

Principal's Column—Whakataki o Tumuaki

Nau mai, haere mai. Half way through the term and so much going on. Fun times!

I don't know what you know about our learner leadership team here at school so thought I'd let you know! They are a really committed, enthusiastic and passionate team of children from Te Rākau who are involved in many aspects of school life. At the start of the year they had to apply for the role, saying why they would make a great leader and they've certainly proved themselves as such. They share the daily notices over the PA, lead assemblies, spot children who are showing our school values, plan and run events and games and many other tasks. They are well known around school and are often asked for help by our younger learners. I meet with them each week to discuss how things are going and plan for new ideas. When we met yesterday it was so good to hear from them how they feel their confidence had grown and all that they gained from the role. Next week I'm taking 6 (though wish I could take more) prospective 2017 learner leaders to a leadership conference in Rotorua to give them some valuable skills, ideas and support.

As we speak a brand new app is being developed for the school that we hope will spell the end for "lost" newsletters and notices! It's called Whatawhata SkoolBag. Upon installing the app you'll be able to select your child's class. From then on you'll receive push notifications for all newsletters, class letters, announcements, reminders and the like. You'll also be able to send us messages, absences and other things really simply. I'll let you know as soon as it's live. Once up and running we plan to phase out paper notices... We hope this will make school things clearer and easier than ever!

With a few big up and coming whole school events we'll do an extra newsletter next week.

Mā te wā—Until next time. Matt Stockton, Principal.

It's parent and community survey time!

Every year the Board sends out a survey to hear from all of you about how you feel things are going at school. This is a great way for us to recognise and celebrate our successes, understand concerns and make plans for how to make the school even better. We also run a separate survey for anyone in the wider community to complete.

Like last year we are doing this as a digital survey for you to fill out. This makes life easier for you and us. Last year we received over 60 responses as a result—and we'd love even more! To access the survey find the link on Facebook or our website, or use the URL: <http://tinyurl.com/phlk4nd>

Paper copies are available at the office if you don't have digital access. The survey is open until Monday 21st November so we have all the results ready for our Board meeting on 22nd.

Please, please, please find 15 minutes to complete this for us—it really does make a difference.

School athletics day

Our school athletics day is on Tuesday 22nd November. Full details will come home next week but to help plan your day 8 to 13 year olds will hold an athletics day of traditional athletics events in the morning and the 5 to 7 year olds will show off their run, jump and throw skills in the afternoon... From this day children will be selected for inter-school athletics the week after.

Mihi whakatau is tomorrow

Tomorrow we're holding our official welcoming (known as a mihi whakatau) to all our new children and their families. As one wasn't held last term we'll be holding a special catch up welcoming all those who've joined us since 30th May!

All new families should have received an invitation. Just in case you didn't please arrive for a 1.30pm start. We'll have a short afternoon tea afterwards.

The PTA and its amazing new team!

Thanks to all you amazing people who offered your time to become part of our PTA fundraising team. Your help is much appreciated. The current PTA are organising an afternoon tea next Tuesday (15th) here at school straight after school finishes to talk about what they do and have done and plan for where to next. If you are keen to help please come along even if you haven't offered your support so far! If you can't make this day but have offered I'll pass on your contact details... Thanks in advance and see you there!

As you know the PTA have been amazing in raising funds to provide many new learning and play resources including digital devices, playground equipment, sports uniforms, gymnastics equipment, shoe racks, furniture and much more. They helped run many events and ran our Whatawhata Gala Day which we hope to hold again next year.

Te Kaho 1 and 3 to the Stardome, Auckland

Apologies for the big changes that happened around Te Kaho 1 and 3's trip to the Stardome Observatory in Auckland on 7th December. We'd hoped to have parents helping us provide transport but were unable to find enough. That's why the date changed, it's now by coach and a lot more expensive! If you have any questions or concerns please contact Kate or Michael. We're still hoping that everyone is able to go—please advise us by next Monday if they cannot so we can change our booking.

Assessment week next week

Next week is our assessment week. This is when children complete a range of assessment tasks to help us determine the progress that they have made over the last term. This will be shared in end of term school reports As many of these assessments are time intensive class learning will be different from usual. Thanks for your understanding.

Changes to paying for school trips and visits

We have changed the way we collect money for trips and visits to make it easier for you (and us!). We will charge any trip costs to your accounts when the trip is announced. The amount being charged will be clearly stated in the letter home. This means you

will not need to make separate cash payments for trips and visits (though still can if you wish). Instead you can pay your account off on receipt of the monthly statement. We hope this helps.

Our term dates for 2017 are as follows:

Tuesday 7th February to Thursday 13th April

Monday 1st May to Friday 7th July

Monday 24th July to Friday 29th September

Monday 16th October to Wednesday 20th December.



Upcoming events November - Whiringa-ā-rangi

10th Te Pihinga to gymnastics

11th Mihi whakatau / welcoming

14th to 18th Assessment week—Programmes change

15th PTA afternoon tea for new members

15th Te Pihinga to TA space centre

16th Learner leaders to leadership conference, Rotorua

18th Core Ed day—Normal programmes change

18th Fraser High School orientation day for Y8s

21st School survey closes

22nd School athletics day (seniors am, juniors pm)

22nd BoT meeting, 6pm

23rd School photos day

25th Te Kaho 2 & Te Rākau Legacy Tour, Rotorua

30th Road patrol training for 2017 kids

December—Hakihea

2nd Interschool athletics @ Bremworth Park

2nd Road patrol fun day

7th Te Kaho 1 and 3 to Stardome Auckland

9th School Space Disco!

13th Year 8s to Rainbow's End (TBC)

13th End of year reports go home

14th Te Rakau waka ama day

15th Prizegiving, whole school celebration and farewell at Te Papa-o-Rotu marae

16th Final school pack up and farewells

19th School officially finishes

Our super curious superheroes!



Whatawhata School
To Grow, To Achieve, To Care