Cyber-safety Workshops

On Tuesday 19th of August students from years 5 to 7, teachers and parents attended one of three very informative presentations on Cyber-safety. We were fortunate to have Greg Gebhart from the Australian Communications and Media Authority – Cyber-Safety Team share with us the current trends, issues and strategies for living in an online world.

I would like to thank the parents who attended on Tuesday night. If you were unable to attend, please take a look at the ACMA Cyber-safety website.

Additionally, the Queensland Police Service will also be holding an Internet Safety Presentation at The Community Place - 33 Teevan Street, Stafford – on Tuesday 9th September from 6:30pm – 8:00pm. This is a FREE seminar and will include a light supper. Please RSVP by phone: 3857 1152 or email: enquiries@thecommunityplace.com.au.

Grandparents Day

Last Friday 15th August was our annual Grandparents Morning and we had a fantastic turnout! Every year, the McDowall State School Grandparents' Morning becomes ever more successful. This year, some grandparents even travelled from North Queensland and inter-State to attend and spend the weekend with family.

Prep Activity Day

On Tuesday 12th August we held our Prep Activity Day, filled with fun educational activities to further develop:

- Social and Personal Learning
- Active Learning Processes

The day was very successful, achieving good learning outcomes while having some great fun along the way!

Prep students enjoying the activities, including: Callyn M, Jasper S, Nicholas D, Jack W, Jayden J and Nathan F.
The X–Factor by Dr Cavanagh

**What is it?**
- We all need it.
- We all should be doing it.
- We’re often unaware we’re doing it.
- We do it quickly.
- We do it instinctively.
- We do it at home and school.
- We don’t have a problem with it.

**Some of us don’t have it!**
- We can’t do it.
- We struggle with doing it.
- We’re not lazy.
- We’re not careless.
- We find it difficult.
- We don’t understand it.
- We have problems with it.

**I’m talking about . . . Executive Function skills.**

Prep or Year 1 teachers are often the first to notice children’s delays or deficits in the development of age-expected Executive Function skills. Whilst teachers may not necessarily know the term, ‘Executive Function’, they do recognise that some children have problems with paying attention, remembering instructions, controlling their impulses, staying focused on their work, and communicating their wants and needs verbally. These skills are seen by teachers as major determinants of success at school. Even when only a couple of children in a class have underdeveloped Executive Function abilities, precious time gets diverted from learning activities.

The metaphor of an Air Traffic Controller is very useful in gaining an understanding of the highly complex way in which Executive Function skills work together to produce competent Executive Functioning. Consider the job of Air Traffic Controllers at busy airports. They manage the arrival and departure of dozens of aeroplanes on multiple runways. They direct traffic both on the ground and through controlled airspace. They separate aircraft, prevent collisions, organise and expedite traffic flow, and provide information and support for pilots. Significantly, the ‘Air Traffic Control System’ within our brain is called ‘Executive Function’.

‘Executive Function’ involves being able to focus, hold information in your mind, filter distractions, work with the information, and when the need arises, switch gears to move on to a different concept. To complete tasks successfully, our brain must coordinate several types of Executive Function skills, the most well-known ones being: Working Memory, Inhibitory Control and Mental Flexibility.

- ‘Working Memory’ refers to your capacity to hold and manipulate information in your head, over short periods of time. Good Working Memory is shown when children are able to hold rules in their head as they figure things out.
- The next Executive Function skill, termed ‘Inhibitory Control’, relates to being able to control and filter your thoughts and impulses so that you can resist temptation, distractions, and habits. Inhibitory Control is displayed when children demonstrate their ability to focus and block out distractions.
The third Executive Function skill, ‘Mental Flexibility’ enables us to pick up mistakes and fix them; revise ways of doing things in light of new information; consider something from a fresh perspective; and, think outside the box. Mental Flexibility is shown by children who are able to direct and re-direct their attention from, for example, a task involving the red colour, to one involving the blue colour, then back again. To be effective, Executive Function skills must work together. For instance, it takes Working Memory to hold two rules in your mind; Inhibitory Control to be able to ignore one of the rules; and, Mental Flexibility to switch between rules as the requirements of the task change.

The fact that young children have a difficult time with self-control, planning, ignoring distractions, and adjusting to new demands is hardly news to the adults who care for them. However, it is not widely recognised that these capacities do not automatically develop with maturity, over time. Contrary to popular belief, learning to control impulses, pay attention, and retain information actively in one’s memory does not happen automatically as children mature, and young children who have problems with these skills will not necessarily grow out of them.

The gradual acquisition of Executive Function skills corresponds closely to the extended development of the brain’s prefrontal cortex regions from infancy through to late adolescence. It is important to note that the brain regions and circuits associated with Executive Functioning have extensive interconnections with deeper brain structures that control the developing child’s responses to threat and stress. This implies that the developing Executive Functioning System both influences and is affected by the young child’s experience and management of threat, stress, and strong emotions. Therefore, extended exposure to threatening situations can compromise the development and deployment of Executive Function skills. In contrast, well-developed capabilities in these areas can help children (and adults) manage stress effectively.

It is less well known that the developing brain circuitry related to these kinds of skills follows an extended timetable that begins in early childhood and continues past adolescence, and that it provides the common foundation on which learning and social skills are built. Once again, contrary to popular belief, young children who do not stay on task, who lose control of their emotions, or are easily distracted are not bad kids who are being intentionally uncooperative and belligerent. Young children with compromised or delayed Executive Function skills can display very challenging behaviours for which they are often blamed. In most circumstances, however, it is the protracted development of the prefrontal cortex that is to blame.

TO BE CONTINUED....

