



WHANGAPARĀOA COLLEGE

Together Believe Achieve Ngātahi Whakapono Tutuki

29 September 2021

Kia ora e te whānau,

At the start of this term, I do not think I would have believed anyone if they had told me we would spend the last 6 weeks of term in a lockdown. However, here we are. It has certainly altered my induction into the Whangaparāoa community; however, we have still been able to progress a number of initiatives whilst working from home.

Yes, we have been able to switch to home learning, once again, quickly. I have been immensely proud of the response from our learners and their whānau to this remarkable situation. As I have stated publicly, nothing will ever replace the face to face and daily interactions between teachers and learners, however, in this current pandemic, our learners have done remarkably well. We have asked them to remain connected to their Rōpū Whānau and subject teacher, and the majority of them have. The challenge for us all, will be to ensure the re-engagement of our learners, hopefully, at the start of next term. To enable us to do this, we are requiring a little bit of information and assistance from you as parents. We would appreciate your opinions on lockdown and needs by completing [this](#) short survey.

Our Board of Trustees has also progressed our strategic direction work. If you have not yet been able to have your say on the direction of the school for the next 3 years, we would really appreciate you completing this survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/wgpcollege> by 4 October. We are very appreciative of all thoughts and opinions, even those who may not attend our school, so feel free to pass this on to other members of our community as we have a desire to truly serve our community.

Despite only having 4 weeks of term at school, there is still so much to celebrate. A highlight was our whole school assembly in week one where we got to acknowledge learners' achievements from throughout the school, from music to Kapa Haka, and sport. It quickly became apparent to me that we have huge potential amongst our learners. At that same assembly, our learners were reminded of the opportunities they have by Deputy Head Prefects, Thea Stout and Matthew Tataurangi. Across the shortened term, we were well represented at the KBB Music Festival, our U14 Rugby team remained undefeated, and our Netball teams continued to excel. Academically, our Head Boy, Alex Lu gained second place overall in the New Zealand Physics and Mathematics Competition and he got an A+ and a Certificate of Distinction in a University of Auckland extension programme for gifted mathematicians. A huge highlight of the school year is always the school ball. Considering what has happened since the event at the Hilton, I think we can be even more proud of all learners who attended this event, and the leadership of Rachel Taylor and Thea Stout in pulling this together. We were able to open our renovated facility (Te Kauika Parāoa) that will provide much needed space for our Learning Support and Careers Departments. We also celebrated Matariki with the annual Tree Planting ceremony involving past Māori learners.

We are encouraging learners of all year levels to be engaging with their learning/lessons online. Teachers at Years 7-10, similarly to those at Years 11-13, will be continuing with assessments, gathering evidence of demonstrated learning in cases where it is difficult to run an assessment. Grades will be reported on school reports at the end of this year. Learners who miss assessments, or for whom evidence has been unable to be gathered, will be reported as Absent for assessments.

As we approach Term 4, the focus for all learners will be to finish the year positively and ensure they attain their best possible academic grades. Obviously, for our senior learners, the academic results they gain this year may determine their futures post school. To assist learners with this, I encourage them to have a look at the [StudyIt](#) platform provided by the Ministry of Education. During this term we have been able to contact those learners that are at risk of not meeting their potential. This will be continuing through into next term with parent/learner conversations early in the term. We are going to need everyone's support to ensure our learners are in good routines and are ready to learn – together we can do this for our learners.

Personally, I have really enjoyed my first term leading Whangaparāoa College. The community has been incredibly welcoming, and the outlook for the college is not only positive, but also exciting. I am also aware that there will be the odd bump in the road, just like what we have now. However, we have a staff that are keen to develop, a community that wants to see our school thrive, and learners that really want to grow and be the best they can.

As we begin to think about the school holidays, we can only hope that, as a country, we have done enough to get back to school at Alert Level 2 at the start of next term. When we know more, I will email you all to confirm. However, I want to reassure everyone that we are well planned, and ready to welcome our learners back. I also want to encourage you to have conversations with your child/ren about reengaging back to school as soon as possible - we know this will set the learners up successfully for the remainder of the term. Remaining at home is not an option for our learners. We need them back to school, following the rules and finishing this year off well.

Once we get into the full swing of Term 4, our senior learners will have their practise and final exams, we have sport and music starting back up and we will be able to celebrate the year with our learners through end of year prizegivings. We can't wait to get all our learners back!

Have a great term break.

Ngā mihi,

Steve McCracken

