

Principal's Panui

Tena koutou katoa,

Last week I started by mentioning the changes that we have implemented for 2021, in particular, our new Roopu system. This week I thought it would be a good idea to detail and explain the rationale for some of the other changes we have made for 2021. These changes were not undertaken lightly and were made in partnership with our students and whanau through hui both at our school and local marae.

Timetable: one of the major pieces of feedback we received from whanau was the confusing nature of our six day timetable. Consequently, we have moved to a timetable that has a ten day rotation. Essentially, it is a week A and week B structure. This means that the students (and their whanau) know that the subjects for each day in those weeks won't change as they did in the six-day timetable. It has also meant that we could address some inequities between the different learning areas in the school, particularly in Years 7-10. The New Zealand Curriculum puts equal emphasis on the importances of all areas of learning and our new timetable structure has meant that we have been able to give each learning area more equity of access for our students.

Te Reo Maori: Te Reo is a very important part of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is one of our national languages and is undergoing a renaissance in our country. A significant majority of students in our kura are Maori, and we believe that it is vitally important that all our tamariki have knowledge and understanding of Te Reo me nga Tikanga Maori. Many whanau have also fed back to us that they wanted more Te Ao Maori in our kura. Consequently, we have made Te Reo Maori a compulsory part of the learning programme for all our Year 7-10 students. This will help them both now, as they grow their understanding of an important part of our heritage, and in the future, as the demand for Te Reo speakers in the workplace increases, particularly in the public sector.

Electives: Electives are a new idea to Okaihau College that we trialled on our return from Alert Level 4 lockdown in 2020. The whanau and student feedback about Electives was overwhelmingly positive. Staff offer activities that allow students to learn new skills or participate in things about which they are passionate. A few examples that are currently being offered are Hunting and Fishing, Kapa Haka, and Photography. New Zealand students are some of the most anxious and depressed in the OECD, especially in the senior

school. This is due to the constant pressure of assessment from NCEA. This is also beginning to be an issue in the junior school as students are prepared for NCEA. Electives offer students the opportunity to learn without the pressure of assessment and teachers to do the same. As students get more skilled at self-motivation, our long term plan for electives is for students to be able to engage with cross-curricular passion projects during this time. Learning that is based on their area of interest or passion that does not have to be linked to an NCEA subject but has a tangible product at the end of it. Our goal is to produce young people that have a passion for learning, something that the grind of NCEA can easily extinguish.

Friday "drop-in": starting this afternoon, we are trialling a monthly "drop-in" when teachers will be available for informal chats about your tamariki / mokopuna. It is a way for whanau to monitor the progress of their tamariki informally, without the pressure of a formal "parent-teacher interview". This will take place on the third Friday of every month from 3:30pm - 4:30pm and will be based in our marae Whakarongorua. I encourage you to come and share some kai with us and talk about your tamariki's learning or anything else you think we need to know. Nau mai, haere mai.

Hui a Hapori: Although strictly speaking, not a new initiative, our Hui a Hapori, is another important way we connect with whanau. These hui take place in our marae Whakarongorua, every fourth Thursday of the month. They are a chance for whanau to have an input on the things that we do as a kura to ensure we are always improving. It is also a forum to raise any questions, concerns, or ideas for our kura to consider. We always finish these hui with a shared meal. Ano, nau mai, haere mai.

I hope this gives you some insight into the journey we are on as a kura. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me through the main office.

Nau reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Hui-a-hapori

Our first Hui-a-hapori meeting of the year will be held next week, Thursday 25th February at 5.30pm.

The agenda will include:

1. Values - continuation of this korero from last year;
2. Tikanga - to be across our kura;
3. Whanau korero - opportunity for whanau discussion.

Nau mai, haere mai

College Calendar

Friday 19 February

- Whanau Drop-In Afternoon 3.30 – 4.30 pm

Tuesday 23 February

- Geography Poor Knights Trip

- Swim for Life – Year 7 & 8

Thursday 25 February

- **ATHLETICS DAY**

- Hui-a-hapori 5.30pm

Friday 27 February

- Staff Only Day

Tuesday 2 March

- Swimming Sports Day

Wednesday 3 March

- Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Programme – Yr 11

Thursday 4 March

- Class Photo Day

Friday 5 March

- Swim for Life – Year 7 & 8

Sports Days

School Athletics Day

Thursday 25th February

School Swimming Sports

Tuesday 2nd March

Year 7 & 8 starting at 9.00 am

followed by Year 9-13.

Relays after lunch

(postponed from this week due to weather)

Whanau are invited to come along to the sports days to support the students and enjoy the competitions

Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Programme

On Wednesday 3 March 2021 all Okaihau College Year 11 students will participate in the RYDA Road Safety Education Workshop. RYDA is designed for 16-17 year olds as they begin to drive or ride in cars driven by their peers. This workshop challenges students to change the way they think about road safety to lay the foundation for safe road use throughout their lives.

Visit www.rse.org.nz for more information and parent resources.

Upcoming Teacher Only Days

We have a couple of Teacher Only Days coming up.

The first day is on **Friday 26 February** where staff will be visiting a local marae to learn more about our local history to better support students' learning.

The second day is on **Friday 12 March** where teachers will meet with teachers from other schools in our Kahui Ako CoL (Communities of Learning) to discuss and prepare curriculum programmes which could align and support learners across all curriculum areas in various schools.

Dental Bus

The Northland DHB Dental team will be **leaving** the College in the next couple of weeks. We have been able to see most students - thank you for students, parents and caregivers cooperation.

If your child has **NOT BEEN SEEN** and you would like to book an exam, please get in touch:

Ulrike 027 496 7778, ulrike.herzhoff@xtra.co.nz or contact the Student Centre.

Dental Care is FREE until the age of 18.

See you next year!

Year 7 and 8 - Top Energy Swim for Life Programme

Tuesday 23rd February, Friday 5th March, plus one more day to be confirmed

We are once again lucky enough to be offered the opportunity to participate in this programme. Qualified instructors will present the programme to our Year 7 and 8 classes. These sessions are compulsory and students are required to bring their swimming gear on each of these days. Please contact the PE office if you have any queries.

Measles Immunisation Campaign

Our school youth nurses, alongside the public health nurses, will be offering a FREE MMR vaccine to those who have not been vaccinated as a child or in the 2019 measles outbreak or for those who are unsure if they have been vaccinated.

Year 9 – 13 students will be sent home a vaccination consent form (the target ages are 15-30 for this campaign). Please complete it and **return to the Student Centre within two weeks** if you wish your child to receive this vaccination. **If a student is over the age of 16 they are able to consent for themselves.** The MMR vaccine is also free at your family doctors clinic.

Youth Health Clinic

A **FREE** School Healthcare Service for Year 9-13.

When: Wednesdays 9.30 onwards

Where: Okaihau College Student Centre

How: See the Student Centre to make an appointment

Drop in during **Interval** or **Lunch** time

Services include: * Nursing & Medical Support *

Health Information & Advice on Sexual/reproductive Health & Contraception * Access to Mental Health & Drug/ Alcohol Counselling * Support to access Dental Health Services * Support to link into other Youth Health & Support Services

*** We are Non-Judgmental, Confidential and Private**

Contact Nurse Ruby 021 573 974

ruby.culley@northlanddhb.org.nz