

St John's Girls' School

Te Kura Kōtiro ō Hato Hoani

Newsletter

24 July 2020

Principal's Comments

Tena koutou katoa—Greetings to you all.

Board of Proprietors

At our last meeting, Raewyn King was elected Board Chair, replacing Phil Muir who chose to stand down after serving three productive years as chair. Phil has remained on the board and is the BOP representative to the Board of Trustees. I am sure Raewyn will steer the ship calmly and well.

We have appreciated Phil's quite stewardship, especially as we worked through difficult tasks such as closing the hostel and through big projects like the hall upgrade and extension. Our work was accomplished easily under Phil's guidance. We were excited to have three nominations for the vacancy on the board. Simon Warbrick-Smith was the successful applicant. It is already obvious that he has much knowledge and a considered outlook.

Parent/School Partnership

This was evident during lockdown and we want to ensure it continues. We need and appreciate your help so we can work together to maximise your daughter's educational opportunities.

Several classes are learning about fractions this term. As you are doing everyday things you could ask how much of the whole your daughter got, ie two pieces of a pizza cut into 8 pieces – 2 out of 8ths. If you cut it into 4 pieces, how much did you get? 1 out of 4, $\frac{1}{4}$. This is basically how we would teach it. You can talk about how far – half way, a third of the way and so on. The more you can talk about every day maths, the greater your daughter's understanding will be.

Card games and baking are fantastic ways of improving maths while spending quality time together.

Most classes have speech exams coming up. Please help us to ensure your daughter succeeds by listening to her speech, offering praise and constructive feedback. The girls must be familiar with the book their book passage comes from and be prepared to answer questions about it, usually what, where, why, who questions.

Other ideas: Deliberately use interesting vocabulary, words that you wouldn't expect your daughter to know. Use the word and follow it with the meaning.

Talk about places and where they are. Children today generally have poor knowledge of geography. Talk about age appropriate current events. Again, this is generally a weakness in today's girls.

Please do not be offended by my suggestions. We know you are busy so we thought it might be useful to have some easy suggestions around how you can help your daughter at home. Many of you already do these things and do an incredible job of discussing everyday educational things with your children. It is very evident in their vocabulary and their input into class discussions.

BOT Parental Survey

This went out this week and already 42 people have responded! I have already implemented one idea from it. Someone suggested that we consider privacy when the girls are getting changed at the end of the day. Great thought. The sun shades are now being pulled on the days when the junior girls are getting changed. Thank you for noticing this.

Parents' Association Meeting

This is next Tuesday at 7pm in the staffroom. Everyone is welcome.

Have a fabulous weekend and enjoy learning with your children. They are so much more knowing that previous generations were.

Have a happy, relaxing weekend

Nga mihi nui (Warm regards)
Brenda Mackay
Principal

Term 2

Please note the change of dates/times from previous newsletter.

July

28th Parents' Association meeting 7pm
Everyone welcome

31st Mufti

August

4th Year 7 Speech Exam

5th Year 8 Speech Exam

6th Year 6 Speech Exam

7th Scholastic book orders close

13th BOT meeting 5.30pm

19th BOP meeting 7pm.

28th Year 8 Father/Daughter Netball—2pm

September

9th Year 5 Speech Exam

10th Mufti

11th Yr6 Pubertal Change session 2pm

13th Election Booth in hall

16th Drama Festival—school hall

17th Drama Festival—school hall

19th Election Booth in hall

24th BOT meeting 5.30pm

25th Bonus Trophies presented

Last day Term 3

Term 4 starts on Monday 12 October.

VACANCIES FOR 2021

There are 3 spaces at Year 6, possibly one at Year 5, and possibly 2 at Year 7. If you know of anyone who is interested please let them know.

Expressing Our Thanks to Our Wonderful Team

The Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge the teachers and support staff for the wonderful work they undertook before, during and after Covid 19 lockdown. Teachers and support staff may not have been classified as essential workers, however they are essential in our eyes.

2020 will be remembered as the year we all learned how to live life with social distancing, living in our 'bubbles' while teacher's and students had to manage distance learning with the use of technology, innovation and persistence. This was a big leap into the unknown - the first time in New Zealand teaching history we had distance learning for every school in NZ.

As a parent I did my best to support my children's at-home learning, but in no way did I consider it was 'home schooling'. The number of times I heard "*But my teacher doesn't do it that way!*" shows our teachers have made a lasting impression on our daughters. I was only supervising, the teachers, were doing all the heavy lifting. Our support staff also helped supervise a small group of girls based at school during level 3.

