

THE FRIDAY FLIER

(Published fortnightly)

KOTA HITANGA

Waikato Waldorf School, Kindergartens and Play Circle



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Kia Ora Whanau

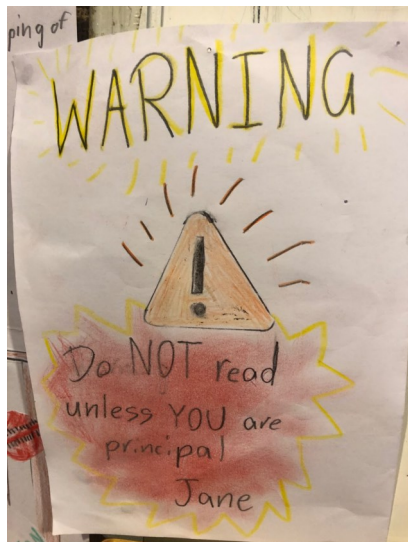
The end of term is upon us and I hope it finds your family feeling successful after a great term of learning and fun at school, and ready for a pleasant break ahead. As our school year is so neatly divided into four terms, it's useful to take time to reflect on the success and learnings each term break, in preparation for the next term. I recommend chatting with your child/ren about what they consider their success this term and what they may be looking forward to learning/doing next term. Success is not just the outcome, but all the little steps of learning along the way.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your many messages, bags of feijoas and friendly smiles as I've eased into the new role here. I've had a great term and I love the community heart, the students and my wonderful team here. It is such a great school and I'm delighted to journey with you all as we continue to grow and develop Waldorf education here in the Waikato.

Flier Contributions

It's been a quiet past two weeks, what with the shorter weeks due to Easter, and the rounding off of work in classes, therefore there aren't many class contributions to share in this Flier. Instead here are a couple of things I've received this term that were very inspiring!

Class 5 sent me letters, which are pinned on my office wall and make for delightful reading, and they came with this warning:



Class 3 created and hand delivered a petition for a pool:



Whanau Group

There were two meetings of parents/whanau of Akonga Maori (students who whakapapa Maori) this term as we seek to enact the Treaty of Waitangi and offer opportunity for Maori whanau. This is a growing piece of work, and myself, the school senior leaders and the board are walking alongside our whanau to support this. The next meeting is scheduled for 15 May and a calendar invite has been sent to those involved.

Attendance

As mentioned previously, we are continuing to monitor student attendance and welcome your support of this. We are in the process of developing specific steps and their related paperwork, in our notification process regarding attendance, and I will share this with you next term when it is finalised.

Visioning the future of Waldorf Education

A group of us from the School Board and Proprietors' Trust have begun to work on visioning forward - how can we continue to grow the success of our school? We will keep you updated as we develop plans, we are only at the draft vision scoping stage currently.

I am attending the International Waldorf Teacher Education Conference next week and will give feedback gained from this as relevant, I'm sure it will be a fruitful time! I've added an article at the end of this flier from the Goetheanum Pedagogical Section entitled 'Education towards responsibility for a shared world' which is also a topic at the conference I will be attending at Goetheanum.

It's been a really successful term here, the staff have worked hard and I'm hoping they take a well earned break in the next fortnight.

Happy holidays to you all,

Jane Keir
Principal

Term 2 Start: 29th April 2024

MESSAGE FROM MIRO HOUSE KINDERGARTEN

OUR COMMUNAL CARPARK

As we strive to maintain a safe and efficient environment for all families during pickup times, we kindly request your cooperation in utilising the parking lot shared between the school and kindergarten differently.

Recently, we've observed a few instances that have caused inconvenience to some of our parents, and in some cases, there have been some pretty scary close calls with children and between cars. We understand that everyone is eager to secure a convenient parking spot, but it's important to prioritise the needs of those with young children, some of whom are not yet walking, others who are still learning about safety in such areas.

Here are a few reminders to ensure a smoother experience for everyone:

- ◆ **Respectful Parking:** When parking your vehicle, please ensure that you park accurately within the designated parking spaces. This ensures that there is enough room for all vehicles and pedestrians to manoeuvre safely. We are aware that the curved aspect of the parks alongside the kindergarten are difficult to navigate but if you could park within the lines then we will have more parking spaces available during our busiest times.
- ◆ **Consideration for Others:** If you anticipate that you'll be parked for more than 10 minutes, we kindly ask that you consider parking on the adjacent road. This gesture allows other parents who require short-term parking to access spaces closer to the school and kindergarten.
- ◆ **Efficient Use of Space:** Please be mindful of unnecessary idling in parked cars. If you find yourself needing to wait for an extended period, and/or are needing to take a phone call, kindly switch off your engine and vacate the parking space as soon as possible to free it up for others.
- ◆ **Prioritising Accessibility:** The car parks outside the kindergarten are intended for kindergarten families to use, for those parents with our youngest children, and those who are pregnant. These are often the hardest years to navigate car parks with children.

