

Celebrating Culture - Cultural/Arts Week (15th June 2009)

This week our school celebrates and values cultural diversity. The school recognises that we have approximately 24% of the student population representing a wide range of nationalities and cultures other than our own culture. The school is delighted to have children with origins from countries such as Japan, Spain, Germany, Israel, Korea, France, Sweden, Russia, Kenya Italy, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Samoa, China, South Africa, Australia, Ukraine, North America and UK.

The school values the fact that our international mix of families into the school provides greater chances for sharing and learning about cultural awareness and understanding. We aim to promote the belief that our focus on cultural regard will provide an enhancement for all learners and people associated with the school. The school's cultural regard strategy is to promote both our own cultural heritage as well as understand other cultures from throughout the world.

For our intentions to be successful we need community support. Parents and local cultural community groups are regularly encouraged to participate in school activities and we hold regular information sharing meetings with new families joining our school community. Such involvement and support has huge benefits for the children in the school and serves as a catalyst for a stronger cultural presence that adds value to the school's educational delivery.

Throughout this week classes will be engaged in a number of cultural experiences through visual arts, performing arts and literacy learning activity. On Friday 19th June all children will be encouraged to wear to the Celebration Assembly a national costume or clothing that has links to their cultural heritage. As an additional highlight during the Cultural/Arts Week, we are inviting children who are learning a skill, sport or activity from another culture, to have the opportunity to perform what they are learning to an audience. Highland dancing, playing the bagpipes, training in Tae Kwon Do, playing music from another country on their chosen instrument, dancing the samba, singing a song in another language are just a few examples of what could be in store for those participating and observing the celebrations throughout the week.

The school's Kapa Haka group practises each Friday and will be looking forward to performing as part of the celebration. Kapa Haka performers learn to combine song, movement and expression into each item and this requires a lot of self-discipline. We thank Rhonda Maindonald for her continued support to the school in this aspect of our cultural awareness programme.

The school always appreciates parents and community members who are willing and able to share some aspect of their culture with the school community, either as a whole school or with small groups. Parents who are able to help in any way should make contact with any of the following staff members to register their interest. Bernadette Woffenden, Trina Wood, or Jeni McKinnon. They would be pleased to hear from you at any time of the year to support our on-going awareness programme.