Birchgrove Buzz
Term 2 Week 4 13th April 2015

Principal’s Report

Sydney school students invited to have their say about The Bays Precinct
Today I took Asha and Rowan (Birchgrove Prime Ministers) to the media launch of the Schools Leadership Forum about the transformation of The Bays Precinct, to be held in association with the Sydneysiders Summit on the weekend of May 16 & 17. Asha & Rowan shared their thoughts on the
ways the area could be developed with planning Minister Rob Stokes as well as UrbanGrowth NSW Chief Executive, David Pitchford. They were interviewed by channel 7’s reporter Lee Jeloseck. Check out the media release at: [http://www.urbangrowthnsw.com.au/news/newsroom/sydney-school-students-invited-to-have-their-say-about-the-bays-precinct.aspx](http://www.urbangrowthnsw.com.au/news/newsroom/sydney-school-students-invited-to-have-their-say-about-the-bays-precinct.aspx)

Don’t forget to watch channel 7’s news tonight!

Application for opportunity class placement in Year 5 in 2016

If your child is seeking Year 5 opportunity class placement in 2016 you must submit the application online between **Monday 27 April 2015 and 15 May 2015**. The application website is at [www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement)

Please note all applications are online. There are copies of the information booklet in the office.

Balmain’s talented bands as well. It was great to get to chat to so many of you and it is always inspiring to see the amount of work and effort our school community puts in to making sure that our annual Fete is always the best ever! It’s always such a pleasure to see everyone’s big smiles and enjoyment of the day. I would like to thank our fabulous families for all their hard work and preparation, it certainly paid off. Thank you to our local member Jamie Parker for his ongoing support and his help opening the Fete. Michael and Matthew have been working with Jamie to help source a grant to help with our playground upgrades. I hope you all looked at the draft plans from our landscape architect on display at the Fete. I should have the new plans for our next P&C meeting. I will include them in the newsletter once I receive them.
NAPLAN (Y 3 & Y5) finishes tomorrow with the numeracy assessment and on Friday there is a catch up time for students who have missed an exam. Thank you to all those parents who made sure the children were on time and had eaten breakfast so they would be ready and have sustained energy those mornings.

Stranger Danger I have heard from some parents that there have been 2 children in the area approached by strangers one near Birchgrove Oval and one in East Balmain. Usually the police contact us if there is anything they feel is a concern for our parents or we are advised by the DEC. I rang our Police Youth Liaison Officer who is responsible for the schools on the peninsula and he checked up for us. There have been two isolated incidents, that weren’t considered a threat to other children.

That being said it never hurts to be safe and have the stranger danger talk with our children regularly both at home and school. Constable John Brettle (Youth Liaison Officer Leichhardt) will be talking to children K-6 about stranger danger and how to be safe tomorrow.

Below is some police advice about things for parents to talk to their children about from ‘Safe People, Safe Places’ Children: Make sure your parents or another adult you know knows where you are at all times.
- Always walk straight home or to the place you are walking to. Walk near busier roads and streets, or use paths where there are lots of other people.
- Know where safe places are – a shop, service station, police station, library or school. If you are ever frightened, you should go to one of these places and ask them to call the police.
- Learn about safe adults you can look for and talk to if you need help – police officers, teachers at school, adults you know and trust.
- Don’t talk to people you don’t know and never get into a car with someone you don’t know. If a car stops on the side of the road and you don’t know the person inside, do not stop.
- If you are scared and can use a phone, call 000 and tell them you are scared.
- If someone tries to grab you, yell out, ‘Go away, I don’t know you’. This lets other people know you have been approached by someone you don’t know.

For those of you who would like some extra direction for you conversations with you children I have included an article ‘What to Teach Kids About Strangers’ containing more details.

Teachers have been busy working on assessment tasks with the students and are currently writing reports that will go home towards the end of term. This year we are trialling a slightly new format to the Maths section to see if it is easier to understand and more beneficial to parents. I will be asking for some feedback on that section of the reports in week 10 of this term.

Tracy Gray
What to Teach Kids About Strangers

Information about the differences between strangers kids should look out for and strangers kids can trust

Kids see strangers every day in stores, in the park, and in their neighborhoods. Most of these strangers are nice, normal people, but a few may not be. Parents can protect their children from dangerous strangers by teaching them about strangers and suspicious behavior, and by taking a few precautions of their own. **Make sure your parents or another adult you know knows where you are at all times.**

Who is a stranger?

A stranger is anyone that your family doesn’t know well. It's common for children to think that “bad strangers” look scary, like the villains in cartoons. This is not only not true, but it’s dangerous for children to think this way. Pretty strangers can be just as dangerous as the not-so-pretty ones. When you talk to your children about strangers, explain that no one can tell if strangers are nice or not nice just by looking at them and that they should be careful around all strangers.

But don’t make it seem like all strangers are bad. If children need help—whether they’re lost, being threatened by a bully, or being followed by a stranger—the safest thing for them to do in many cases is to ask a stranger for help. You can make this easier for them by showing them which strangers are okay to trust.

Who are safe strangers?