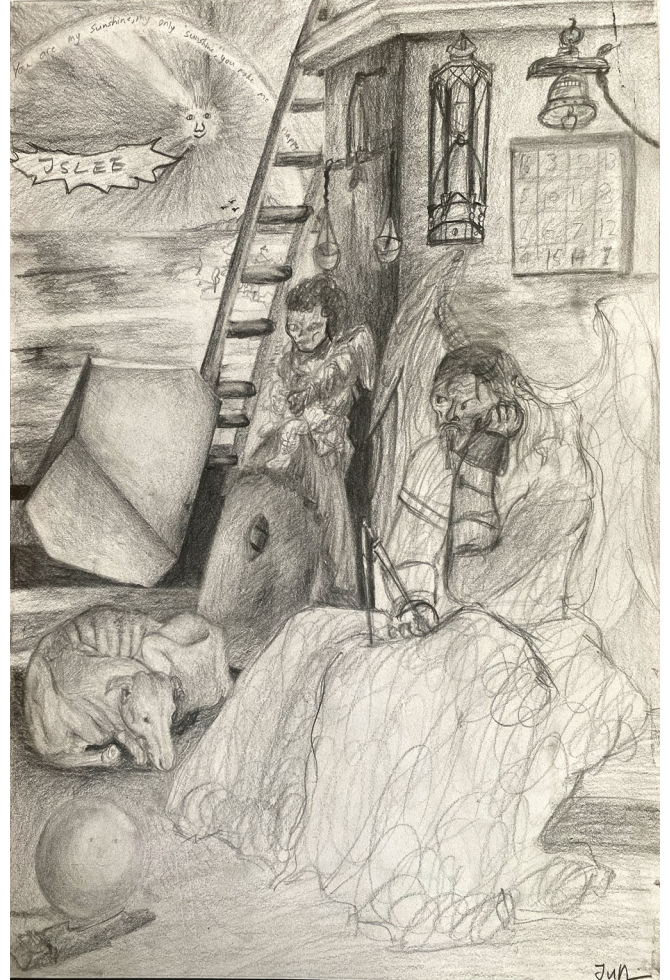
By adhering to these simple guidelines, we are doing our best to keep our parking area a safe and accessible space for all families. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated as we work together to foster a supportive community environment.

Margaret McCarthy
ECE Principal

Class 8 Visual Art

The students completed an artist study looking at the work of Albrecht Durer. Their task was to copy one of the engravings he did in 1514 called Melancholia I. Alongside the drawing the students are learning about the elements of art and how these are used in the artwork. They also hear about the themes within it and what the artist was like. Here are some of the results.

There are always students who find this task a challenge and this is a great opportunity for them to develop their artistic eye.



Education towards responsibility for a shared world -

an article from the Goetheanum Pedagogical Section:

Education is a field of radical responsibility: society's basic responsibility towards those who are coming into the world. Constanza Kalik's contribution to the «Freedom and Responsibility» lecture series.

To receive those who are coming into the world and enable them to participate in a shared world in an active, autonomous way is a social obligation; because we are human and, while birth is given us as a gift of nature, being able to live requires enabling by others. This obligation of society is self-evident and unquestionable. What we need to ask is: what conditions are required so that this growing into the world can become an acquiring of freedom and responsibility.

Learning, in childhood and youth in particular, happens among human beings: that is where it takes place and where it finds its preconditions. Education is realized in the space of relationships, of dependence, a space that must be both open and protected. The immediate relationships of teachers to learners or students are essential. It is therefore not surprising that even in countries such as the Netherlands, which are very well equipped digitally, children learned «little or even nothing» during the Covid lockdowns, as a study has shown. [1]

What are the developmental conditions that enable people to decide in freedom to take responsibility for a shared world? What is needed in developmental terms for a relationship to oneself and to the world that enables a person to assume responsibility?

