Welcome to Week 6 and the official start of winter. Year 6 head off to Canberra tomorrow for their three day, action packed visit. I know they are all excited about going and am sure they will represent themselves and the school proudly.

Next week we welcome a past student, Charlotte Elvy, back to school for some work experience. Charlotte will be helping out in our Infants classes during the week.

**There will be no canteen this Friday, 6th June.**

Finally, please remember that the Uniform Pool is now open on Tuesday mornings.

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**Mr Giles**

**Congratulations to:**

- All students competing at the district cross country carnival with everyone doing an amazing job!
- Halle Boyd and Lawson McElrea for both qualifying to represent the Lower Blue Mountains PSSA at the regional cross country carnival.
- The following students who have completed their Premier’s Reading Challenge:

**Thank you to:**

- ALL teachers and parents who helped with last Friday’s mammoth task of covering the district cross country and the 13 Storey Treehouse performance.
- Mrs Howat and Mrs McKellar for all of their work in organising the Year 6 Canberra excursion.

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**Term 2 Assemblies**

Assemblies for Term 2 will be:

- Friday 13th June – Infants (K-2)
- Friday 27th June – Captains’ Assembly (K-2)

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**What's Happening At Our School ......**

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**School Banking**
There will be no school banking during the last week of Term 2 – Thursday 26th June.

**Stewart House School Clothing Appeal**
All clothing appeal bags need to be returned to the school no later than this Friday 6th June, 2014.

**Unexplained Absences**
If your child/ren is away from school a note explaining the reason of the absence is required to be sent to school within 7 days of them returning to school.

If you know your family is going to be away for an extended period (a family trip for eg) then an “Exemption from Attendance at School” should be applied for. Contact the office for further details. If a student has high absenteeism during the school year a referral will be made to the Home School Liaison Officer.

*During the next week, letters will be sent home to those families where our records indicate an unexplained absence exists. If you receive a letter please complete the reason for the absence and return the slip to school.*

If there are any questions regarding school attendance please contact Mr Giles.

**Reforms to P&C Federation**
The NSW Parliament has introduced legislation to reform the NSW Federation of Parent and Citizens Associations, which has suspended operation pending Supreme Court action. While these reforms will not affect the day-to-day operation of individual school P&Cs, they will introduce a new executive structure which will ensure the Federation operates as a modern and representative body on behalf of school P&C Associations.

Each school’s P&C Association will be asked to vote for councillors and delegates who will represent their electorate at the Federation’s Annual General Meeting and councillors who will serve on the Federation’s Board of Management. More information will be available on the Department’s website at http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-z/involvement.php

**UWS PENRITH OBSERVATORY**
Great Western Highway, Werrington North (Building AO)

**ASTRONOMY NIGHT**
Saturday 7th June (7-9pm)

**WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH A RADIO DISH OR TWO?**
Radio astronomy involves looking at light from the weakest part of the electromagnetic spectrum, which has such little energy that giant radio dishes are needed to collect it. We’ll look at what you can do with a dish or two (or a few thousand), including historic discoveries, the space program, pulsars, radio dishes in space, future massive radio telescopes, and so on.

*The night will include a multimedia presentation, a 3D astronomy movie and viewing of the night sky through the University’s 0.6 metre and 0.25 telescopes (weather permitting).*

**Cost:** $15 adult, $10 child/concession & $40 family

**Bookings essential:**

**Enquiries:**
Phone: (02) 4736 0135 (Mon, Wed or Thurs)
or email: r.mccourt@uws.edu.au

**Good News!**
Blue Mountains Occasional Care is extending their hours from 9:30am – 2pm at every venue. We are open in school term once a week at Blaxland, Lawson and Blackheath.

We offer an early childhood program where children can make friends and learn through play (for children 0 – 6 years).

So what is Occasional Care? It is quite similar to preschool or long day care as it follows the same curriculum (EYLF) and is led by an Early Childhood Teacher and caring team of Educators. The difference is shorter sessions that are more affordable and flexible booking arrangements. Many of our families use occasional care so they can study or attend appointments. A government subsidy is available to all families also.

