From the School Coordinator

Thank you to all the fantastic people who contributed so well for the Autumn Festival (P&F take a bow). I have heard that it was one of the best in recent history and I certainly enjoyed the day as someone experiencing it all for the first time. Your feedback on what went well with the Autumn Festival and what you would like to see improved for next year is invited. There are feedback forms in the office.

It was a sad week to see Sabine Blankner leave, but Sandra Brandão has been in the office for her first week by herself and you have been wonderful at making her feel welcome. Thank you all for your positivity to yet more changes.

You have probably heard it a couple of times already, but I will say it again, the next couple of years are an important stage for the school. Because of the Empowering Local Schools programme, we have the very real possibility of developing into a single stream full primary school with a strong playgroup and kindergarten enthusing families about the opportunities offered by this form of education. We have just completed an application for funding for two more classrooms which will set the primary school up until around 2020. We are, at the same time, focusing on how to build the Playgroup to the next stage, whatever that means in today’s world, with the aim of also building one more kindergarten. Over the next couple of months Council and College will be engaging in a planning process where the exact steps and priorities will be defined for the next five years. We, of course, need everyone’s input into this and we strongly urge you to think about how you would like the school to look and feel in five or even ten years’ time and either chew the ear of someone on College or Council – or, even better – get yourself nominated to stand for Council. The AGM will be on the 10th May and we need you to be there. The other very important item at the AGM is that there are changes needed to the constitution to allow for the appointment of a School Coordinator. Council has been working on this and a few other minor changes. It will be most helpful if you have a look at the changes before that date.

The Calendar of the Soul, week 26

O Nature, your maternal life
I bear within the essence of my will.
And my will’s fiery energy
Shall steel my spirit striving,
That sense of self springs forth from it
To hold me in myself.
At the same time, we have applied to the Shire for permission to smarten up the road frontage of the school. This means that we will be starting to build a second entranceway for the school closer to the hall. Can you please consider the proposal which is detailed in the special box below and give me your thoughts about how it will affect you. In the longer term we hope to erect an entrance statement that advertises the school better. It will include low native plantings along the frontage to replace the mix of weeds and bracken currently there and some form of gateway with the school’s name.

Part of the development of the school’s Annual Plan is that we focus at the same time on what good habits we all need to have, especially when on school grounds, to allow the development of the school as a healthy, growing spiritual being. There are a few observations I have made over the last month or so that you might like to reflect on. The first is that a significant number of people are arriving late to school. Of course we can’t control the arrival of the bus, but we ask all other students to be at school, ready to go, before 9:50am. With the roadwork about to start on Scotsdale Rd, there will be considerable delays for a considerable time. Please don’t allow this to become an excuse for lateness. Next, there have been a few dogs on the school property not on a leash. This puts the school in a difficult position where it has to trust every dog owner that their dog is never going to be inappropriate on the school property. For example, there have been a few comments about small children being frightened by these “large” animals and a dog that punctured the school soccer ball. We therefore ask that all pet owners only bring their pets onto the school property when strictly necessary and that they are on a leash at all times.

Also, we have quite a few smaller children catching the bus and sometimes it has been quite stressful for them (and their teachers) to remember if they were to catch the bus after school. Could the parents of these younger children who often catch the bus organise a non-verbal system (perhaps a card or a token) that is in their school bag when they are to catch the bus.

Last, we seem to have a problem with unsupervised children at school while the parents are busy in Parent Evenings or similar. The teachers have effectively handed over duty of care as soon as the parent has greeted their child and, believe me, there is a major difference between children playing at school when they know there are teachers on duty and at other times, especially as the group size increases. We can help organise child care during parent evenings but we need notice and it may be simpler if parents arrange this themselves. Denise has offered the Kindergarten to supervised groups if she is given warning and the place is clean and tidy afterwards.
On a completely different topic, it is NAPLAN decision time again. The College is very clear that sitting NAPLAN in Class 3 makes no sense at all in our education system. On the other hand, it is probably important for the teachers at whichever high school the students attend – and possibly for the students themselves – that our Cl.7 students do sit this test. College has debated the value of Class 5 sitting NAPLAN, but did not reach a clear view point. Therefore over the next week or two we request the following: Cl.3 parents please think seriously about signing the enclosed withdrawal form. Cl.5 parents please discuss with either Eliza or Robert if you think your child needs to sit NAPLAN. Cl.7 parents please discuss with Eliza or Robert if you think your child should not sit NAPLAN. Withdrawal forms must be returned to the office by 16th April.

