



LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS

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A natural way to learn

It is always a pleasure being with the children when their learning is enriched through a natural and often spontaneous way. The camping experience is one where the scope of the learning may well require stronger levels of participation, contribution, and team work than usual and will most likely bring some challenges that require increased levels of self-determination and resilience. But isn't this great for young learners? Of course, it requires appropriate supervision and support through sound risk management procedures that need to be followed by those who do the supervising. Fortunately, this school is able to call upon a large contingent of parents who support the teaching staff at our three camp venues. When visiting each of the campsites I am always impressed with the high level of goodwill and active involvement offered by the "parent helpers". A key and fundamental positive relationship factor that contributes to the success of our camps is this involvement where parents can share their own levels of knowledge, skill and leadership. Children can sense the high levels of respect, open minded and level headed cooperation between their parents and teachers. In this highly appreciative environment the children thrive and exhibit higher levels of confidence, challenging themselves through a range of graded confidence building activities that develop and put to the test their mental, social, emotional and physical competencies.

At camp, whether it was climbing Conical Hill, scaling up the trees, abseiling, raft making, mountain biking, study and note taking, or just getting thoroughly wet and muddy, the activities the children experienced provided challenges that could not have happened without the support of all the adults on hand. The team building, the support for each other and the delight seen in their faces as they accomplished the challenge and problem-solving activities they were confronted with, highlighted the significant benefits of this kind of outdoor education.

Outdoor challenges add so much value to learning and it is the interacting with our natural environment that adds value to the children's perspective of what they can enjoy and achieve in a very natural way. Levels of challenge at camps are designed and graded to take account of the year levels, where confidence readiness and risk elements are always carefully considered. The use of qualified instructors, along with a high level of parent involvement in managing groups of children during activities, food preparation and the camping routines, play a significant part in the success of all the camps. The instructors provided at school camps are highly skilled in their work and relate extremely well with the children and adults.

In acknowledging and thanking the teaching staff and parents for their involvement it is appreciated that the camping programmes are "full on" and there is very little downtime for those who take on this responsibility. However, I expect we would all agree that "getting out there" is our "kiwi" way of life and it's our strong connection with our values for living that motivates us to be out there with our children. Camping experiences offered by the school are so valuable for our children at this age and there is no doubt learning outside the classroom needs to remain a priority learning strategy in the education of our children.

Thank you teachers and parents for making this happen.

Kevin Gooch
Principal