For all this and more, we say thank you. The Board of Trustees are grateful to you our teachers, our support staff, along with our families, for rising to the challenge in these unprecedented times.

Mark Billcliff
Board of Trustees Chair

Congratulations to the following girls who received awards recently—

Room 1	Rosie Laughton, Ava Amar, Sophia Lillo-Dockerty, Laura van Westrenen
Room 2	Bailey Cooper, Mia Reilly, Peyton Cornish, Mia Padgett
Room 3	Ingrid Flemming, Sophia Warbrick-Smith, Kiran Gilmete, Sofia Peters
Room 4	Anna Amar, Lucy Middlemass, Shanna-Beth Smith, Sophie Baron
Room 5	Brooke Acker, Amanda Henderson, Charlee O'Connor, Meg Scott
Room 6	Lucia Hughes, Shakayla Brown, Binne Lenihan, Meah Somerville
Room 7	Olivia Sorensen, Alicia Purdon, Louella Mirrielees-Huxtable, Madeleine Lawlor

Values Cup

3 July	McKenzie Bennett	Rm 5
24 July	Lily Hillman	Rm 7

AFTERSCHOOL CARE PROGRAMME

This programme operates every day after school from 3.15 to 5.15pm. Girls can attend on a daily or permanent basis.

If your daughter attends on a casual basis it is expected you will pay on the day. If your daughter attends on a regular basis, payment is expected weekly.

This is an excellent service offered to the school by Mrs Wilson so please use it.

HEALTH CONSULTATION FEEDBACK 2020

Thank you to the ten people who responded. The feedback is always valuable. It makes us review what we are doing, always with a view to improvement. *Our response is in italics. Not all comments are included as generally they were one off.*

What areas of health are we doing well? Summary:

Most respondents think the school has a good coverage of what they see as the key areas of the Health Curriculum.

Many respondents appreciate the coverage on general health and healthy living.

What aspects of health education do you think we could improve? Summary:

There was no trend in the responses. They were all one off suggestions, all showing thought. Below is our response to some of the ideas.

Starting pubertal change earlier – *we have discussed this but decided this is a parental responsibility as Year 5 is too early for most of the girls. It would go over their heads or in some instances, scare them.*

Sending all girls to swimming – *we have made a deliberate decision to send the girls who cannot swim 200m to swimming instruction. While teaching lifesaving skills would be beneficial, we have to decide what we include or don't include in the programme to ensure we make the most of the time available. If we sent the whole school, the girls who need to learn to swim would receive reduced instruction. Swimming clubs teach lifesaving skills.*

Compulsory wearing of sunhats – *this was the expectation but we have moved to encouraging girls to take responsibility by wearing sunblock and finding shade. Girls are welcome to wear navy sunhats and some do.*

Including education about friendships, including anti-bullying – *This is an important area. Relationships is part of several health units taught, including Me, Myself and I so it covered but the most effective way for girls to learn about friendships is the incidental discussions that occur as part of the everyday programme.*

Acceptance and open mindedness of other cultures – *this is a work in progress.*

Comments:

- Smoke free module would be a good idea. Is this included in drug and alcohol use/abuse? *Yes, this is part of the Year 7/8 Drugs and Alcohol unit.*
- Milk: being a 'water only school' are families aware that plain milk is also an option? I was not. *Yes, this is a good option, assuming it can be kept cool, perhaps in a thermos.*

Stimulant medications often cause loss of appetite. For children who lose their appetite from medication (ADHD) protein helps. A protein supplement drink should be an option in this situation, available in their lunchbox. *The Board discussed this and decided that we keep to water only but would make allowances for children in this group if a note from the doctor/ paediatrician was provided to the office.*

How can unhealthy convenience foods such as pies, sausage rolls and cheerio's be allowed in lunch boxes. It seems very contradictory having a healthy 'water only school' allowing these saturated high in fat sugar and salt and low in protein party foods! They may be great for a special occasion but not a nourishing item for inclusion in lunches on a frequent basis. What happened to being able to bring leftovers?

We accept your comment about the inclusion of pies, sausage rolls etc on a frequent basis however the school's role is to educate about healthy eating and not to check lunches. We need to rely on parents and caregivers to provide appropriate healthy food for the girls. Our policy with regards water drinks is straight forward and requires minimum, or no monitoring by the school and is now common practice with all schools.

Heat ups are allowed but only wrapped in tin foil. The large containers are a safety risk for Mrs Lang and helpers as they get very hot. They are also dangerous for the owner of the food. Food in thermos flasks is a much safer option.

Brenda Mackay

On behalf of the Board of Trustees