

St Patrick's School Bryndwr

Te Kura O Hato Patariki

'Called to Shine.'



Weekly Newsletter

Term 1 - Issue 3

Friday 19 February 2010

<http://www.stpatricks.school.nz>

From the Principal's Desk

Parent Teacher Evening

A huge thanks to all the parents who attended the Meet the Teacher Evening on Monday evening. I hope you found it a valuable opportunity to understand the learning opportunities your children will be provided this year.

At each meeting I presented information relating to the School's newly developed homework programme. The homework programme was reviewed and re-developed at the start of the year by the teaching staff. The review included an evaluation of current practice throughout the school, an analysis of information provided by parents in the 2009 survey, an examination of current homework research and an investigation of effective homework programmes implemented at other school.

The result of the review included the following;

- The majority of parents wanted homework, however fifty percent of parents said that they struggled to fit homework into the busy week
- There is no quantitative or anecdotal evidence indicating that homework has a significant effect of student success at school or improves their study habits.
- Homework can have negative effect on students learning if not effectively managed.
- The consistency and progression of the current homework programme should be improved.

Consequently the new homework programme was been developed with the following in mind:

- The homework programme should be developed for the primary purpose of maximising student learning.
- The homework programme should be easy to administer so that teacher and learning time focuses on other more effective learning opportunities.
- The homework programme should value the out of school learning opportunities parents provide their children (sport, dance, drama, etc).
- The homework programme should reflect the School's Special Catholic Character.

A sociological perspective suggests that the dominant post-industrial belief towards education has been "more equals better" or "the harder your work the more you success you will have". Although I would not discourage hard work this belief is not necessarily accurate, if you're practicing something incorrectly, you do not achieve much. I believe a more effective philosophy is "to think smarter and use strategies that accelerate learning."

Social Skills /Bullying

A huge thanks to the 53 parents who attended the Social Skills presentation by Robert Peirea after the Meet the Teacher Evening on Monday night. It was great having so many parents supporting this new school initiative. Over the course of the week I have received many emails and calls from those who found the presentation valuable and enlightening.

Results of the 2009 community survey showed that the vast majority of families believe that we provide a happy and effective learning environment for children. This said and done even though we are a Catholic school it is important to be open and honest about the issue of bullying at our school.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Negative social interaction and bullying could almost be considered part of the human condition. It seems natural for us to react to experiences and interactions we have with others in a non-productive manner. The beauty with the CBT promoted by Robert is that the manner in which we manage bullying or other negative interactions focuses not on the behaviour emitted by children but instead on their thinking or the activating agent that leads to the behaviour.

I have included a summary of CBT in the newsletter for families who did not attend the presentation.

The challenge we are faced with now as a school is how we effectively fit CBT into our busy classroom timetable. Over the next few months the teachers and I will be trying to solve this issue. It is hoped that our efforts will further improve the positive learning environment we currently provide.

A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approach to School Bullying

- a synopsis

by Robert Pereira: B.A. Dip. Ed. (Macquarie University M.A. Hons. Fordham, New York

Introduction:

Bullying is a universal phenomenon and occurs at many levels of society. In schools, it is experienced by a growing percentage of students in every classroom and in every school. Teachers are, on the whole, not taught how to address this issue in an educational manner. Teachers find themselves appealing to students, threaten students with punishment, produce anti-bullying policies or they take a 'blind-eye' approach. Some schools deny that bullying is an issue and claim there is no evidence of bullying in their hallways and playgrounds. Some schools claim that their status, their long history of prestige within the community precludes them from what might be occurring in 'other schools.' Any attempt to deny the existence of

bullying colludes with the perpetrators of bullying, hence bringing continual misery to the lives of this growing percentage of children and teenagers.

Teachers desire to modify the behaviours of students who are engaged in bullying behaviour. This is indeed an important goal. Fortunately, not every student engages in bullying, however every student is capable of becoming a bully. Why do some students bully and the majority do not? One possible answer is that for those who do engage in bullying, something is occurring *within them* that influences them to behave in this undesirable and anti-social manner.

Most if not all behaviour is the result of thinking, or the lack of it. For example, a student challenges a teacher about his or her test results or why he or she received 6 out of 10 marks for an essay. Why? One possible answer is that the student *thinks* that his or her answer warranted a higher mark, and might even have some reasons to support that claim. The student's *thinking* generates the behaviour. Another student who might also think likewise, doesn't appeal to the teacher for an upgrading. Why? Perhaps because this second student *thinks* that there is no point in appealing, because 'the teacher won't listen.'

