

11/05/09

Friday Active Sports Programme

At this time of year many of the Y4-6 children are excited about getting into one of the competitive sports teams on offer at Elmwood. For the main winter sports codes (netball, rugby, soccer and hockey) sports coaches are or have organised trials to select teams for the forthcoming interschool competitions that occur on Friday afternoons. The school endeavours to provide opportunities for all children wishing to be included in competitive sports teams however the number of teams on offer is determined by the number of coaches and managers available, and of course the entry restrictions and rules that apply to the various codes. Elmwood is fortunate to have a good number of enthusiastic staff and parents who are able to coach or manage teams and they are very visible out in the playing areas on most days during their break times. We need to value their contribution to sports and appreciate the fact that it is because of them that we can offer so much sport at this school.

For the Friday sports sessions the Y4-6 children can participate at three levels:

Level 1: (A & B Grade Teams for all codes) Interschool competition for our top players who are entered into the Canterbury Sports Association Competition. (Restricted entry conditions apply –please note that only Y5/6 children are permitted to compete and team entry will be determined by the coaches on the basis of the players ability and suitability for this high level competition.)

Level 2: (C Grade Teams) Friday “home games” providing an introduction to games and competition at school or against other schools. (Held at Fendalton School grounds for Y4-6 children)

Level 3: Friday “games and skills programme” for those Y4-6 children who are not involved in the competitive aspect but enjoy the opportunity to participate in games and receive skills development. These games are played at Elmwood Park or here at school.

Helping children develop life skills is an essential part of teaching and learning at school. An important part of this education is to help children to appreciate and cope with the elements of competition. Some key understandings need to be nurtured and handled with care. Winning, losing, fair play, teamwork, selection and non-selection, along with developing respect for coaches and managers are important aspects of the learning process. Much of this learning comes from the role models they see through their coaches, managers, parents and the sports stars in our local and national teams. Our leaders in these positions need always to be aware of the significant influence they can have in shaping our children’s values.

Trials do bring a high level of interest and anticipation of selection. However, some children will be naturally disappointed if they do not make the team they first choose. For most, that disappointment is short term as they realise that there are other options available to them. Team selectors are very mindful of the levels of readiness needed for children to be included in competitive sports teams. This readiness refers to skill level, attitude, team play, physical ability, commitment and most importantly the ability to handle set backs such as losing, stand downs and the demands needed to improve for the next game. Coaches do not want to see children playing in grades they cannot cope with, and while they appreciate there will be disappointments from non-selection, it is far more important to consider the readiness levels and personal safety of those competing. Not everyone will make the top teams, but there are other team sports on offer that they could try for. For example, in netball those who miss selection for the A, B, and C Teams can still play in a netball team through the school’s Year 4 and Year 5 “Future Ferns”

teams. Year 6 players can play in the Year 5 Future Fern grade but are restricted to having no more than three Year 6 players on the court at any one time. Canterbury Netball Association has also introduced a competitive grade in the Saturday competition, for Year 6 children only. The school currently has one team entered into this new grade. Further, all Y4-6 children who are not involved in any sports team do still play sports at school and the programme for this caters for all levels of ability.

It's all about helping children develop understandings that in life there are options and choices available, and to expand their horizons to look further and beyond the popular choice. The popular choice will always be limited and non-selection is a reality we all have to adjust to in our daily lives from time to time.

There exists an excellent spirit for sporting activities at Elmwood. Thank you to those who are making this happen.

Kevin Gooch, Principal