In future editions of Tartan Times, we’ll explore:
• Executive Function Milestones
• Impact of Execution Functioning on Learning
• Executive Function Skills and Social Play
• Enhancing the Development of Executive Function Skills

Dr Cavanagh

**Library News**

Book Week has been a HUGE success, so thank you to everyone who participated in our various activities. We’ll be providing a full report on Book Week in the next edition of the *Tartan Times*, but for the time being, here’s a snippet from our super-fun Pyjama Party last night (Wednesday 20 August).

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**Sports News**

**Regional Athletics**

Next Tuesday and Wednesday (26th & 27th August), 28 athletes and three relay teams from our School will compete in the Metropolitan Regional Athletics Carnival at the University of Queensland.

Our students will be representing both McDowall State School and the North District as they aim for selection in the Metropolitan North team to compete at the State Track and Field Championships later in the year.

Our regional relay teams are:

- Girls 10 yr relay team : Sasha T, Abbey W, Sarah B, Charlianne M
- Girls 12 yr relay team : Neasher M, Giselle O, Maddie H, Kyra E
- Boys 12/13 yr relay team : Tom L, Noah B, Damin A, Reeve A

**Inter-school Sport Years 5-7**

We are currently planning Inter-school Sports for Term 4. We’re planning on offering the following sports: Touch Football, Softball, T-Ball, Baseball, Futsal and Tipsy Bash Cricket. Students from Years 5 to 7 will be able to nominate for one of these teams. We will endeavour to place students in the team of their choice. Students will play against other schools in our district each Friday afternoon for 7 weeks in Term 4. *(Please note: there will be no sport when the G20 Summit is on).*

Costs are being finalised but we expect them to be similar to last year which was $60. We encourage and welcome all students to participate in Friday afternoon sport in a McDowall State School team. If your child is unable to participate in a school team, they will participate in the Multi-School program at school. If this is the case, please advise Mr Henderson via a note.
Music News

Instrumental Recruitment Concerts
The Instrumental Recruitment Concerts held last week were a great success. At the concerts, all students should have received a form to indicate if they would like to join the instrumental music program. Please ensure students return this form as soon as possible to Miss Pomroy or the School Office.

Chamber Music Concert
This concert is more intimate than our two large Celebration Concerts and showcases the talent of our students in small ensemble and solo performances.

Students who have auditioned to perform at the Concert will be notified soon by their instrumental teacher and receive a note for parents with all necessary information.

Only a limited number of performances will be allowed in order to keep the concert to a reasonable length. We hope to see you there to support the talented musicians at McDowall!

Honours Music Camp
Congratulations to all students who were accepted to attend this year’s Honours Music Camp. Those students will receive an information brochure as well as a medical and consent form this week. The Honours Music Camp will be held on the 10th - 12th September (week 9).

CONTACT: Miss Pomroy – Music Teacher

Defence Family News

Term 3 has been busy for all students. I continue to see a small group of eager students with their friends at Little Heroes. Pom-poms have been a favourite this Term!

Some of the defence children from Prep, Year One and Year Two have been making ‘Treasure Boxes’ for when their parent/s are away, on course or out bush. The idea behind the Treasure Boxes is to help children develop resilience during parental absences. Children can place special items in the box for safe keeping and once their parent returns, they can sit down and share what they have been up to over the weeks and months.

Some children have begun making hugs and kisses boxes to add for each day their parent is absent. The idea being that they can present their loved one with a box full of love when they return.

DCO is hosting a Moving Schools Workshop on the 26th August.

Thank you to those families who have returned their School Posting Forms. This information is essential in being able to provide direct support to your children in preparation for their move.

Please contact me should you have any issues that you wish to discuss.

CONTACT: Mrs Jones – Defence School Transition Aide

cjone404@eq.edu.au
What's Happening

AUGUST 2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; 27</td>
<td>Prep – Yr 7</td>
<td>Merrille O'Neill Book Week Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>25/08 – 01/09</td>
<td>Yr 3</td>
<td>The Times are Changing – Brisbane Urban Environmental Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>P&amp;C Association General Meeting K Block 7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-28</td>
<td>Yr 5-7</td>
<td>Regional Athletics</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Yr 6-7</td>
<td>School Tennis Tournament</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>‘More Than Words’ Concert School Hall 6.30pm-10pm</td>
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SEPTEMBER 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02-03</td>
<td>Yr 5</td>
<td>Nudgee Beach Environmental Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Tartan Network Meeting School Hall 8.30am</td>
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<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Performing Arts Chamber Concert School Hall 6.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Prep – Yr 7</td>
<td>P&amp;C Association Fathers’ Day Stalls</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Yr 5</td>
<td>Fathers’ Day Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-12</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Instrumental Music Honours Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yr 1</td>
<td>Arts and Activity Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Prep – Yr 7</td>
<td>Student Council ‘Casual Dress Day’ $1 collected.</td>
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P&C Association

P&C Fundraising Concert – In only 9 days – Saturday 30 August!!!!

More Than Words is a corporate vocal group that have performed in many big venues around town. Bring your friends and family along for some Adults Only fun for only $40. Concert starts at 6:30pm for 7pm

To book or for enquiries, please email: kathy.wright@queenslandshowchoir.com.au.

CONTACT – Ms Kathy Wright – Parent Volunteer

Tartan Tuckerbox

The Tuckshop will be open on Mondays for over the counter sales. There will be no Flexischools orders. We have a few sandwiches, drinks and snacks on sale. Mrs Anelle Moller (Tuckshop Manager) at the Tuckerbox, phone 3872 5304 or email tuckshop@mcdowallss.com.