Please phone Kerry 0412 932 801 or visit our website at [www.mocs.org.au](http://www.mocs.org.au)
**School Volunteers**

A reminder that if you are considering helping out with any activity at school please remember that a *Working With Children (WWC)* form will need to be completed and returned to the office. When completing the form you will need 100pts of identification which will need to be sighted when handing in the form.

Both the required form and a list of ID which can be used has gone home in previous newsletters but is also available on the school website on the Notes page.

If you have already registered through the Kids Guardian website then all we will need is the clearance number you were given. If there are any questions please contact the office.

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**Student Assistance, We Can Help**

During the course of the school year there are many financial demands upon parents. Excursions, uniforms, shows and textbooks are just a few. As a parent I understand the constant pressure that these costs can bring to a family budget and that as parents we want to provide our children with all opportunities made available to them. Each year the school is provided with a small budget to help any parents who may require some financial assistance for school related expenses. *If parents require any assistance with school related expenses please contact Mr Giles or your child’s teacher. All enquiries are confidential.*

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**Anaphylaxis – a shared responsibility**

Being the start of a new school year it is just the right time to remind everyone about this issue. We now have a couple of students at our school who have a severe allergic reaction to peanuts. This anaphylactic reaction is likely to be life-threatening. For this reason we ask that peanuts are not brought to school. This includes peanut butter, nut spreads (nutella), and nut bars.

The inconvenience to some children is recognised and appreciated, but the consequences to children with this severe allergy are extremely serious.

All members of our school community are asked to be aware of the dangers of even the slightest contact with peanuts or tree nuts for these children.

To help minimise the risk, simply washing hands and cleaning teeth before coming to school would really help.

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**Lost A Copy Of A Past Educom Issue??**

*The Educom Is On the Internet*

Our bi-weekly Educom can be accessed from the internet on our web site –


If you are not receiving your fortnightly issue of the Educom please contact the office and update your email contact.

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**School Security, You Can Help**

If parents or community members observe any destructive or suspicious behaviour in the school grounds please ring the School Security phone number listed below. All reports are treated discreetly; names do not have to be left with the operator.

**School Security - 1300 880 021**
Join 1st Blaxland Scout Group

If your child is active and adventurous, Scouts could be for them!

Scouts is a worldwide youth movement for boys and girls aged 6 through to 26. Scouts offers children an outdoor educational program that allows for socialisation in a different environment, teaches them about working in teams, builds an understanding of the value of physical fitness, broadens their experience and develops an understanding of responsibility and leadership.

There are five sections, broken into separate age groups:
1. **Joey Scouts** is for 6-8 year olds
2. **Cub Scouts** is for 8-11 year olds
3. **Scouts** is for 11-15 year olds
4. **Venturers** is for 15-18 year olds
5. **Rovers** is for 18-26 year olds

The leaders who work with the youth members are aged from 18 and over. Each of the sections enjoys their own weekly meetings during school terms.

**Activities**
Scouts enjoy lots of fun activities including camps, hikes, abseiling, bike riding, swimming, playing games, learning knots, first aid, orienteering, singing, making craft objects, cooking, earning badges.

There are also outings to places such as the zoo, the movies, the police/fire station, ten in bowling, ice skating, indoor rock climbing, etc.

**Involvement with community events**
includes: Clean Up Australia Day and ANZAC day march.

**Availability**
Our Group currently has places available within all of our Sections, and we look forward to having new members join us to experience the fun of Scouts.

For more information please contact our Group Leader, Adrian Watt with an email to adrianwatt@netspace.net.au. You can also check out the Scouts NSW website www.nsw.scouts.com.au.

To join up, contact Adrian Watt on adrianwatt@netspace.net.au or 0411 106 795.
Keep your saving - Plus make friends with the dolphins at Sea World.

Adventure Holiday: Underwater to win a family trip to the Lost City of the Sunken Treasure.
Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Michael Grose

Helping kids leapfrog their difficulties with these 5 ideas

A parent’s attitude to their child’s difficulties will determine how successfully they meet and overcome many of the obstacles and hurdles they meet.

Whether it’s going to school for the first time, making new friends or even going to school camp, children often experience difficulties that they need to overcome.

When children overcome problems and deal with unpleasant situations they learn they are capable, which is the basis of self-esteem and confidence.

