

Teena Koutou,

Dear Parents / Caregivers,

This is the final communication from me for the year, and what a year it has been. We have all been through a lot and I have certainly appreciated the support of family, friends and colleagues during such challenging and unprecedented times. I am really looking forward to taking time out to recharge and hope that you can also find time to refresh and reconnect with those close to you over the summer. It is easy for us to think that the whole year has been impacted by COVID because of the recent and significant disruptions and the changes that will impact on our way of life for some time yet. It didn't affect the whole year though and there are some very positive highlights from earlier this year. As a school we were able to complete much more than during 2020 with some of the following highlights; a school production, the senior ball, almost all of our sporting events for Terms 1, 2 and 3, Matariki celebrations, Picnic in the park, Restha'van' fundraising, Spirit week, the CHS version of *The Chase* and a full-on House competition (which saw Te Oko Horoi crowned as House champions for 2021). Academically we have also done very well, with staff and students adjusting to online learning and making the most of the support offered by NZQA for senior students. Online learning has not been a substitute though, and it has been great to see the students back on site this term connecting socially and learning from each other in a class setting. In looking ahead to 2022, we are positive that the worst of the disruption is behind us. The Ministry of Health has shared their modelling with us which indicates that we are likely to get cases and, when that occurs, we will identify the close contacts and respond safely to those staff and students affected while keeping the rest of the school open. Long periods of online learning are certainly challenging, and it is assuring that, with the traffic light system in place next year, this experience should become more of a thing of the past. This is for next year though, and we will communicate more details before school starts. In the meantime, here are 2 pieces of information to update you all on before the end of the year.

There are a few pieces of information I need to share with you before the summer break:

- New Zealand Secondary School and Waikato Secondary School Sports vaccine pass requirements

All New Zealand and Waikato sanctioned sports events next year will require participants to have a valid vaccine pass. This will mean that, if you haven't got a vaccine pass your participation in sport will be limited. You will be able to practice with our teams and join some community groups but will not be eligible for competing in any Waikato or New Zealand Sport sanctioned events. These events include almost all fixtures from one off tournaments to regular season competitions.

- Phone use results and approach for 2022

I have attached the results from our phone survey. We had almost 800 responses and really appreciate your feedback into making the shift towards no cell phone use in class. You can see this move has overwhelming support from our community. We recognise that it will be a change in culture for our students and this will take time to embed, and we will need your support during this time to make it work. We will share more details about the planned logistics of this change at the beginning of next year.

But these are all things to work through next year. Until then it is really important that we take a break and recharge. I know it has been tough and I want to thank you for all of your support, feedback and 'home schooling' you have put into get us through this year. I hope you can enjoy a well-earned break.

Merry Christmas

Greg Thornton