Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Thanks for all of your support this term. So much has happened, so many functions have been arranged, fundraisers have been busy and many people have helped with the school program, the canteen and the P&C.

Many school children have also been busy fund raising for charities. Ronald McDonald House & the John Hunter Hospital seemed to be the favourites and their guessing competitions & colouring competitions are fairly well supported by the children as well.

We look on these student initiated activities as a real learning exercise. Students advise me of their intentions, but then they have to go away & work out as a team what they are going to do. They actually write out a procedure, based on Who, What, When, Where, Why & then put these plans into action. They give up their whole lunch hour, usually for a week, hosting the competition. It’s such a sound base for being community minded & aware of the needs & situations of others. Children K-6 are involved by choice. They do a mighty job for local charities.

SPECIAL MENTIONS
Three of our students have been selected to represent the Hunter Region at State Championships.

- Josh Murphy went to Sydney to compete in the State PSSA Swimming Championships last week.
- Logan Marshall will be representing the Hunter Region in AFL at the State Championships in Beruga.
- Isaac Taylor is in Rugby League and will travel to Dubbo, to compete in the State PSSA Championships.

There are approximately 250 primary schools in the Hunter Region. Selection is highly competitive and this might help you understand what a superb personal achievement this is for the 3 boys.

We wish them every success in their endeavours.

ANZAC DAY CEREMONY
This Friday at 10am we will be holding our school ANZAC Day ceremony as ANZAC day actually falls during the holidays. Every parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or any special friends are most welcome to join us.

We host a very emotional, yet simple service. Many students are involved on this special occasion and all respect its reverence.

Please join us for morning tea at the conclusion.

If there are any parents who would be available to help serve the morning tea after the service, please let us know. Your help would be greatly appreciated.
PRINCIPALS’ CONFERENCE

Last week on Thursday & Friday I attended a Principals' Conference and I have to report it was one of the best ever that I've been to.

The presenters were highly skilled & knowledgeable. Michael McQueen, who is only 31 & so wise, explained the characteristics of the GEN/Y children—some of your children.

On the one hand they are seen as being tech savvy, well educated & ambitious youngsters, poised to take on and change the world.

Others describe the group as being disloyal, disrespectful & a demanding generation who have never learned to wait or really work hard for anything. They demand & expect instant gratification.

These youngsters have essentially grown up in a different world & the era in which you are born seems to have a profound effect on your perceptions & world views.

We learnt some strategies to help us meet the needs of these students in the real world of today.

There were other lectures worthy of note, particularly the one on real listening. Everyone needs to be appreciated & valued & genuine listening, where you totally de-fuzz your own screen, has a marked effect on relationships. It’s so important, yet such a simple concept. Try it at home & over time you will certainly see a growth in your connection with your child.

These conferences ensure we are kept up to date with all the changes that are occurring in education. I shared with staff one of the analogies used in dealing with change. It concerned the yachting world:

* You can’t change the wind.
* You can’t fight the wind.
* You can’t ignore the wind.

In a yacht you have to tack to change your direction. Therefore, we all need to stay relevant in times of change, be responsive and go with it!

For parents, it’s important to realize that schooling today is far different from your day when you all did the same work and your social studies books were a picture of beautiful note-taking from the blackboard, coupled with lovely colouring in.

The whole emphasis has changed and student directed learning ie. What do I need to learn as a student about this topic & what do I want to know, has taken precedence.

It’s an exciting time in education & at Kahibah, we are very well placed to tackle all the different challenges. So much of what was mentioned, we’ve been doing for years. We all share our ideas, our resources and our knowledge every day, in all aspects. We do, by nature, all that was suggested.

OUR STAFF MEETINGS

I thought I’d share with you how our staff meetings are run, because I’m not sure I have actually explained this in any detail & it’s important that you all know.

- Tuesday morning is our administrative, information meeting. We deal with topics of relevance where preparations for an event take priority, plus Student Welfare issues where we discuss students who may appear to be eg. alone in the playground, those who seem unusually sad, some whose behaviour has changed significantly and so on. We all know to keep a watchful eye on those we worry about. We almost always take action on these situations.