The central thesis of a **cognitive behavioural therapy** approach to school bullying is this: if we as teachers wish to modify behaviour, we need to focus not so much on the behaviour, but on the conscious (or unconscious) **thinking that drives the behaviour**. The term 'thinking' can be expressed in other terms. Below are a list of prominent authors in the field of social cruelty and personal development who support the above claim, who use other terms to describe the word 'thinking.'

- a) Martin Seligman: - 'The Optimistic Child' - explanatory style; first thought, self-talk, perception, judgment, belief.
- b) Peter Senge - 'The 5th. Discipline' - mental model
- c) Stephen Covey - 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' - paradigm
- d) Scott Peck - 'The Road Less Travelled and Beyond' - simplism
- e) Sarah Edelman - 'Change Your Thinking' - attributional style
- f) Albert Ellis - regarded as the founder of cognitive behavioural therapy, from which all contemporary authors in the field base their subsequent work, uses the term 'belief.'

Advantages to a 'Cognitive Behavioural therapy' (CBT) approach to Bullying:

Prior to outlining some possible benefits to school bullying, an introductory comment based on extensive work with teachers and school Administrators may be appropriate.

Bullying is an unpleasant and embarrassing reality for any School Principal or teacher. Often they are the focus of blame from parents. Often the school is surprised by such parental attacks because the school was unaware of the existence of any bullying issue, or if it was aware, did not consider it to be grave. When one is attacked, the natural response is to defend oneself. Some forms of defense are to deny the existence of bullying, or minimize its occurrence, or blame the victim of bullying for 'bringing it upon her/himself.' It is difficult for a Principal or a teacher to not take such criticisms personally. Such responses generally do not sit well with parents.

I am often asked: “Will a CBT approach to bullying work?...ie. will it be successful?...will it produce long-term results? Sometimes I sense by the way the question is asked, is that teachers want a full-proof answer, a definitive answer, a guarantee, that if they conduct a CBT lesson or a series of lessons, that bullying will cease completely. In desiring this guarantee, teachers often forget that they cannot guarantee that the math lessons they taught yesterday on fractions, algebra or calculus, or the English lessons they have taught on grammar for the last four weeks, were immediately understood by all the students in their respective classes! The brighter students would probably understand most concepts quite readily. The below-average student might never master the concepts and probably forget most of the material once the test is over. Yet, it is my experience that teachers almost demand instant appreciation and long-term results of this CBT approach as a precondition before adopting this approach.

If another example is needed here, I remind teachers that a football team, a tennis player or an Olympic swimmer, does not achieve mastery in their respective sport through a single practice session. A great deal of daily practice is required. So too in the area of bullying education. Time needs to be devoted to it and a different process to what is currently in vogue also needs to be adopted. If former strategies have not achieved the desired results, other strategies need to be employed. Albert Einstein once defined ‘insanity’ as ‘doing the same thing over and over and expecting to achieve a different result.’

A key advantage: - a CBT approach engages all three groups of people involved in bullying:

Traditionally, it is the victim of bullying who receives attention from the school and from professionals. The victim may be counseled and given ‘strategies’ to cope. Even if a counselor was to be successful in supporting a victim who is generally very depressed about his or her plight, the counselor’s success can be quickly dashed once the victim leaves the counseling room. The bully/bullies may continue their inappropriate behaviours and all the good work a counselor may have done with the victim, may be undone.

The perpetrator of bullying may be summoned to the Principal’s office and threatened with dire consequences if she or he were to continue such behaviours. Often, it is difficult to have a perpetrator counseled as (in Australia) parental permission is required for this to happen. Generally one out of every ten parents would give this permission! Parents of bullies are often in denial as well. “My child is not a bully...how dare you insult me by insinuating that my child.....” etc.

Michael Thompson, researcher in the area of childrens’ social cruelty for over 35 years, claims in his book entitled ‘*Best Friends Worst Enemies*’ that the ‘most successful, school-wide, bully prevention programmes focus on **the bystanders**. Michael Thompson recommends that these three groups should not be separated when addressing bullying.

