Principal’s Newsletter

Awards for demonstrating the You Can Do It keys to success, improvement in reading improved behaviour and completing homework were just some of the awards given out this week. Well done to all the students who received awards for their efforts this week.

School Attendance Term 1 Winners
Congratulations PSB and 1SM who are tied for winning the Term 1 Highest attendance Award. Both had 97% attendance. Congratulations. The members of both classes will receive prizes from the prize box.

The highest average attendance for a year level was Year 7 with 97.5%, followed by Year 1 with 96%.

Congratulations and thankyou to all the students and families who are placing a high priority on attendance and coming to school on time. We are seeing great improvement in individual and year level results as an outcome of this.

District Cross Country
Students from Runcorn participated in the District Cross Country Carnival today at Algester. Congratulations to all the students who represented Runcorn. Results will be posted in next week’s newsletter.

NAPLAN Preparation
As a parent of a child undertaking NAPLAN this year, I am wearing two hats – parent and educator. While my daughter is not overly concerned as she is in year 7 and has previously undertaken the testing before, her discussions brought to mind how different students and parents view these tests.

As a school we attempt to prepare students for NAPLAN by making the testing process familiar, setting our usual expectations around “always giving your best effort” and articulating to students that this is one test which is part of the schooling process across Australia.

I recently read this article by Michael Gross (educator, public speaker and author of 8 parenting books) and I thought I would share it with you as it provides sound advice to approaching topics with children which may cause both us and them concern.

One view commonly put forward is that the NAPLAN tests put undue pressure on children to perform in test situations. If so, then perhaps the best approach for parents and teachers is to help them handle the pressure rather than avoid it. The most resilient children and young people are those who rise to meet rather than retreat from the challenges presented to them. Perhaps it’s best to view the NAPLAN tests as good learning experiences rather than dreaded pressure tests. Children and young people take their cues from their parents about how to handle many situations. American psychologist Martin Seligman discovered more than a decade ago, through his research into children’s thinking styles, how closely a child’s explanatory style mimics that of the parent they spend most time around. Optimistic parents beget optimistic kids, just as anxious parents can beget anxious kids. The impact of a parent’s explanatory style seems to be magnified somehow in small families where there are fewer voices to be heard. As a parent it helps your child, if you take a positive view of the NAPLAN tests. It’s better to see them as learning opportunities for kids as well as opportunities to overcome any anxieties or nerves that these tests may bring on. It’s also worth remembering...
that many children don’t stress over these tests. The vast majority take them in their stride, wondering what all the fuss is about.

Whether your child stresses or takes them in his stride here are some tips to help prepare for the NAPLAN tests:

**Take your cues from your child:**
If your child doesn’t worry about them then neither should you. Be careful not to create a problem that doesn’t exist by incessantly talking about, or worse, worrying about the test.

**Focus on doing their best and trying hard:**
Choose your words carefully when you speak with your kids. As with all their learning activities place your focus squarely on effort rather than results. The only pressure on kids should be to try hard rather than to do well.

**Listen to any concerns they have:**
If your child confesses to some nerves then validate their feelings, rather than shut them down with a ‘get over it’ response. “Yes, sometimes tests can be a little scary, but they get easier every time you take them.” Use this as an opportunity to develop some emotional smarts, which starts with recognising how kids feel.

**Give them some relaxation ideas:**
Anxious or nervous kids will benefit from some simple relaxation strategies. Taking some deep breaths, changing their thinking and exercising the morning of the test are some simple ways to help kids get some feeling of control.

**Help them retain their perspective:**
One way to help children who become excessively anxious about an event is to ask what’s the worst thing that could happen? Okay, they may not do as well as they would like but the sun will still rise tomorrow, regardless of how well they do. Keeping perspective is a life skill that we all need to practise.

A positive, caring parent attitude is one of the best gifts you can give a child when they are apprehensive or nervous about approaching any different situation whether it’s going on school camp, joining a new club or sitting a NAPLAN test.


3B Mr Kraynik
Due to family reasons Mrs Bayle has extended her leave for another week. Mr Kraynik will continue on during this time and support students during NAPLAN Testing. I would like to thank Mr Kraynik for supporting students and enabling continuity with the class.

Mother’s day Stall
A huge thank you to all the P&C mothers who put together yet another fantastic Mother’s Day Stall this year. It was great to see so many students walking out with huge smiles on their faces, anticipating the response they will get from mum when she opens her present on Sunday. Priceless!

Happy Mother’s Day to all our mums on Sunday. Hope you get spoilt

Prep 2015
Attached is flyer to inform community members about Prep enrolments for 2015. We already have a number of students enrolled for 2015 and places are filling. If you have a child who is Prep eligible (born between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010), please read the attached flyer and contact the office to enrol.

If you have friends or family members with Prep age children who are thinking about Runcorn, please forward this information to them.

Disney Disco
The Disney Disco for Preps to Year 7 will be on Friday 30 May 5.30-7.30pm. This event is supported by the P&C and requires parent helpers.

Parents are welcome to come along, meet members of the Runcorn State School Family and indulge in the fantastic food being sold by the P&C. If you can help out contact Samara or one of the P&C reps via pandc@runcornss.eq.edu.au.

Have a great weekend
Regards
Greg