These conditions obviously change between early childhood and young adulthood. The anthropological perspectives unfolded by Rudolf Steiner can give orientation [2] in that they promote and deepen our perception of children. Teachers are in constant interaction, permanently interweaving two perspectives: approaching the child's reality in a way that needs to be and remain cautious and sensitive, and conveying the broad horizon implied in being connected with the world. Children go towards the world, willing to enter it, seeking it, saying «yes» to it. They want to meet *this world, learn from and in it*. In 1922 Rudolf Steiner said in the Oxford Course (*The Spiritual Ground of Education*): [...] What children demand of us by their nature is that they can believe in us, that they can instinctively feel: teachers can tell me something because they are connected with the whole world. [3]

In early childhood, children hopefully experience a relationship with the world and an environment that give them reassurance and the feeling of being wanted. The adults who are already in the world confirm the child's presence there so that the child can experience that there is good in the world and that this goodness is tangible in the warm, protecting and supportive proximity.

In addition, growing children need to increasingly experience that they are being seen. In seeing me, the other person affirms my being here. And in the middle of childhood, the adults increasingly unlock in children an awareness of the diversity and richness of reality so that children can sense that there is also beauty in the world, in human beings, in human creations. Learning to see and being seen are related, mutually conditioning, interweaving experiences.

And finally, young people develop on the basis of their relationship with the world a relationship to themselves. Gently, yet crucially, the question arises as to their own path, their own future. Young people hope that others recognize something of their potential, if only faintly at first. Knowing oneself to be recognized and learning to know the world are inseparable experiences. The world can be known, its intrinsic intelligibility can be cognitively penetrated: the experience of truth is open to the cognizing human being.

With every child and young person society needs to ask how it helps them grow and experience the changing connectedness with the world described earlier. Can children and young people learn to see the world as precious, valuable and lovable despite its shortcomings and challenges? Is it a world in which they can witness lasting relationships in an environment that can be trusted and that trusts them?

[4]



Photo: PädSek/ Charlotte Fischer

Rudolf Steiner's image of the human being is rooted in a view of the «I» as a relational entity. The human self is constitutively a being of relationships. It is not a preformed substance but a being that is becoming, that evolves through relationship and mutuality. Some 20th century thinkers, educators, sociologists and artists describe the «I» as the implementation of mutuality. Franz Rosenzweig points out in 1917, «[...] *my I emerges in the You. [...] With the first You the creation of the human being is complete.*» [5] In a book published in 2021, Josep Maria Esquirol describes how our own name is given to us by the world, by others. The word that will resound throughout our entire life, that we are addressed by, that means us, calls us. The name we receive in the first moments of life already expresses the fact of human dependence:

[...] Being a beginning necessarily means that the first word comes from another. [...] I am given a name, that is, I hear my name and then I give it to myself: «I». In that order: I receive, one calls me, and I respond.

Because I am received and one calls me, I speak; because I feel that I am called and seen (recognized and acknowledged), I respond. However, to listen and to speak requires trust. The received word makes us listeners, companions. Only through the encounter and the word we listen to can we become creative. Only through the encounter and the word we listen to can meaning arise.

Receiving the name is the beginning of a calling. It makes me responsible before I am even capable. [6]

A child- and world-centred education requires constant wakefulness both for the child – for this one real child who bears a name – as for the plural and complex world. In this world the individual meets others. Freedom takes place in a responsible and creative process that enables learning as a discovery of and participation in a living becoming. We learn with our hands, by being astounded, by seeing, by creating and comprehending. Knowing has many dimensions, it happens as much in creative activity as in instruction, in research as in practice. [7] The pedagogical practice requires a free, creative relationship that arises from engaging with the child and with the world. In this ambiance, a longing, willingness and will can grow for assuming co-responsibility for the shared world as a free decision and for shaping this relationship in autonomy and solidarity. 'Education should not only contribute to an awareness of our Earth-Homeland, it should help this awareness find expression in the will to realize our earth citizenship,' Edgar Morin writes in the late 1990s about the basic requirements for learning and teaching in the 21st century. [8]

A sense of being connected with the world cannot be demanded from the outside. Respect for individual decisions and the affirmation of the joint responsibility for our shared world are fundamental to a pedagogical practice that is oriented to the reality of the human being.

We very much look forward to the forthcoming World Teachers' Conference, where we will address many questions concerning the creation of the conditions required for «earth citizenship».

Constanza Kaliks

Translated from German by Margot M. Saar

This article is a shorter version of Constanza Kaliks lecture on [goetheanum.tv](https://www.goetheanum.tv) that was part of the lecture series «Responsibility of Freedom» at the Goetheanum.