A CBT approach as outlined in my Resource book ‘*Why We Bully*’ deals with perpetrators, victims, and bystanders together, not separately. This is Michael Thompson’s recommendation. Bystanders are ‘the silent majority,’ ‘the witnesses’ who see acts of bullying occurring daily and who say nothing, generally due to fear of being targeted if they supported the victim. This possible targeting of the ‘whistleblower’ is a reality in adult-world as well !

A CBT approach, facilitated by the classroom teacher, **empowers these bystanders**, to

- a) speak out against bullying
- b) provide sound reasons why bullies need to stop their behaviours
- c) speak in support of the victims of bullying
- d) provide the entire group with a vision of how school life ought to be for everyone.
- e) reclaim their personal and corporate values.

Outcomes:

From my experience of conducting close to 1000 lessons with children from age 7 to 18, I have observed a surge of enthusiasm by classes. This enthusiasm is displayed by the silent majority who is dismayed about

the tensions and stress that bullies create in the classroom. The victims, who often think that ‘no one cares about me,’ discover that they are not alone, that in fact, there is considerable support and empathy for their plight. For the perpetrators, they are silent, withdrawn, confronted in a gentle manner, and are challenged to amend their ways. One author calls this approach ‘a peer led recovery.’ A CBT approach uses the peer group in a positive manner. So often, ‘peer pressure’ is couched in negative terms and experiences. A CBT approach is an example of ‘positive peer pressure.’

While no statistical research has been done on a CBT approach, such a process is supported by prominent authors in the field. Anecdotal evidence abounds. One school Principal, who sat in on a lesson with 10-year old boys, stated at the completion of the lesson: ‘You have changed the culture of my school.’ At least twelve (12) boys from different schools have informed me that they have not called another boy ‘gay’ since the lesson on teasing. One 16-year old boy claimed that what he liked about the lesson, what made an impact on him and influenced him to take notice, was ‘the way you talked it through.’ In other words, he was commenting on the process, not just the content.

From the examples given so far, the focus seems to be on boy-bullying. It is my experience that bullying among girls is just as severe if not more so, than bullying among boys. Girl world is filled with social complexity that most teachers and parents would be unaware of. Girl bullying is quiet, manipulative, conducted in whispers and side-glances. Today, cyber-bullying has achieved new heights and the acts of bullying occur outside school hours. For some victims, there is no relief.

Another advantage of a CBT approach is that such an approach uses as its point of departure, real life examples of girl-girl relationships. The conversation may begin with real-life events that a 7 year old girl experiences the minute she walks into the school yard. Most adults have no concept of what girls are thinking as they meet one another. What makes a CBT approach successful for girls is that it assists them to make sense of their experiences and deals with the core issues associated with feelings and irrational thinking. In addressing these issues, a reduction of bullying behaviours is more forthcoming.

The CBT Process is described in detail in my resource book ‘*Why We Bully.*’ This resource was written in a step-by-step manner, so that teachers who wish to study the material, can experiment with the process. In Australia, I conduct seminars for teachers and teach them the process. Thus the book takes on greater significance when they study it after the inservice day..

ROBERT PEREIRA

PFA News

Second Hand Uniform Sale

The PFA intends trialling a second hand uniform sale in Terms 1 and 3. The first sale will be held on **Friday 26 March.**

If you would like to donate clean uniform items please leave them in the office and they will be collected by a PFA member. We will also sell “on behalf” if you attach your contact details and asking price. If you have any queries please contact Hayley Hall ph: 3526221

Are there any members of our school community who may like to become a “buddy family ” for our International students and their families. A new country and a new school can be strange and unfamiliar for them. It would be nice if we could make them feel more welcome. If anyone is interested in this, please leave your name with Anne in the office, or email me karen@enso.co.nz

PFA Members 2010

Karen Mountford – Chairperson and Class Rep Rm 2

Tracey Sparrow – Secretary

Catherine Taylor – Treasurer

Angela Baker

Geraldine Kilpatrick

Kath Crutchley

Christine Duxbury – Class Rep Rm 4

Rebecca Brinkhurst

Suzanne Montocchio

Margaret O'Boyle – Class Rep Rm 1

Sue Spiers

Erica Turton – Class Rep Rm 3

Hayley Hall

Jane Kent

Catherine Small – Class Rep Rms 5 & 6

Maria Gardiner – Class Rep Rm 7

Maria McGoldrick

Notices!