Safe strangers are people children can ask for help when they need it. Police officers and firefighters are two examples of very recognizable safe strangers. Teachers, principals, and librarians are adults children can trust too, and they are easy to recognize when they’re at work. But make sure that you emphasize that whenever possible, children should go to a public place to ask for help. **Learn about safe adults you can look for and talk to if you need help – police officers, teachers at school, adults you know and trust.**

You can help your children recognize safe strangers by pointing them out when you’re out in your town. Also show your children places they can go if they need help, such as local stores and restaurants and the homes of family friends in your neighborhood. **Know where safe places are – a shop, service station, police station, library or school. If you are ever frightened, you should go to one of these places and ask them to call the police.**

Recognizing and Handling Dangerous Situations

Perhaps the most important way parents can protect their children is to teach them to be wary of potentially dangerous situations – this will help them when dealing with strangers as well as with known adults who may not have good intentions. Help children recognize the warning signs of suspicious behavior, such as when an adult asks them to disobey their parents or do something without permission, asks them to keep a secret, asks children for help, or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way. Also tell your children that an adult should never ask a child for help, and if one does ask for their help, teach them to find a trusted adult right away to tell what happened.
You should also talk to your children about how they should handle dangerous situations. One way is to teach them “No, Go, Yell, Tell.” If in a dangerous situation, kids should say no, run away, yell as loud as they can, and tell a trusted adult what happened right away. Make sure that your children know that it is okay to say no to an adult in a dangerous situation and to yell to keep themselves safe, even if they are indoors. It’s good to practice. If someone tries to grab you, yell out, ‘Go away, I don’t know you’. This lets other people know you have been approached by someone you don’t know.

It’s good to practice this in different situations so that your children will feel confident in knowing what to do. Here are a few possible scenarios:

- A nice-looking stranger approaches your child in the park and asks for help finding the stranger’s lost dog.
- A woman who lives in your neighbourhood but that the child has never spoken to invites your child into her house for a snack.
- A stranger asks if your child wants a ride home from school.
- Your child thinks he or she is being followed.
- An adult your child knows says or does something that makes him or her feel bad or uncomfortable.
- While your child is walking home from a friend’s house, a car pulls over and a stranger asks for directions.

What Else Parents Can Do

In addition to teaching children how to recognize and handle dangerous situations and strangers, there are a few more things parents can do to help their children stay safe and avoid dangerous situations.

**Know where your children are at all times.** Make it a rule that your children must ask permission or check in with you before going anywhere. Give your children your work and cell phone numbers so they can reach you at all times. Point out safe places. Show your children safe places to play, safe roads and paths to take, and safe places to go if there’s trouble.

Remind your children: Don’t talk to people you don’t know and never get into a car with someone you don’t know. If a car stops on the side of the road and you don’t know the person inside, do not stop.

Make sure your children know to: Always walk straight home or to the place you are walking to. Walk near busier roads and streets, or use paths where there are lots of other people.

Teach children to trust their instincts. Explain that if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable, they should get away as fast as they can and tell an adult. Tell them that sometimes adults they know may make them feel uncomfortable, and they should still get away as fast as possible and tell another adult what happened. Reassure children that you will help them when they need it. If you are scared and can use a phone, call 000 and tell them you are scared.

Teach your children to be assertive. Make sure they know that it’s okay to say no to an adult and to run away from adults in dangerous situations.

Encourage your children to play with others. There’s safety in numbers!
STRINGS WORKSHOP
The Intermediate and Senior String Workshop is this weekend. Don't forget to submit your forms and payment.

SOLO SOIREE
The Solo Soiree is on June 14th - a wonderful afternoon of music and great chance for your children to perform in a positive environment. All instruments and abilities welcome. Please contact lhealy@y7mail.com to register or with any questions.

FETE
Well done to all of the Fete Performers on Saturday! It was wonderful to hear our ensembles play so beautifully and enthusiastically. A fitting sound track to a terrific day.

Is your child making friends at school?
Kids who get on at school tend to be more engaged in learning. Here are some ideas on how to help your child with social skills: http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/development/how-friendships-boost-your-childs-learning

Mastering spelling
Are you checking your child’s weekly spelling homework? Try talking to your child about how you spell, and what you do when you don’t know how to spell a word. Here’s some advice about how to help your child master spelling.Find out more: www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/homework-and-study/english/english-tips/getting-your-child-used-to-writing.
Another successful Birchgrove Fete and once again perfect weather on the day. The fete was a lot of fun for everyone and has been a success from a fundraising perspective. A lot of people put in a lot of effort on the day and leading up to the fete. Thank you to everyone who contributed. I would though like to specifically thank the following:

Logistics
Rebecca Cortiula
Damon Thomson
and all the wonderful set up and pack down helpers on Friday and Saturday

PR- stall decorations and artisan market decorations
Kate Tisdale
Susan Bannister
Juliette

MC- Rob Cormack who did an outstanding job. Another tireless effort from Rob

Paul Angus helping set up, run around collecting fete stuff and of course for being our barista with Simon on the coffee cart

Claire Hodgkinson on outstanding job engaging new STALLHOLDERS for the bigger and better Artisan market.

All class parents and parents up baking, squeezing lemons, setting up books, creating bouquets and garden pots in the days leading up to the fete.

Richard Hinchcliffe - floats and money collection

Nicky Bennett- Hampers

Raylene and other office staff who I'm sure we drove mad with all the drop offs and coordination through the school office.

Last but not least I would like to thank Kim Hall. She very calmly organised the fete and co-ordinated on the day. It's a big job and I know that everyone really appreciates the work that she did. The kids & parents had a great day and we have raised valuable funds to help make the school even better.

Thank you Kim.

Matthew Garvey
P&C President
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