- On Tuesday afternoon we have 2 types of staff meetings, each of which involves training & development of staff:
  - Week A: Stage meetings where Grades K, 1&2, Grades 3&4, and Grades 5&6 get together to discuss things like programming, reporting, assessing, sharing best practice, and they may include organization for choirs, dancing, sport and so on.
  - Week B: Whole staff meetings where presenters discuss GATs students, programs, ideas for acceleration etc: literacy & numeracy workshops, IT workshops, code of conduct, workplace health & safety, & child protection. The list is endless.
We also spend a significant amount of time analyzing our NAPLAN data so we can clearly see our strengths and recognize our gaps in individual learning so we can individualise what we do in the classroom to suit students’ learning needs.

It’s wonderful watching kids finally “get it” in some aspect of their learning. This is the “ah Hah” moment & one that gives each teacher a huge thrill when they break through such barriers. It’s hard to define how that feels. To our teachers, that’s almost like winning the lottery!

**SPECIAL REQUEST**

If there’s a time when you have become disturbed or upset by another student’s behavior towards your child, please come & discuss the issue with me, any members of our executive or the class teacher before & instead of other action you might take.

Please refrain from the option of discussing the situation yourself with the child, as this is our job. In the, past there have been some parents who have threatened or intimidated children & in some cases, filled them with fear. That is not your job. Our children, regardless of whom they are & what they are perceived to have done, have the right to feel safe in our playground. We will deal with the problem after ascertaining detailed information from all sides re what the issue, based on fact, is all about.

Please know that we do deal with all issues we hear about. If you hear folk saying: “Nothing happens,” that is absolute “Tommy Rot.” Perhaps the folk who spread this have no conception of the hours, & sometimes days that we spend investigating situations to be sure of our facts and I I think it’s important to share this information with you to keep you all attuned as to what we actually do. I wish I had kept a time diary of all the hours Mr Ian Davies spent last year dealing with multiple issues. It involved hours after school & into the evenings & even weekends, sifting through reports & information received.

So, in short, let us deal with your issues. Most folk do! Just tell us what they are, and we’d all appreciate that. Thanks a million.

**CANTEEN UPDATE**

I have had 2 quotes come through for the renovations of our school Canteen. One for $38,500 and the other for $148,000. Guess which one I’ll take!

**HANDWRITING**

Please encourage your children to practise their handwriting. It is so important that this skill is not lost & check out their pencil grip too. Help us by helping them at home. Some of the grips I see I would describe as “atrocious.”

So many children type everything these days. They type messages constantly on I-phones, I Pads & the like. At high school they use laptops more frequently & when it comes to the HSC students have to write their answers. There is no other option.

How can this be? How trained are children to write? What practice do they have? Do we have the mechanical hand fortitude to write quickly & coherently for 2-3 hrs in the HSC exam? This is the expectation, without the experiences.

Also, please encourage your child to do cursive (or running) writing rather than printing. If your child says it’s ok, that’s just hogwash. Don’t believe them. Yrs 4,5,6 are expected to do cursive writing, which is actually begun in Yr 3.

**SCHOOL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

At the end of last year there was an article in the Saturday Weekender about our school. This was not generated by us but by a parent and indeed it was a fabulous article for public education.

A friend of mine is training to be a teacher at University and during one of her lectures on Behaviour and Quality Teaching, the lecturer held up our article and said that this was what a quality school looks like & what
quality teaching is about.
She felt very proud sitting in her seat, knowing some of the people involved.
It’s a big thrill for our school to be mentioned in that way and a big endorsement for how our teachers operate.

Our school is extremely calm and we don’t have, currently, any children capable of turning the school upside down. This is because of the relationships we have with the children, the untold hours of teachers listening to children, connecting with them with no put downs.

In such an environment where children really feel safe, real learning takes place & that’s why, academically, our children perform well. Everything is linked.

**MAGGIE’S RETIREMENT**

It is with much regret that I have to advise you that our lovely Mrs McNair will not be returning to our school. Maggie is a real gem. She has always been one of those professional people who just gets in & does the job. She has always taken on multiple tasks in her own free time, never once asking to be relieved or given extra time to complete whatever she does.

The children she has taught over the years have been so lucky to learn that there is a different way, that they are all special, lovely & valued. They have learnt how to work things out.

Above all, she always had a sense of fun. I can’t begin to tell you how much we will miss her. Following is her own letter to you all.

We are so lucky to have Mrs Loren Newell continuing with the class. The children’s education will not be interrupted.

