



21 March 2024

Kia Ora one and all

Start to the Year

I trust you have had a great start to the year regarding school. You will have had newsletters from our campuses, opportunities to attend assemblies and various campus-based opportunities to connect.

I'm excited, always optimistic and encouraged to have been made aware of so many conversations taking place to ensure all our students thrive at school this year.

I must admit, it's incredible to think we are now approaching the last 3 weeks of this term already. Thank you for all your support in enabling us to have such a stable start to the year and to set in motion all our planning and aspirations.

Our Board

We have now had a number of meetings and I appreciate their excellent governance support for our school. It was so good at our last meeting to welcome Mr Adam Green as an appointed Proprietor Rep. We are also excited to welcome our new student rep Adrana Belloso following the recent student election.

Staffing

It has been heartening to hear from new staff as to how much they love working at our school and how much they appreciate the students and their interactions with you as parents. As with all years, some staff move on and new people join our team. The end of 2023 and the start of 2024 has been both demanding yet exciting for us as Mt Albert was launched and we have been resetting as one school on just two sites now.

Seeing Mt Albert and Henderson thriving and growing is such an answer to prayer and confirmation of all our hard work.

At our Botany Campus (BC) we farewelled Deputy Principal Stephen Briscoe and celebrated with him in securing the Deputy Rector's position at Waitaki Boys High in Oamaru. Stephen led superbly at our Botany Campus and his vision for a high functioning focused young-adults environment was and still is well on the way to being realised.

This year at BC, Associate Principal Gary Johnstone has stepped into the leadership of that campus. Gary has for the past 2 years amongst his other responsibilities, been helping to

steer our Mt Albert Campus. Now he brings his massive senior high school experience back to BC for 2024.

Conveyancing Allowance - to any family living many kilometres away from our school, you should check out the following link to see if you qualify for the conveyance allowance.

<https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/transport/sta-eligibility/#criteria>

Donations

With March 31st just around the corner and the opportunity to claim a third back - it is a great time to contribute **your special character donation**. If your child is using Education Perfect (\$50) and / or Schoology (\$22) we would sincerely appreciate your donation towards those costs too. Similarly, you can claim 1/3 tax rebate on these also. Don't forget to also submit receipts for your donation to camps as well - these too qualify for a tax rebate.

ARISE PTA

We are announcing the formal recommencement of our ARISE PTA group. A group for parents led by parents to support and to bless our school sites. The first meeting for this group will be **Monday May 6 in the Golflands Staffroom starting at 7.00pm**. This is really exciting. All enthusiastic parents who would like to add further value to either of our school campuses are invited to join us. Come to find out more, come to plan and come to make a difference for all our students.

Snippets I've gleaned from BC and GC:

Botany Campus: Year 11 students settling into BC culture and environment. Staff are working hard to create a sense of belonging. Leadership growth opportunities for students - student leadership induction / student Leadership camp at Blue Mountain Adventure Centre. Aaron Ironside visited and talked about life strategies and understanding ourselves and how capital T and small t traumas can come up in our lives and how this works in the real world – resilience for students.

International Students: 49 short term students across BC and GC have come and gone. The feedback from agents and parents has been very positive. 42 long term students are now settled in. The students are well catered for with inductions / ESOL / pastoral care.

Golflands Campus – Middle Years: 4 There is an upbeat and friendly atmosphere amongst students. Smaller class sizes have led to greater levels of engagement and positive behaviour for learning. Teachers are working with the 'Mitey' the John Kirwan foundation to write a unit of work called 'My Backpack' - equipping students with emotional resilience skills.

Golflands Campus – Junior Years: Our 'Meet the teacher' evening was well attended. We have had a highly successful Y5 camp, sporting events and such a great start to all our classroom programmes.

Emergency Procedures

Parents - both of your campuses have termly emergency procedure drills. We have always done this and will continue to do so.

For a lock down practice, a notice will come out in a campus newsletter to parents and students will be advised through assemblies.

The lockdown practice is now standard procedure for all schools in preparation for when the real thing might occur. In 2023, a staggering 1500 school lockdowns occurred in NZ - these were the real thing, requested by emergency services, so you can understand that it is not a case of "if" but more of a case of "when" the real thing will occur.

The National Centre of Educational Statistics has this to report about practice drills:

School Safety: Policies, Practices, and Procedures

- *During the 2022-23 school year, public schools have a variety of written plans in place that detail procedures to follow for emergency scenarios. These include active shooter situations (96 percent), natural disasters (94 percent), and suicide threats or incidents (91 percent).*
- *During the 2022-23 school year, more than 90 percent of public schools have or plan to drill their students on the following emergency procedures: evacuation (96 percent), lockdown (95 percent), and shelter-in-place (93 percent).*

We also have drills for earthquakes and fire. Lockdown practice requires prior notification because part of the process requires parents to be notified during the event. No notification of an earthquake or fire drill is necessary.

Sabbatical: During Term 2, I will be on a Ministry of Education funded 10 week sabbatical. I thank the Board for allowing me to do this.

The school will be left in the very capable hands of our 3 experienced Deputy Principals - Gary Johnstone, Mandy Heim and Brieta Groenewald, who already form a strategic management team. This sabbatical gives me an opportunity for refreshment leave and for development, research and reading. It therefore also provides an excellent opportunity to grow leadership across the staffing team. I saw this work exceptionally well in my previous sabbatical in 2013.

All functions of our amazing school will continue and will thrive in Term 2.

Look toward the end of this term and beyond:

- **Easter Break** Friday 29th March - Tuesday 2 April. All students attend again from Wednesday 3 April.
- **GC Heritage Assembly** 8.40am Thursday 11 April
- **BC Heritage and Mangatepopo Assembly** 8.40am Friday 12 April

- Senior and MY Prefects attend the **local ANZAC parade and service** on Stockade Hill April 25.
- **Term 2** commences Monday 29 April

With kind regards

Murray Burton MNZM
PRINCIPAL