Children’s resilience is fostered when they overcome problems and manage unpleasant social situations such as teasing or going into new situations. Protecting kids from challenging experiences robs them of chances to learn, develop and grow.

Resilient kids look back and draw on skills and understandings they have developed in the past to help them deal with present challenges. For instance, a sixteen year old girl recently revealed how her time spent on a twelve-day adventure camp helped her overcome the homesickness she experienced on a six-month student exchange.

She remembered how on the first day of her school camp she didn’t think she could make it – but she did. She experienced those same doubts early in her exchange but she knew that just as she had coped before she would do so again, but this time in more difficult circumstances. She was drawing on the same resources.

Here are five great parenting ideas to help your kids leapfrog their difficulties:

1 Frame the problem as a challenge:
Frame the difficulty as a challenge rather than a problem. Kids take their cues from their parents so the frame of ‘challenge’ gives kids something to rise to rather than be overwhelmed by.

2 Coach kids to do well:
Talk kids through their challenges, give them ideas to cope and manage. Consider rehearsing some skills or language that they may need.

3 Show confidence they will succeed:
Children generally meet their parents’ expectations so make sure your expectations are realistic, positive and supportive of their feelings.

4 Give kids a chance:
Allow kids to approach challenges in their own way without constantly checking on them. Your nervousness is definitely catching.

5 Celebrate their success:
Even if they were partially successful, such as they went to school camp for two out of the three days, then praise their efforts. They’ve got a great building block for next time.

The attitude and approach of parents and teachers will determine how successfully children and young people meet and overcome many of the hurdles they encounter. That attitude needs to be courageous, sensitive and hopeful that your child will meet, and overcome with assistance, all the challenges they encounter.
Helping kids who struggle at school

The way we praise our children, even from a very early age, can have a lasting impact. When done effectively, it can really promote resilience.

More and more in my work, I hear about young children struggling with anxiety, serious behavioural concerns, mental health issues and aggression.

At the same time, I am staggered to see the ‘push down’ of formalised learning onto children under six in this country. This is contrary to best practice in early years education and despite a lack of evidence validating any positive influence of early formalised education on young children’s lives.

In Issue 9 of Parentingideas Magazine, I wrote about why play is critical for brain development and social, emotional and cognitive development in young children.

The removal of play in kindergarten and preschool in favour of sight words and worksheets, homework and black line markers can be damaging to our children’s ability to function as social beings – which is still our key biological driver.

Much of the push seems to be happening to improve schools’ data – misinformed principals seeking good NAPLAN results and top rankings on the MySchool website. However, lots of educators tell me that they also get pressure from parents who do not understand how critical non-formal learning is early on.

The rise in aggressive behaviour being exhibited by many younger children, mainly boys, is a sign they are unable to cope in environments with no opportunity to play, no fun, little movement and developmentally inappropriate tasks. We then penalise these children by suspending or expelling them.

The latest COAG Reform Council report on education, released in October 2013, shows that despite some improvements in overall outcomes, the gap for Indigenous children and disadvantaged children is growing ever wider.

When you think that around 30% of children struggle with school anyway, how can parents better support their kids if they are struggling?

Tips for struggling kids

The first thing to consider is whether there are any developmental delays.

Children mature at varied rates and in all sorts of ways depending on environment and unique genetic templates.

Any kid can have developmental delays around phonemic awareness, and these can be helped by being read to a lot, learning nursery rhymes and songs and engaging in lots of conversation.

From birth children need to be saturated in sound from humans as they are unable to learn sounds from television, DVDs or screen-based devices like iPads.

If the delays are in self-regulation – the ability to manage one’s energy, to be able to concentrate for up to 15 minutes, to sit quietly when asked – you need to identify and reduce the stressors in the affected child’s life.

Things that improve self-regulation include music, sport, real play, time spent in nature and being in safe environments. Things that hinder it are too much television or other screen time, being too passive, poor food, lack of sleep, too much pressure and weak human connectedness.

If a child is forced to attempt a task they’re unable to do developmentally, this can cause enormous distress. Take handwriting for four- to five-year-olds: it’s a complex task that many children are unable to do until closer to six. The brain integration required is deceptively complex.