Some of us have been discussing the school’s road frontage and now it is important that you consider the following proposal and give us feedback if it will adversely affect you or if you have a better idea. The purpose of this work is to minimise the traffic jam at the current entrance way where there are vehicles heading in four directions. As the school grows, we believe this will become more and more difficult to sustain.

On this plan you will see that we want to put two single lane access points onto the school property. According to this proposal, all cars and busses would enter the property using the entrance closer to the hall. Cars would then park near the Playgroup, against the road frontage or close to the Kindergartens as normal. Then on exiting, all cars would leave via the access point closer to town.
News from Peppermint Cottage

We had a beautiful Easter Festival together with Silver Birch and Karri Kindergarten children and parents last Thursday the 28th of March. Denise told us a special Easter story as a puppet play, then we went out into the big playground searching for brilliantly dyed red Easter eggs. They were all found, two big baskets full! Then we went and had a picnic in the dell by the river, eating Easter eggs and freshly baked hot cross buns. Thank you all who came!

There are three more weeks of term left before the school holidays, which we will spend enjoying the lovely autumn season, with its produce, colours and joys.

A little brown possum knocked at my door,
I gave him an apple, he wanted some more.
The apple he took with dainty paws,
Then nibbled, holding it in his claws.
When all the apple he'd taken from me,
Away he scampered, into a tree!

Playgroup sessions are 9.30am to 11.30am Tuesdays and Thursdays, Parent and Baby group Wednesdays 10am to 12pm.

With thanks, Silvia, Clare, and Theda

From Silver Birch Kindergarten

Thank you to all the families who were able to attend our Easter Festival last Thursday. What a magical delightful and happy time we had hunting for eggs and celebrating by sharing morning tea together.

Our thanks to all the helpers and to the staff who cooked and created.

We experienced autumn in Denmark with a moist early morning and sunny time for morning tea, followed by a blessing by the rain fairies after lunchtime. This was a wonder filled way of travelling into the Easter break.

A reminder to all to watch out for head lice, which enjoy warm and moist conditions!

Kind regards, Christine and Sophia

From Karri Kindergarten

Summer goodbye, summer goodbye
You may no longer stay, Autumn is on its way
Summer goodbye, summer goodbye

Since the Equinox, the days are becoming noticeably shorter. This week we seem to be having a true taste of a typical Denmark Autumn, with cool misty mornings developing into very sunny, warm, still days. Some of the children have been arriving warmly dressed for the chilly start to the day, and becoming overheated as the day warms up. Please could you dress your little one in layers they can "peel off", (natural fabrics breathe best) or send along something short-sleeved in their school bag, and also ensure they have a sunhat at kindergarten?

Meanwhile, we will enjoy these lovely peaceful days while they last until King Winter arrives in all his wet, cold blustery glory! To make the most of this glorious weather, we are planning to go walking on Friday mornings, taking our morning tea, and afterwards having some playtime in the wider world nearby our kindergarten, then returning in time for the 12.30 pick-up. Our first little adventure will be to the paperbark forest where we will gather some fallen paperbark to renew our hanging baskets. Please ensure your child is wearing covered shoes on Friday ready for this expedition (or has a pair of rubber boots at kindergarten).

Warm wishes, Denise
Class 1/2 news

We have been learning to do roll call in Maori, which is New Zealand’s native language. They really do learn quickly!

Kiaora - Hello Kei te pēhea koe? - How are you?

Responses:

Ke te pai au I am good
Ke te teno pai au I am very good
Ke te pouri au I am sad
Ke te mauiui au I am unwell
Ke te hia kai au I am hungry

We have been adding new responses over time, and I have found it a really useful tool to know if a child is feeling out of sorts. You will be pleased to know that most of the responses are the first two.