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**Dear Kids, Parents and Friends,**

**Just to let you know that my leave will continue for Term 2, leading up to my retirement in early Term 3. This means that I won’t be returning to classroom teaching in 2013.**

I would like to thank you all for your amazing support and friendship during my time at Kahibah Public School. When I arrived in 2000 and realised that the philosophy of the school matched my own exactly, I thought I’d died and gone to Heaven! I feel very privileged to have worked in such a special place, particularly under Pam’s inspired leadership.

You know how fantastic everyone who works at the school is – their care, concern, professionalism and dedication are beyond question. But it is the real magic of parents, their children and the staff all working so well together to get the very best outcomes for every child which separates us and makes us so unique.

Stay true to the fantastic values and beliefs which enable all the good things to happen and thank you so much for letting me share your children’s lives.

Love,
Maggie McNair

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**CHOOK CARERS NEEDED**

We are asking if there are any families who would be able to care for our chickens during the school holidays. If you are able to assist us, please let Heather or Loretta know. Thank you for your assistance.

**BOOK FAIR**

Our Book Fair will be held on Thursday, 9th May in the school Library.

A brochure will be sent home this week advertising our Book Fair. Last year we raised over $1,800 worth of books for our Library, as well as providing many students with good value books to read.

There are lots of well-loved children’s books as well as classics.

The fair will run from 8.30 until 4.00pm in the Library, so please come along and check out what is available.
Staff at our school feel blessed because of your wonderful children. They intrinsically care for each other, and though there are some incidents, they are all little champions. My greatest problem is the running on verandahs and through the foyer, so if you could reinforce at home that we walk everywhere, I’d be thrilled to bits! And, if that’s the biggest problem we face, how lucky are we!

- Congratulations to Manning Gregory in 1K who produced a creative portfolio of special drawings. He is quite talented and was very proud of his effort. Well done Manning!
- Ella Cleare managed a personal best in swimming 50 metres freestyle in 45 seconds and she was the club champion in breaststroke, backstroke and freestyle, even beating her Mum. Top achievement, Ella.
- Brady Anderson of 6A wrote a very interesting acrostic poem about change. The special thing about this was how he applied his thoughts to his own life and decided what changes he wanted to make in himself. Self-reflection is a very important skill to develop & we were all very proud of the courage he displayed. Top thinking Brady!
- Cody Neat of 4N played soccer in the Broadmeadow Magic World Cup, U/10s and though they were knocked out in the grand finals, the team performed very well. He played No 7 on the right wing & his proudest moment was when he passed the ball for someone to score. That’s what being a team member is all about. Congratulations!
- KN were very excited to show me how well they could spell already. Using the interactive whiteboard they worked out how to fill in gaps & how to spell their words. We had a lot of fun & their happy faces said it all.
- Phoebe Fitzgerald and Bronte Baldwin in 4N won the Newcastle Basketball T-1 League recently. This was quite an accomplishment so congratulations girls!
- Declan Clancy of 1H has become a star reader. He practises at home regularly and in just 7 weeks he has moved from level 3 to level 11. This is enormous growth & he’s so proud of his achievements. You are a little star, Declan.
- Tyler Bonofiglio was brought to me by classroom helper Imogen Melia. Imogen explained that Tyler from 1H was the 1st finished in the class, making up number 97 using “ten and ones” blocks. Great work Tyler.
- Huge thanks to the 3 senior girls who were in the library on computers yesterday morning. One of our parents found a book in the playground & upon taking it to the library she was greeted by these three girls who were described as being extremely polite, very well behaved, well mannered & very helpful. I don’t know who you are girls, but you do & know that we are very proud of what you did. Thanks a million.

**STAR STRUCK NEWS**

Congratulations to Matiese Rarity, Ella Nicod, Natalie McRory, Kira Finnie, Maddison Grant, Kristal Alfonso, Olivia Tindall, Emma Connolly, Ruby Crane, Tehani Morris, Amy Neal, Maikayla Smith-Wilson, Paul Battaglia, Hannah Gregory, Lily Wilson and Kahri Anderson who have been selected to be our Kahibah Star Struck team for 2013. We had a large number of senior students audition and the level of talent was very high.

We have been given three dance items in all, including the finale.

On Wednesday 1st and Thursday 9th May we will be going to the Newcastle Basketball Stadium to rehearse two of our items. All permission notes and transport notes need to be returned to me ASAP please. Each student is also required to bring in a flash drive this week (instead of the 2 blank DVDs) so I can put choreography onto it to learn over the holidays.

