

Ata marie e te whaanau

Good morning parents and caregivers,

It has been an interesting first few weeks at CHS with staff absence and bomb threats stretching our capacity. Week 2 finished incredibly well with our Open Evening on Thursday 4th August. This is a great evening where we capture the wonderful opportunities we offer Cambridge, and provide our students with the chance to show off their school to prospective families and the community.

A few significant items to share with you this morning:

- BoT Elections
- Facemask update
- NCEA TOD – 23rd August
- Information for parents
 - Social media
 - Alcohol consumption

BoT elections – 7th September.

As a Cambridge community, we have been actively promoting the value of being involved in the governance of schools as all schools have BoT elections this year. This has seen us receive 14 nominations for our Board of Trustees. It is a significant role and fantastic to see how many of the community are prepared to contribute to the governance of CHS. They will make a great contribution to the direction of the school over the coming three years and so make sure you understand the candidates and cast your vote. Full details are on our [website](#), but the key dates are:

- Voting Papers issued by Wednesday 10th August 2022
- Election polling closes 4pm 7th September 2022

Facemask update.

I have received a few queries about facemasks and so want to give you an update on the situation. We needed to see a large uptake in facemask wearing, and the community have responded very well to this. The position at CHS is that we strongly recommend that all staff and students wear a facemask while indoors, in support of the request from the Ministries of Health and Education. Therefore, it is expected that all staff and students will wear facemasks indoors unless you have contacted us to inform us that your child is exempt from this expectation.

To explain a bit of the thinking that has gone into this. We are at a particularly important time of the school year for learning, assessment and extra-curricular events (such as sports and music finals). Attendance at school during this time is incredibly important. At a time, when national and regional data is showing a significant increase in transmissible diseases (including but not only COVID), it is prudent to take steps to minimise that transmission as much as possible. This data will be reviewed in the coming weeks, and we will review our position as a school again then. The school year has already been disrupted and we don't want the final 11 school weeks (for seniors) to be further impacted by illness if that can be avoided. This is especially important as we have no further indication from NZQA whether special measures will be put in place to support students with their assessment and credit totals this year.

We recognise that there are a range of reasons why you may want your child to be exempt from this expectation. Please contact the school on CHS1stcontact@camhigh.school.nz if you wish to be added to the exemption list.

Finally, the reason we are expecting all to wear facemasks indoors and then managing an exemption list is for practical reasons. With so many different timetables and classes that our students move through in a day, we need a simple method of expecting students to wear facemasks indoors. Staff will ask students to wear a mask indoors if their name is not on our exemption list. If your child is on our exemption list, they will not be asked to put on a mask in each of their five classes for that day.

NCEA TOD – 23rd August.

There is an upcoming Teacher Only Day which is focusing on the development and implementation of the new NCEA standards. An update about where we are with this change package. We are currently involved in pilot trials for Commerce, Literacy and Numeracy standards. The full change with NCEA will be in place for 2024, having been delayed for one year because of ongoing disruptions. That means that this work we are involved in is important for the current Year 9s, as they will be in Year 11 in 2024.

Information to help with parenting.

I just wanted to share a few topics and resources which have become relevant for us recently:

Social media.

We frequently deal with the impact of social media at school, with much of it starting outside of school time. We see this as a good opportunity for us to help students learn how to engage online respectfully and inform students of the risks and legal boundaries there are with online behaviour. At times, some of this engagement can go too far and be a concern for all those involved. If this is happening outside of school hours, please take screenshots and involve the Police. If you are unsure how best to handle it, please get in touch with us. As a parent, it can be a challenge to find the balance between providing autonomy and being too closely involved. It is important that you try to remain connected with your teenager during this time and be aware of what they are using and how they are behaving online. There are several great sources to help including [Net Safe](#) (NZ focused support) and [Common Sense Media](#) (they review apps for safety and have a store of great resources under parent tips). One new app which we have seen being used by our students is SendIt. This is an anonymous messaging service, and you can imagine how that could be misused by our youth. It has been reviewed [here](#).

Alcohol consumption in youth.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have funded research into the effects of alcohol on our youth. The full [research article](#) was released in The Lancet medical journal, but summaries are available in different sites such as [this one](#). We also know a lot more now about how our brains function, thanks to advances in neuroscience and technology and we know that alcohol has a significant impact on the developing brain. We are now learning that what we may have thought was ok when we were growing up, we now know was damaging for brain development and has health consequences. I encourage you to have these conversations around home, helping educate the family on the risks associated with alcohol consumption. Here are some good resources to help with those conversations:

<https://www.alcohol.org.nz/impacts-of-alcohol/>

<https://wharaurau.org.nz/resources/youth-resources>

<https://www.drugfoundation.org.nz/education-and-young-people/students-drugs-and-alcohol/>

And, finally, a very informative and useful go to site for neuroscience and its connections to learning. We use Jared's Science of Learning approach to inform how we approach learning at CHS.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/JaredCooney>

Ngaa mihi nui

King regards

Greg Thornton

Principal