

Kia ora e te whaanau,
Good afternoon Parents / Caregivers,

I want to start today by acknowledging the challenges that a lot of our community have experienced since Cyclone Gabrielle, especially to those of us connected to communities still affected in across the North Island. We have connections with Wairoa College and have reached out to offer them support. They are really struggling with many of their whaanau having lost everything. They have said that financial support at this time would be best, so that they can support families as they try and bounce back and return to school next week. We will run a non-uniform day on Friday 3rd March, please donate generously to support their community. You can either contribute through an online payment to CHS (details below), or through a cash donation during form time.

Donations

On the topic of donations, we are delighted to announce that we will no longer ask you to pay school donations. At the end of last year we were invited to join up to the Donations Payment Scheme, and have our school donations funded by the government. Under the decile system we were ineligible, but this changed with the introduction of the Equity Index and we now qualify for the scheme. This means that we will not ask for school donations. We will still charge you for overnight trips and opt-in activities and subjects with a take home component. Please get in touch with our finance department if you have any queries.

The scourge of vaping

On a less positive note, I want to broach the issue of vaping. This is a national problem with schools across the country battling a new form of nicotine consumption that has been deliberately marketed at our youth. We maintain a balance of discipline, education and lobbying for local and national change in trying to challenge this significant problem. We employ a range of measures to shift behaviour, but it is proving incredibly stubborn and difficult for us to get on top of the problem. The point of me writing this is to try and raise awareness of why we are concerned and ask for help from the community. Most of our students who vape also do so outside of school and we are concerned about the development of nicotine addiction and other health problems. The following information is intended to help inform our community of the risks and ask that you support us in encouraging our youth to take a stance against vaping.

The initial intention of allowing vaping in New Zealand was to provide an alternative for those that were attempting to quit smoking. The reality is that it has opened up a new and harmful market to our youth.

One of the primary dangers of vaping is that it can lead to nicotine addiction, which can cause a range of health problems. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can affect the developing brains of young people, leading to issues with attention, learning, and impulse control. Nicotine addiction can also increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other health problems.

In addition to nicotine, many vaping products also contain harmful chemicals and toxins, such as formaldehyde, acrolein, and diacetyl. These chemicals can cause damage to the lungs, leading to respiratory issues, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. Furthermore, the use of e-cigarettes has been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, as well as lung infections and inflammation. There have also been reports of e-cigarette batteries exploding, causing burns and other injuries. Overall, while vaping may be perceived as a safer alternative to traditional cigarettes, it still poses significant health risks and is often associated with behavioural problems in our youth. If your child is having problems with vaping, we can offer support to you through our medical and guidance teams. Please get in touch if we can be of assistance.

PPTA Strike Action

Across New Zealand secondary teachers are engaged in industrial action with the government over the terms and conditions of the Secondary Teachers Collective Agreement. This means that there is a 'relief ban' in place whereby staff are not covering other classes in their non-contact time. Over the past couple of years this has been a vital component of surviving through significant COVID disruption. The intention behind the action is to highlight with the community and the government how much extra work is and has been done by the profession that is over and above the collective agreement and support the claim that this is not sufficiently recognised by the government in its

most recent offer. There is also a planned Strike Day for the 16th March. Although this is yet to be confirmed we wanted to give you as much notice of this as possible. We will confirm the details as soon as they have been released by the PPTA.

Athletics Day

Finally, I want to profile our last full school event for Term 1 – Athletics Day (Tuesday 28th February). This is a great event where we have a range of competitive and participation focussed events. We emphasis the House Spirit and value the chance to get to know students better outside of the classroom. There was such a fantastic vibe at the Swimming Sports this week with students enjoying a great time poolside with their friends and staff. I am looking forward to getting dressed in house colours and doing what can to get amongst the day. It is also a day here parents or caregivers are welcome to come onsite and see their children perform. Please sign in at the school reception and staff will guide you to the event. We have attached the schedule to this email to help you target particular events. Thanks to our staff and student leaders who make these days such successful events for CHS, especially the Sports and Arts team, our PE Department and the House Deans.

On that note, just reminding you that we have a staff recognition setup here at CHS. If you want to acknowledge a staff member who has done a particularly good job of helping you or your whaanau start the year well, please fill out this [form](#). They will be acknowledged with a certificate and go into a regular prize draw.

Cyclone Gabrielle donations – online option

Account Name: Cambridge High School BOT

Account No.: 03-0303-0132350-00

Reference: Gabrielle Don

Kind regards

Greg Thornton

Principal

Cambridge High School