Home Help Wanted

Help wanted in Totara Street after school for a couple of hours for school family expecting 4th baby next week. If interested please phone Pieta Aitken 343 6433.

Baby-sitting

My name is Genevieve Kent. I'm a passed pupil of St Patrick's School and I am currently in year 10 at Villa Maria College. I'm available for baby-sitting, and have experience with four younger brothers and sisters. If you need a baby-sitter please call or text me on 027 7400180. Thank you.

Cleaning Position

Could be a job share position. 5 nights (after 5.30pm-6.30am) any two hours within this time. Please contact Val or Dave at angelCare on 3514436 or email david@angelcare.co.nz

An invitation to come together to pray the Rosary – Everyone is welcome

An open invitation to come together as a school & parish community, to pray for the sick & for all of the special intentions of those in our community.

9:00am every Tuesday in term time, St Mathews Church (approx 25mins) All welcome. You don't need to be familiar with the Rosary to join in pray.

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them."

University Of Canterbury – "Tween Girls and Celebrity Culture"

2 evening sessions Thursdays 18 and 25 March 2010, 7.00-8.00pm

These lectures will explore the current debates about 'tween' girls and celebrity culture.

Presented by Dr Tiina Vares. Fee \$25

For more information or to enroll phone 364 2470 or visit www.communityeducation.canterbury.ac.nz

MARIST HOCKEY CLUB

Trials for 11Aside and Super 8 (Boys and Girls primary teams) will be held at Nunweek Park from Sunday 28th of February, 10.00am to 12.00pm

Registration day for the 2010 season is at Nunweek Park on Sunday 7th March from 3.00pm to 5.00pm.

Please check our website www.maristhockey.co.nz or contact Angela Baker, ph:3545975, email

steveangelab@xtra.co.nz or Tracey Hughes, ph:3555447, email p_t.hughes@paradise.net.nz

Marist Albion Rugby Club

Warmly welcomes all returning and new players to the 2010 season.

REGISTRATION DAYS

- Sunday 21st February 11am-2pm Parkview Lounge, Riccarton Club
- Saturday 6th March 10am-12pm Marist Albion Office, Riccarton Club
- Saturday 13th March 10am-12pm Marist Albion Office, Riccarton Club
- Saturday 20th March 10am-12pm Marist Albion Office, Riccarton Club
- Saturday 27th March 10am-12pm Marist Albion Office, Riccarton Club

Check out the Club Website www.maristalbion.co.nz or contact John Lynch ph 3555278, email john@nzpeltandskin.co.nz or Tony Gill ph 3239089, email tonygill@primepanels.co.nz

Merivale Papanui Rugby Football Club Junior Registration U6 – U13

Details on Junior noticeboard or flyer in office.

Coming Events

February

Tues 23rd 9.00 am Rosary in the Church
Thurs 25th Rms 5 & 6 Class Mass
Fri 26th Assembly R4, Rms 1 & 3 Swimming at Wharenui

March

Tues 2nd 9.00 am Rosary in the Church
Fri 5th No Assembly, Swimming Sports at Jellie Park 12.30-3.00 pm. Coffee morning R8, 9am
Tues 9th 9.00 am Rosary in the Church
Wed 10th Zone Swimming Sports, PFA Meeting 7.30pm R8
Thurs 11th Mufti Day – Bottle Tombola, Class Mass Rms 1 & 3
Fri 12th Assembly R5, Rms 1 & 3 Swimming at Wharenui
Tues 16th 9.00 am Rosary in the Church
Wed 17th St Patrick's Day – lunch provided by PFA
Fri 19th Assembly R6, Rms 1 & 3 Swimming at Wharenui
Sun 21st School Mass, School Fair
Tues 23rd Reconciliation Rms 1, 2, 3 & 7, 9.00 am Rosary in the Church
Thurs 25th Rm 2 Class Mass
Fri 26th Assembly R7, No swimming, Wharenui Pool closed
Tues 30th 9.00 am Rosary in the Church

IRISH DANCE CLASSES

Mondays 3:30pm – 5:00pm
Spreydon Primary School Hall
2 Halswell Road

Tuesdays 3:30pm – 5:00pm
Heaton Normal Intermediate School Hall
125 Heaton Street

Donna Brady is inviting girls and boys, all ages, to come along and learn Irish Dancing. She promises a good work out and loads of fun for all.

For more information please contact Donna 0275 381 604