

Principal's Column

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We are now into the third week of the new school year. In the Chinese astrology calendar it is the year of the Monkey. The Monkey is described as an intelligent, witty, and inventive animal. They are problem solvers, working with their group while simultaneously demonstrating independence associated with achievers. The nimble monkey is playful, youthful in nature, and is a joy to watch as they move from activity to activity.

I think that if every teacher had a class full of these monkeys, they would be extremely positive about their year ahead in the classroom. Many of the attributes of the 'monkey' can be found within the key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum that schools develop their teaching and learning programmes around. In essence today's learners will need these skills as they grow and develop in a world that continues to rapidly change pace around them.

As schools begin their year, they will look at how each student interacts with the others, who have personalities that need nurturing, what motivates them academically or what they find a challenge, and how safe they feel in the environment. How safe they feel in the environment becomes a three-way conversation between the teacher the students and the parents, as parents care greatly about the pastoral care of their children. As much as we would like to know what is going on at all times, it is difficult to do so. We need to know as early as we can in schools if there is something not working for your child so that we can figure out the best way for it to be addressed. Communication is the best way to do this, but it needs to be with the school and as soon as possible so that issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

In an era of social media where issues can be shared quickly and sometimes without careful consideration, it is important that any grievance is shared with the people that are likely to have the most positive impact in the least amount of time for you and your child.

So, if you get the call to say your child has been 'monkeying' around at school, don't get steamed up too quickly, as this year that might have a totally different meaning to the one you are used to! Monkeying around this year is exactly what the teacher wants.