Warm regards, Chrystal

Class 3/4 news

Well, we’ve had a busy couple of weeks with the Autumn Festival followed by Easter celebrations. Class 4 particularly enjoyed playing the dragon as part of the opening ceremony to what was a bright and cheerful day - thanks to everyone who made it so gorgeous. This Easter we thought about the things we were thankful for and had a lot of fun making arts and crafts. This week we look forward to settling into our routine again and continuing our work expanding the Bush Tucker garden.

Hope you all had an enjoyable long weekend with family and friends. Ingrid

Class 5/6/7 news

Thank you to all those wonderful parents who contributed baked items and crafts and helped out at the Easter markets. It was a successful day and well over $1000 was raised for our Dwellingup camp.

This week, the Class 5 students will be moving onto their first Botany main lesson. Often, in mainstream education, the study of Botany is approached by sprouting a few plants on the window sill and explaining the process of fertilisation, photosynthesis and the carbon dioxide/oxygen exchange. However, in Steiner education, we seek to give the children an imaginative picture of the whole of the plant kingdom over a period of 6-7 weeks (split into two main lesson blocks), finding ways to connect the various divisions of the plants with some aspect of the human being.

We will be looking at algae, seaweed, fungi, lichens, mosses, ferns and conifers in this main lesson block, saving the flowering plants until our next Botany main lesson in Term 2. Notice that we are not covering bacteria or microscopic plant forms. In general, the microscopic realm is saved for organic chemistry (usually introduced in the 8th year of Steiner Education) and for the primary student it is best to remain in the realm of what is visible to the eye.

This Friday, it is CRAZY HAIR DAY at Golden Hill! Students need to bring a gold coin donation (to go towards Dwellingup Camp) to wear their hair in any crazy hairstyle they like. Have a great week!
Parents and Friends Committee News

Thank you to the parents who have attended our meetings, and helped make the autumn festival such a wonderful success! Your help and contributions are so valuable to the school community. Our thoughts now bend towards the bush dance – planned for Saturday May 18th in Term 2.

Our next meeting will be NEXT Tuesday the 9th of April 12.30pm to 2.30pm at Peppermint Cottage. Please come and support us!

Your P+F committee

Market

Friday April 12-Last Markets for Term 1

Thanks to all class 1/2 parents who helped make the markets run smoothly last Thurs-although attendance was lower than previous markets, a significant amount was raised for their maths aids, and funds from the delegate vegie stall and Sofia’s quilts, felts and little treasures went to class 5/6/7 camp-what an industrious bunch we are!

This will be our last market before we really let the secret out and promote to the wider community. A big cheers to all parents who’ve had stalls and I hope to see you next term. For those who are thinking of becoming involved by having a stall, talk to me because I’d love to hear your ideas and share some of my own- seriously, my head is bursting with them.

Next Friday, MacDougals will be back with their fruit, chestnuts and fruit trees- its the time of year to be planting out and Rod and Marion have been propagating trees in Denmark longer than anyone.

There’ll be more seasonal fruit and veg, seedlings, honey, preserves, wholefoods, olives.....(may I suggest bringing your own shopping baskets or bags) and Brad will be bouncing about on the oval with hoops and diablos.

See you there.

Simone 9848 1942 or email simonecoleman@westnet.com.au

Book stall

If you have books to donate, all funds raised go to the school. Donations to be dropped at the office with Sandra.

Lost and Found

- Please, take a minute to check the lost and found box outside the office. All the items will be taken to an op. shop after the end of the term. Thank you, Sandra.
- White Ipod with black case still not found. Please, keep eyes open for it. Thanks, Lena (0405 630 651).

Clothes Swap

Wednesday April 10th 3pm, at the school hall. Please, put aside clothes suitable for school that have been outgrown and bring to the hall, to take away some next size up items. The more people involved, the better this will work!

Rental

Family with a dog coming to Denmark are looking for a house to rent, 2 or 3 bedrooms and up to 15km out of town. Please, contact Bo Wong - bo@metaphoto.com.au.