know what you are talking about, and apparently that’s something more valuable than gold itself, as we are encouraged to,

“Do yourself a favour and learn all you can; then remember what you learn, and you will succeed in your endeavours.”

I have just started with chaplaincy at both Woody Point and Redcliffe Special Schools and I stand in amazement and wonder to see how the staff offers education with tangible passion, and life is being taught in such a way that my life is impacted daily. I would like to give a BIG thank you to everyone, principals, chaplaincy committees, parent committees, teachers, teacher aides, staff members, parents and students for allowing me to journey with you.

A last thought,

“May your words always be pleasant and interesting, and may you always know how to give the right answer to everyone. May the influence of your acts of kindness last forever.”

Kind Regards

Tilla Gerber
School Chaplain
Intermediate 3&4
We have had a wonderful time working with Hannah, our Music Therapist. Hannah helped us to write our own song and used music and instruments to help us with our communication and movement!
Literacy in our room

Senior 1

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In our classroom we have been reading an Australian storybook called ‘Are we there yet’? The book follows a young family on a journey around Australia. We have plotted the journey the family took on a map in the classroom and talked about the various landforms and sights they saw along the way. The students have enjoyed our English based unit this semester.
TWO GREAT FUNDRAISERS ON THE REDCLIFFE PENINSULA TO SUPPORT CHAPLAINCY –
AUSTRALIA’S BIGGEST BUSH DANCE – 31/10/14 AT DOLPHINS LEAGUES CLUB AND

CHAPLAINCY SUPPORT BREAKFAST, MON KOMO HOTEL, MONDAY 10/11/14, 6.30AM,
GUEST SPEAKER PETERO CIVONICEVA, RSVP, 4TH NOVEMBER, OR UNTIL SOLD OUT.

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT WOODY POINT SPECIAL SCHOOL RECEPTION.