

## Principal's Panui

Tena koutou katoa,

Alert Level 2 continues to be in effect, and although some of the restrictions are being relaxed, it is still important to adhere to good hygiene practices wherever we are. I want to take the opportunity again to reiterate the school is a safe place to be for our students. The Ministry of Health has told us that the chances of young people contracting Covid-19 is low as is the possibility of transmitting it to adults and each other. I also want to make sure that our community understands that some of the information out there, particularly on social media, is in fact, misinformation. There is still the idea that the Police and Oranga Tamariki can forcibly remove students from school if they are displaying symptoms circulating on places like facebook. **This information is wrong.** These powers have never existed and still do not exist under the orders passed by Parliament.

Over the past two weeks, we have changed much of how school looks for our students that returned with Alert Level 2. It definitely has not been "business as usual". As I have had a few queries about why we have done this, I want to explain the thought process behind our changes. All the information coming from the Ministry of Education before Alert Level 2 stressed the importance of ensuring the wellbeing of students and staff. For us, this meant reconnection between the students and their whanau teacher. Students were in their whanau classes for the majority of the day to ensure that they could reconnect with their peers and with their whanau teachers, who are their significant adult at school. We also focussed on doing wellbeing activities with the students during this time to give them the skills to better monitor and manage their own wellbeing.

One of the things that we noticed during Alert Levels 4 and 3 was that many of our students struggled with the idea of self-directed learning. On return to school we have been doing activities with them to help them develop more skills around self-management, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. All these skills and attributes are going to be vital for our students as they enter the world beyond school. If they can continue to develop these skills and attributes then our students will be able to pursue anything when they leave school. Online learning is a great tool to develop these skills also which is why we've asked students to bring devices to school.

The third thing that we have concentrated on over the past three weeks is a focus on Te Ao Maori. I have opened and closed the day with karakia through a video conference with all the classes and we have also had some time set aside daily to investigate both New Zealand and local history from a Maori perspective. Approximately 70% of our students are Maori and, as responsible Treaty partners, we should be ensuring that our Maori students achieve as well as our non-Maori students. Creating an environment that reflects the

majority culture at our school is one way to help this happen.

I am aware that this approach has not seemed to meet the needs of all our students. Our seniors particularly, have been concerned about NCEA. I would answer this by saying that New Zealand's senior students are some of the most anxious and depressed students in the OECD precisely because of the constant pressure of assessment for NCEA. These two weeks have been unashamedly about learning that doesn't count for NCEA. We have asked our students and staff to think about learning in a different way. Learning has become inextricably linked with NCEA to the extent that if it is not worth credits, it's not worth doing. This approach is damaging and completely ignores a huge amount of knowledge and skill that is not assessed but extremely important. For us, the last two weeks has been a window into what school could be like, and the beginnings of a transition to a kura which values learning over assessment, character and culture over credits. I firmly believe if we concentrate on learning, culture and character - credits will come. A focus on credits, however, does not necessarily produce learning, cultural confidence, or character.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou tena koutou katoa.  
Thomas Davison, Principal

## College Calendar

### Friday 29 May

- Cross Country Day

### Monday 1 June

- Queen's Birthday Holiday

### Monday 15 June

- Board of Trustees Meeting 6pm

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Year 11 student Charlyse Tansey who is now on the Far North Youth Council and has been elected Vice-President of the Far North Youth Parliament. They are currently holding the Youth Parliament via zoom meetings on a weekly basis.

## Rangimarie Art

Rangimarie students and staff finally completed our bottle top artwork depicting a Puriri tree with the sun in the background.



Many thanks to those who have brought us bottle tops over many months to complete our mural.

## Congratulations

Many congratulations to former Head Girl, Fiemalie Pe



Fale, who has been admitted to the bar. She came and showed she was a proud Okaihou College girl with photos in front of the college before she and her family went to

the ceremony in Auckland. We are very proud of your achievement Fiemalie Pe!



## Careers News

Recently retired Career's Advisor, Mr Robert (Blue) Newport, was recognised at the recent NorthCATE (North Careers Advisors and Transition Educators) AGM. He was honored as a life member of CATE and NorthCATE and held his last meeting as retiring Chairman.

Photos were shared of Blue receiving his gift from Grace Latimer and Tayla Cook (both ex-Okaihou College students) in November 2019 to acknowledge his 44 years of service to careers, Okaihou College, NorthCATE and CATE National.



Thank you Blue, from the Okaihou College Careers Department. Kia Kaha.

## Electives

Students have been doing an elective of interest each afternoon during the last two weeks. Here are a few of the activities.



Knit your own beanie (or scarf):



Renata (below) created a Maori kite, using traditional resources such as harakeke.



Here is a clip from a stop-motion video created by brothers Stephen and Lucas Harris in Mr Donaldson's elective.

The students had to learn the techniques required to plan, design and film a short clip. In the video the Lego characters are playing soccer when the ball turns into a monster and scares the players.

