

**30/03/09**  
**Holiday planning**

With just two weeks of school remaining, families will be planning activities over Easter and the school holiday break. Holiday time is a wonderful opportunity to 'hang out' together whether this is at home, visiting other parts of the country or venturing abroad. The educational value of holidays on our children shouldn't be missed, as this is a time for them to share learning experiences in a way that cannot be replicated within a classroom.

We understand well that education is not just knowledge learning within the school environment. Holidays are also a learning resource, and provide meaningful opportunities to share learning experiences, and enable us to gain valuable insights into our children's learning pathways. Holidays enable children to share learning experiences that can be just as new and exciting for their families and friends as they are for themselves.

Planning for holidays is not always easy, especially when work responsibilities need to be factored in. However the good news is that children will gain just as much enjoyment from simple, shared activities, whether at home, in our local surroundings or abroad. We have many opportunities to enjoy our natural environment within the South Island, for example the Otago Central Rail Trail (highlighted on a television programme last week), treks across Banks Peninsular driving through the Alpine Region to explore the West Coast and of course the Southern Lakes area, to mention just a few. All of these examples offer a natural playground for learning that is located within 'our own back yard'. Children readily learn during outdoor pursuits and it is well known that attitudes and responsibilities towards preserving our natural environment are best formed during these early years.

So whether the holidays are going to be at home or abroad, remember that children love to explore, whether it is mental, visual, physical or social. Their curiosity knows no bounds and this is integral to their education. Taking advantage of the many different types of opportunities to explore surroundings in a caring and sharing environment will not only increase knowledge but also strengthen children's beliefs and values, and also provide satisfaction and enjoyment for all. What better way to promote and reinforce the new curriculum's focus relating to key competencies and values than through the holidays and experiences with the family.

A couple of very different events were enjoyed last week. The cross country was once again very successful and congratulations to all the children who took part. Results have been posted on the school's website. Parents will also have enjoyed the 'wedding march' in the school's auditorium last Friday, our way of wishing two of our teachers well as they embark on married life. Congratulations to both Jo Bray and Gerardine Henry who are to be married over the Easter break. I hope the advice our junior class children gave to them both at the assembly will set them off to a good start!

Kevin Gooch  
Principal