



LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS

[14/06/10]

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Well informed

Over one hundred parents attended one of our information meetings relating the National Standards. We were heartened by this response and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to share how the school intends reporting against the National Standards. For many, the progress reporting will be enlightening and give clear affirmation that their child is on track or making even bigger progress steps than anticipated. We do appreciate that there will always be some children who are not yet on the national standards achievement level, however this shouldn't necessarily give cause for concern. Rather here is an opportunity to identify 'next step' learning requirements and plan forward progress.

With parent interviews coming up next week our teachers and parents will need to give thought to how best to involve the children in the reporting process. The reporting requirement is between the teacher and the parents, and we need to be careful that we don't place the children in a situation where we undervalue their progress due to expectations that we place upon them. We do encourage parents to involve their children in these interviews, however I suggest the focus for each child should be on positive progress already made as well as the next steps that can lead towards the prescribed standards.

Parent Interviews are scheduled for 23-24 June. These interviews start at 2pm parents should note that the school will be finishing at 2pm on both days.

There are some key understandings that we believe to be important:

- **The student should know what goals they are working towards**
 - *We want the students to be learning about setting their learning goals. They are more likely to be motivated to learn when they have been engaged in their goal setting.*
- **As it has always been, the teacher, with the student, will be making on-going judgments about progress throughout the year.**
 - *Assessment practice is an on-going process that helps the teacher and the student monitor and track progress growth.*
- **The on-going judgments relating to the National Standards will be reported to parents at least twice a year.**
 - *Parents need formal opportunities to be informed about their child's learning journey.*
- **The four-point scale (at, above, below, well below) has been designed to show reliable differentiation in teacher judgment.**
 - *The explanation and the conversation held with parents about this differentiation is the most important aspect of the reporting process*
- **The students and parents need to have understandings about learning readiness, individual differences, pace and speed of learning, and be realistic about progress expectations.**
 - *Reporting and celebrating progress is important and should focus on what the student can do well, what the next steps can be, and how parents can help at home. The possibilities for future progress growth need to be discussed.*

- **The overall judgments that teachers make will be based on a wide range of assessment practices and tools.**
 - *Quality “judgment calls” and “reporting” require comprehensive evidence based assessment practice*
- **Parents need to understand that we are assessing the student’s progress against the National Standards – our focus is not about assessing the student against their class, school, or other schools.**
 - *We will not be assessing, nor have we been asked to assess, your child against league ladders (within a class, the school or another school)*
- **The reporting templates we use are designed to provide a picture of the learning journey. They are “tracking indicator charts”.**
 - *Our tracking indicator charts are designed to provide an overall picture of the progress journey throughout the student’s time at Elmwood.*
- **The mid-year report is intended to provide a “mid-point” update about the progress being made towards the Standards.**
 - *Remember there is still 6 months of learning to be achieved!*

Parents who were unable to attend the information meeting on the National Standards can obtain an information pack from the school office.

Hopefully all parents will make the effort to attend the interviews next week. It is so important that your child’s teacher is provided with an opportunity to share their rationale, and evidence they have gathered, to make their overall judgments against the National Standards. I am suggesting that the time taken to have the conversation with the teacher will in fact give a greater insight into the child’s learning gains and future needs.

Kevin Gooch
Principal