References

[1] Cf. Spiegel Online: *Studie zu Corona-Schulschliessungen: Kinder haben wenig oder nichts gelernt* and the Oxford study of February 2021: Engzell, Per; Frey, Arun; Verhagen, Marc D. *Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic*, accessed on 18 February 2023.

[2] Cf. Rudolf Steiner. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*. Great Barrington 1991, GA 305, p. 44 (Lecture 4, 19 August 1922).

[3] Rudolf Steiner. *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, Great Barrington 1991, GA 305, p. 9 (Lecture 1, 16 August 1922).

[4] Rudolf Steiner. *Becoming the Archangel Michael's Companions*, Great Barrington 2006, GA 217 (Lecture 6, 8 October 1922), transl. René Querido.

[5] Franz Rosenzweig. *Briefe und Tagebücher*. Vol. 1 1900-1018. The Hague, 1979, p. 471.

Chronic Stress and Gut Health

We have all experienced the phenomenon of the 'gut feeling'. We get 'butterflies' in our stomach when we are nervous, we see something 'gut-wrenching' or we 'go with our gut' when faced with a difficult decision. It turns out that the 'gut feeling' is a real physical phenomenon, not folklore. To understand why our tummy serves as a repository for feelings we commonly associate with the brain, we need to understand how the gut and the brain are intrinsically linked.

The gut possesses an unimaginable amount of nerves, so much so that it's been coined the 'gut brain'. These nerves help us to 'feel' our inner world (together they are referred to as the Enteric Nervous System or 'ENS') and through a series of complex neural pathways relay the information they receive back up to the brain (the Central Nervous System or 'CNS'). The channel of communication between the CNS and ENS is referred to as the 'Brain-Gut Axis'. Interestingly, the dialogue between these two systems goes both ways - our gut sends signals to the brain and the brain sends signals to the gut. This explains why you stop eating when you are full (the stomach becomes distended and communicates this to the brain), and why your stomach is the repository for all sorts of feelings when you are nervous or overcome with emotion.

The Fight or Flight Response

Stress is thought to be among the most important stimuli discussed by the brain and the gut. When we come into contact with a stressor, the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis (our internal 'stress control' centre) instigates the production of a chemical called corticotrophin releasing factor (CRF). CRF triggers a cascade of other chemicals which eventually cause the release of cortisol (commonly known as the stress hormone). Cortisol diverts energy away from the gut to our muscles and brains, works to keep blood sugar elevated (to meet glucose demands of the brain) and retention of sodium (to keep blood sugar up), all of which allow us to respond quickly and efficiently to danger.

The fight or flight mechanism works best as a temporary response to help with survival. Our ancestors suffered from 'acute stress' if they found themselves, for example, fleeing from a sabre-toothed tiger #cavemanproblems! However, our bodies were not designed to handle long term, chronic stress. In this day and age, our lives are no longer filled with occasional stressors that come and go for short, interspersed periods of time. Rather, with looming deadlines, financial burdens, social pressure and the constant inundation of information, it's safe to say that for the **majority** of the Western World we are **stressed** for the **most part of a day**, **most days**. In other words, we are in 'fight or flight' mode more often than not. As energy is diverted away from the gut during the fight-or-flight response, digestion and immune function is slowed or halted for long periods of time, which can rob us of key nutrients and expose the gut to infection and inflammation.

So what to do?

Gut health is affected just as much by the state of your mind as it is by the food you consume. Wellbeing requires a holistic approach to health - we need to take care of our mind, body and soul. An aggravated mind leads to an aggravated gut and an aggravated gut will aggravate the mind. If you suffer from a gastrointestinal disorder, consider whether or not your body might be under chronic stress. If so, implement stress-reduction strategies such as meditation, yoga, mindfulness, supplementing with a probiotic or diaphragmatic breathing. BUT be gentle and go slow have a long term plan rather than a quick "*I will fix my gut in a month*" plan. Even just stopping for a moment to "smell the roses" or watch how wind moves a tree or a bee moves through a flower slows our breathing, relaxes our brain and our gut.....increasing these mindful moments can have an impact on our Gut/ Brain pathways and creates small changes towards wellness.

Maree Smith RN, Anthroposophical RN

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BY MARY NORTON, ADAPTED BY CHARLES WAY

6 - 20 APRIL 2024

DIRECTED BY GLEN MATHEWS

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