Information will go out next term regarding our school excursion to the Friday Matinee Star Struck performance.

Looking forward to an exciting and busy Term Two!

Kelly Bruce
Star Struck Coordinator

**FOUND**

A turkey was found in Frith St, on Friday afternoon. If anyone is missing a beautiful pet turkey, please phone 0421419634.
CONGRATULATIONS

* Huge congratulation wishes go to Mrs Beth Filipo, who gave birth to twin boys on 25th March. Fraser and Darcy are doing very well. Beth, husband Foss and son Mason are so delighted with their new additions to their family. It's the best news ever for such deserving, patient parents.
* Congratulations to the Black family on the arrival of their new baby girl. Tiana Lilly was born on 24th March. This is a little sister for Kalan who is in Kindergarten.
* Koby Imre from Kindergarten has a new baby sister. Eadie Lynn was born on 1st April. Congratulations to the Imre family on their new addition.

CHAPLAIN’S MESSAGE

One of the most difficult challenges I faced when becoming a palliative care volunteer, was to improve my listening skills & not have my own agenda. How often do we REALLY listen to what another person is actually saying, without wanting to add bits of our own, or drifting off, thinking of other things? I truly regret not having paid more attention on many occasions, yet I probably thought at the time that I was listening. However, I am aware that instead of being fully focused on my son’s conversations as we travelled home from school, that I would often allow my thoughts to wander to such things as what equipment I would need for my Yr6 Science lesson tomorrow; or who I would use in the left full back position of the school soccer team I was coaching; or what I would feed the troops for dinner, since I had forgotten to leave some meat out to thaw before I left for school.

Such mundane things were definitely not as important as my son’s words. Thankfully, these days I do make a concerted effort to close my mouth & focus on the conversation of the person speaking. Well at least I try!!

I hope you have more success than I once did.
Helen Harvie (Mrs Rainbow)
School Chaplain

PEACEFUL PARENTING COURSE

This course will be commencing next term with 6 sessions starting on Thursday, 9th May from 6.30pm—8.30pm each week up to and including 13th June. The flyer with all information is attached.

MOTHER’S DAY STALL 2013

The KPS Mothers Day Stall will be held on Thursday the 9th May. All gifts are only $5 with a great variety to choose from, all beautifully wrapped, ribboned and with gift tags. Students come to the stall with their teacher in a set time during the morning and are able to purchase one gift. For students who wish to buy more than one gift they are able to come back to the stall at lunchtime for additional purchases. If anyone could help out on the day that would be great, even if it’s just for an hour or two. We will be in the demountable classroom (next to the canteen).

Thanks
Janette Neal
0410655037

Sincerely

Pam Richardson
Invitation to.....our School Readiness Night

Come and meet with other parents, pre-school staff and Public School staff and have your questions answered.

Legal requirements, age, milestones in development, social skills, speech and language.

Guest speakers- Susan Behavioural Optometry, Dietician
Dorte Bladt- Chiropractor

When: Monday 13th May 2013
Time: 7.00pm start
Place: Charlestown Public School hall
RSVP: to your local school or pre-school by Tuesday 7th May

Refreshments provided. Hope to see you there.
PEACEFUL PARENTING
An initiative of the Whitebridge Community of Schools

Improve your family  Improve your world
Remove frustrations
Do you want your child to make responsible decisions? To be calm, safe, secure, cheerful, and happy?
Do you want to be a loving, caring, confident, calm parent who is in control?
Do you want to live a more peaceful life?

Parenting is the most difficult job in the world and we don’t get any training for it.

How we connect to our children in their early years determines how they will live their lives as they grow towards adulthood. This program links with restorative processes, helping to heal harm.

They need you to be the best parent you can be.

We offer you 6 intensive 2 x hour sessions at a COST of: $60 PER PERSON

Venue  Kahibah Public School Library  Frith St, Kahibah
Dates  9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th May
AND 6th AND 13th June
Time  6.30pm – 8.30pm

RSVP to book:
Phone 49434501
Facilitators:
Pam Richardson, Maggie McNair
and Brian Collins

*Places are limited!

Parents’ Comments: “Our life is much more peaceful”; “It’s been an excellent course and I’d like to say thank you from the bottom of my heart”; “I’m much calmer as a parent”; “There’s real harmony in our home now”; “I have a renewed faith in myself and the magic my family can share”; “Fantastic.” “I no longer yell,” “All parents should have the opportunity to do this course.”