



## Rangiora High School



### He waka eke noa *We're all in this together*

#### Newsletter to parents/caregivers/whānau

22 May 2020

Kia ora koutou,

Firstly thank you to you all for the huge effort over the past seven weeks. We know from our own households, that none of this has been easy and we really appreciate what you have done to support our work with your children.

The return to school has gone very smoothly and it has been great to see how eager our young people have been to get back to school to see their peers and teachers; and to resume learning on-site. As you know our focus for this week was to 're-start, re-connect, re-boot'. While continuing to track our young people's wellbeing, as the week has progressed our focus has shifted to re-establishing routines, reminding students of our expectations and getting underway with learning and assessment programmes.

We would ask that you reinforce our key messages at this time:

- ❑ **Arriving at school on time for form time.** Attendance at form time is critical as this is where we give students key messages - not only are daily messages read so your child knows what is coming up but we also use this time for form teachers to check in with students and to update students in any changes to our practice.
- ❑ **Wearing the correct school uniform.** As we come out of lockdown we are having to remind our young men that they need to be clean shaven. Mornings are also colder and we are seeing a number of long sleeve black t-shirts worn under shirts / dresses and hoodies being worn. [The Uniform Shop](#) is open again if you need to purchase items such as jerseys or white tops to wear under shirts. If purchasing a uniform item at this time is a problem for you please ask your child to see their Dean or Head of House to explain as we have a small store of uniform items that we lend out. We are pleased to announce that long-sleeved polo shirts will be available from The Uniform Shop in early June.
- ❑ **To focus on the positives.** We understand that many of our young people are experiencing anxiety as we as a country work towards a 'new normal'. Rather than focusing on the issue / subject that they are struggling with, it is really important that home and school both remind them of what is going well. For example, if your child is in the senior school and feels that their NCEA programme is not going well, talk them through each subject. Identify and congratulate them on the subjects where they are going well and on track. Then talk about the subject(s) where they are struggling - not only talk about what strategies they can adopt but also encourage them to talk to their subject teacher(s). We often use the phrase - 'Not Yet' - as in, you might not be able to do that yet, but with practice and help, you will soon. We are here to support.

#### Misinformation being spread through Social Media

As you will be aware through the media reports, misinformation is being spread through social media. The gist of the misinformation is that the law passed on 13 May gives powers to Police and others to uplift children from school if they

appear unwell and forcibly test for COVID-19, and administer medication including flu vaccinations. As you will already know from media reports, neither the Police, Oranga Tamariki, nor anyone else have been given any such powers. If a child is unwell we will contact you in the usual way to collect them.

### **The Importance of Attending School**

We are very pleased that our school attendance rate has been over 90% this week. We know some of our families and whānau are still feeling anxious about sending their young people back to school, which is understandable given everything we have been through these past two months. However it is really important that young people do return to school, not just for their education but also their health and wellbeing. As you can see on the [Ministry of Health website](#) instances of Covid-19 in New Zealand are very low and here in Canterbury we have only had three active cases, with the last case reported on 15 May and in isolation.

We're aware of concerns in our community that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. The Ministry of Health has advised us that there is no instance in New Zealand of someone spreading the virus without ever having symptoms. Even though there is such a low risk of the virus getting in school gates to start with, we will be keeping up our hygiene practices and other public health measures as an extra precaution for as long as we're at Alert Level 2.

### **When Young People are Unwell**

Public health advice regarding sick children and school attendance has not changed. If a child's illness is not an infectious one, for example, it results from an injury or a chronic disease like diabetes, and they are well enough to attend school then they can do so.

COVID-19 like symptoms will be very common over the winter and the vast majority of children with those symptoms won't have COVID-19. The advice to parents whose children have symptoms of cough, fever, sore throat and/or runny nose and sneezing is for them to keep their child at home until they have been symptom free for 48 hours. This also applies to infectious respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases, and vaccine preventable diseases.

If they do see a GP or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453 and then are tested then your child will need to be isolated at home until they have their result. They can return to school if their result is negative and they have been symptom-free for 48 hours. In most situations, the rest of their household do not also need to self-isolate. That means that siblings of the ill child, regardless of where they go to school, can attend school while the test result for the ill child is awaited. The only exception is if the child being tested is a symptomatic close contact of a case. In that case, we ask that their household members do self-isolate while awaiting the test result. This exception is unlikely to occur as any child (or adult) who is identified as a close contact of a case will already be in self-quarantine and being monitored by the Ministry of Health.

### **NCEA - National Certificate of Educational Achievement**

As you will be aware from media reports the New Zealand Qualifications Authority announced last week that the NCEA external examinations will now run from Monday 16 November to Wednesday 9 December. The revised NCEA External examination calendar can be [found here](#). This revision has led to changes here at Rangiora High School for our senior students - for Years 11-12, semester 1 will now finish on Friday 19 June and the last day for timetabled senior classes in preparation for the external examinations will be Thursday 12 November, just prior to Canterbury Show Day.

Please be aware that we are in the process of reviewing how the end of the school year will look for senior students and this will be different from previous years. We are in the process of developing a number of strategies to support our students after this prolonged period of disruption - including having some identified senior students on-site in school through November to complete their NCEA qualifications.

Ngā mihi ki a koutou,

Karen Stewart

**Principal / Tumuaki**