

Welcome to CHS,
Nau mai haere mai, nau mai hoki mai,

Welcome back everyone and an especially warm welcome to the new members of our Cambridge High School community. We held a wonderful poowhiri today for all new staff and students to CHS. A particular highlight for me was our staff and senior student leaders joining together to perform the haka poowhiri for our incoming whaanau. We then followed this up with connecting the new students with the key people for them this year (their student leaders and their teachers) before the rest of the school joins us. It is great to see the school fill up with people again and this place will certainly be buzzing tomorrow, with all students onsite.

There are a few details about the coming weeks that I would like to share with you today as we get up and running.

Key details until the end of next week

2nd February – Full school attends with the following outline:

8:45 Form time. All students go to the form class on their timetable.

9:35 Period 2 classes. All students follow their timetabled class for Day 5.

10:20 Formal assembly. Year 13s need to wear their formal uniform.

The remainder of the day is on normal timetable with periods 3, 4 and 5 classes.

5th February – Teacher Only Day

6th February – Waitangi Day

7th February – Full school attends and it is Day 8 on the school timetable.

7th and 8th February – Year 9 students are on their BYOD and cultural days. More details have been sent directly to the families of these students.

Uniform expectations and review

Last year we received great support from the community in improving the way our uniform was worn. It looked great and reflected very well on the students and our community. We want to keep this standard high and ask that you please help us with the summer uniform. The key item to be aware of here is the footwear. Students can wear sandals, but they must have a back strap and students must change into shoes in the science lab and workshops. For full details please visit our [website](#).

I also wanted to provide a brief update on the uniform review we began last year. We have made good progress on the design of the uniform and are currently assessing the costs of the suggested changes. We will keep in touch as this piece of work evolves through the year.

Academic results from 2023

We are very pleased with the academic performance of our students last year. I will publish a more detailed analysis for the community later but wanted to share some highlights with you now. There were a couple of areas where we were improving our performance, while the national trend and similar school band results were declining. This increase in achievement was most notable in our overall results from Level 1 and 2 showing great improvement that was counter to the national trend. There was also a notable increase in the success of our Maaori students across all senior year

levels, heading back towards our pre-pandemic levels of achievement. Finally, we have maintained a strategic focus on improving our school-wide literacy skills over the past 3 years. We were glad to see a significant improvement in Level 1 and 2 literacy results, a reflection on the efforts of our staff improving in this area and preparing our students for ongoing success as learners.

Cell phone expectations

The Government has introduced regulations that require all state schools to have student phone rules in use to comply with the 'phones away for the day' requirements. Full details of these expectations can be found [here](#).

We have had a phone policy in place for several years, effectively banning the use of phones in class. This has been very effective at improving the quality of learning in the classroom for our students. We are now required to extend this into break times also. The management of this extension will be more of a challenge, and we will need your assistance to make it successful. Can you please ensure that your child leaves their phone at home. If they are likely to need it after school, they are to leave it in their bag and off during the whole school day. If you need to contact your child, we ask that you send an email to their school email address or, if it is an urgent matter, phone the student office to get a message to the class.

Through this first term our priority will be to warn students when they are using phones during their breaks and ask them to put it away in their school bags. We will then review the student response before finalising the next steps and implementing any discipline measures. We currently manage exceptions to our cell phone policy through our Learning Support (Whare Tautoko) and Guidance staff.

Open day for the new S-Block

There is a lot of excitement around this new building and the great opportunities it will open up for our students. We are looking forward to inviting the community to showcase the building and what it provides. This will be later in the term, once we have our courses up and running and students sufficiently well trained to offer you a good quality barista coffee from our café.

Sign-ups for summer sports and arts

Please keep an eye out for communications from our Sports and Arts teams as they promote registrations for various codes. I will also use this as a chance to promote the school production 'For Today' that we will be putting on in week 1 of term 2. It is a show based on great NZ music hits and the first rehearsals got underway today.

Once again, welcome back everyone. It has been great catching up with staff and students over the past weeks. Everyone seems well-rested and really looking forward to getting 2024 underway - there sure is a lot to look forward to this year. Remember to stay up to date by keeping an eye on the coming events (published weekly) and the school [website](#) where all recent communications are stored and the school calendar are published.

Nga mihi nunui ki a koutou,
Kind regards,

Greg Thornton
Principal
Cambridge High School