When a child cannot do a task like handwriting, or can’t manage to remember sounds or colour within the lines, they often see themselves as dumb or stupid.
Have realistic expectations of your children and talk to their teachers or school leaders if you feel they are expecting too much. (There are lots of articles on my website you can use as evidence in these conversations.)

If it is identified that your child has some delay issues, early intervention is essential, particularly if they are identified as having an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), auditory processing concerns or sight issues.

Not all kids are going to do well at school. According to Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory we have at least nine different ways of being smart. Google this to show your children and help them work out ‘which smarts are you?’

If your child is struggling academically it is important to help them at home to be really competent at something! Self-mastery builds confidence – even if it’s tree climbing, stargazing, frog hunting, growing vegies or helping to fix things in the shed. This helps them build a healthy sense of self, even if they struggle with maths or learning to read.

For older children, investing in tutors and maybe purchasing some technology-based support is well worth the cost.

Practice makes perfect and brain plasticity allows for kids to always improve with increased effort. Remember that it must be engaging learning and fun or it will simply make things worse.

Finally, if your child is displaying really significant anxiety and distress and you have done your best to work with the school to improve things, then the environment may need to change.

We can’t leave kids struggling and just say ‘toughen up’ – otherwise we are just wiring them for hypersensitivity for life, when childhood should be filled with joy and delight.

Maggie Dent is an author, educator and speaker dedicated to quietly changing lives through commonsense wisdom. She has four adult sons and is author of five books and numerous resources including a new video seminar on raising boys: Boys, Boys, Boys. Check out her blogs, newsletter and other resources at www.maggiedent.com.
Valley Heights Locomotive Depot
1914-2014

Centenary Steam Train Shuttle Rides
Sunday 22nd June 2014
Penrith – Valley Heights – Penrith

Four Return Trips 9:35, 11:10, 12:50 & 14:35 (subject to change)
Rides depart from and return to Penrith

Tickets available from Heritage Express – www.heritageexpress.com.au

Further Centenary Details:
Website: www.infoblue_mountains.net.au/locodepot
Email: atmuseum@optusnet.com.au
Phone: (02) 4751 4638 – Leave message
Address: 17b Tusculum Road, Valley Heights NSW 2777
A FREE COURSE for Australian citizens, permanent residents and some visa holders, not enrolled in another free TAFE course

Pathways to Office Skills

The course will include skills needed for effective work in an office or business environment:

- Computer skills
- Personal presentation, communication and organisational skills
- Using business equipment & technology
- Job search, applications and interview skills
- Training and career pathways

Classes will be held:
Fridays 10.00—3.00 from 25 July to 28 November
at Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre, 62 White Cross Rd Winmalee

Compulsory enrolment session:
Friday 18 July at 10 am at the Neighbourhood centre

Registration essential:
Please call Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre on 4754 4050 to register or for more information
The Mt Riverview P&C Association is running a school disco with a real DJ!

**Date:**  
Friday 20\(^{th}\) June 2014

**Time:**  
6.00pm – 7.30pm

**Cost:**  
$7 per child, which includes a popper and packet of chips. Payments are to be made to the school office.

**Safety:**  
Children must be dropped off and collected at the school hall by a parent / guardian. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to enter the disco without being dropped by a parent / guardian at the door or allowed to leave until collected.

**Please return the permission note and money to the school office by Friday 13\(^{th}\) June.**

Children will receive a ticket to the disco and a roll will be kept just in case tickets are lost. For supervision and insurance reasons tickets are limited to only children currently attending our school. Sorry no siblings at this event.

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**Yes I can come!**

I give permission for my child (listed below) to attend the P&C School Disco on Friday 20\(^{th}\) June. I have enclosed $7 for each child.

Child 1 Name: __________________________________ Class: ____________________________

Child 2 Name: __________________________________ Class: ____________________________

Child 3 Name: __________________________________ Class: ____________________________

Child 4 Name: __________________________________ Class: ____________________________

**Emergency Contact**

Please complete the following details in case of an emergency on the night.

Emergency Contact: __________________________________ Telephone: ____________________________

**Parent Supervisors**

We will need some parents to help supervise during the disco. Please let us know if you are able to assist (please only parents that can assist without additional siblings to ensure we have enough adults supervising at all times).

Name: __________________________________ Telephone: ____________________________

Email: __________________________________