

Term: 2 Week: 5

30 May 2024

TOTARA COLLEGE NEWS

This Term at Totara

Theme: Time

Value: Integrity

Scripture:

Malachi 3: Verse 6

For I am the LORD,
I do not change.



**TOTARA
COLLEGE**

Vision

Reaching our God-given potential

Save the date: Wednesday 12 June 2024 5.15pm—7pm

Cyber Safety Presentation - presented by Caroline Gyde from Tararua REAP held at Totara College Hall.

Dinner will be supplied. Senior student leaders will be available to supervise children while parents/caregivers attend.

RSVP: by 10 June 2024 for catering purposes.





From the Dr's Office...

Greeting Everyone

I trust you're all staying safe through the onset of the winter cold. Sickness is definitely hitting Dannevirke (influenza, covid and nasty colds) but it doesn't seem to be hitting us as bad as many Palmerston North schools. We are blessed at Totara College to have staffing organised in such a way that we can generally balance things when staff are sick and thus limit the impact on the children's learning.

We've been working diligently and I've got a number of things to update you all on:

Teacher only day Friday 31 May

Just a reminder that this Friday your children will have to stay home. If it's a real problem for you (and I recognise we should have given more notice) please contact the office. The Ministry of Education has given us this day (and another one in term 4) to focus on curriculum (i.e. what we are teaching) and our staff will be using this to consider how our teaching is progressing and also how to improve things in the future. In the primary school, the focus will be on the new literacy changes the Minister of Education has been talking about in the media. We're also using the opportunity to have a mid winter Christmas lunch (albeit a tad early) as a bit of fun for the staff who work very diligently for our school and your children.

Kings Birthday holiday

And don't forget that Monday is a public holiday!

Secondary student surveys

This week we've surveyed all of our secondary students for how they are finding the changes we implemented to learning this year. This survey is something our Board set as a goal, since we have invested significant resources into making learning better for the students. I'll give some more detail later, but it was very pleasing to see that, overwhelmingly, the students are loving the changes, finding school more engaging and relevant and feel they are being set up better for their lives. We also received some excellent feedback about how we can continue to improve and our leadership team (myself, Ruth Peters and Carl McIntyre) will be considering this data as part of what we are doing on Friday.

One thing that is very satisfying is that the vast majority of students say they would recommend our school to their friends. I think that is a key statistic to show that (hopefully) we are on the right track.

Administration day for me

Just fyi: on Wednesdays, I generally work from home. We have a significant amount of policy and system documentation to upgrade and it is easier for me to be productive away from the general hubbub of school life.

Complaints/Concerns

One of the many policies I will be working on is the complaints and concerns policy. It won't be out till later this year, but just to give you the general direction:

I usually prefer to call these concerns rather than complaints since people often don't want to actually lay a formal complaint, but they may have some significant areas they are worried about in their child's schooling. We want to make it easy for you to air these.

Please note: Parents' and students' concerns are very important to us.

If you have a concern this is the basic strategy:

Please go to the adult involved first. This would generally be the child's teacher. If that doesn't work, i.e. the situation isn't resolved to your satisfaction, then see Mr McIntyre or Mrs Peters (whichever one works for you). If your issue is still

unresolved, please book a meeting to see me about it. It's best if these meetings are prepared and organised in advance so that we can give you our best attention (contact Sue in the office). When parents turn up unannounced with a concern, often there will be other things we are attending to and it is difficult to give you the time and effort that you deserve. When things are aired openly and transparently, and with the time to dedicate to the issue, it is much easier for us to see them resolved appropriately.

Board updates

Just to fill you in if you've missed this:

Calder Woodfield is now the Board chair (NZSTA now likes to call it the position the 'presiding member'). Ricky Carnie is the Deputy chair.

Gavin Welsh retains his position as the proprietor trustee on the board as well as Trevor Viljoen, who was recently appointed.

The parent trustees are: Ricky Carnie, Clayton Locke, Calder Woodfield and Isobel Omundsen.

For the school, the staff trustee is Ruth Peters, the student trustee is Kyan Carnie and then there's me.

Board business generally entails ensuring that the goals set through the 2024 annual plan are being worked through as well as any compliance issues (finances, property, staffing, safety, attendance etc.) and any emerging issues. We also look to the future and how the school is set up strategically to be a successful entity going forward (hence things like the new logo, the van purchase etc.).

Vaping

We have had a few isolated incidences of this and I want to make it crystal clear that vaping is not allowed in school and is considered a serious offence. It is magnified in its seriousness if someone brings a vape or similar to school and shares it with someone else (this is considered supply of an illegal substance). I do sometimes feel sad for our students, since vaping can be easily accessible in Dannevirke and, in certain situations, can be difficult to steer clear of; however, it is illegal for under 18s and the health issues associated with nicotine are well documented.

Napier Careers Expo

On Tuesday we sent most of our secondary students to Napier to learn from the careers expo there. The students engaged in a number of activities and had their eyes opened to other possibilities for life after school. Many thanks to **Mr McIntyre** for organising this.

Basketball

The basketball season is well underway and our senior students are having plenty of opportunities to compete. We are blessed to have **Mr Craig Ellmers** coaching both the girls' and the boys' teams (with periodic assistance from me as stand in coach, and constant help from team manager **Mr Jonny Max**). Craig is a former basketball semi-pro and his knowledge of the game is vital for us. Many teams would give their right arm to have him as their coach. Both Craig and Jonny are very generous in their donation of their time freely to assist with the teams and I am grateful for all they give to the school. If your children are involved, please remember to not take either man for granted!

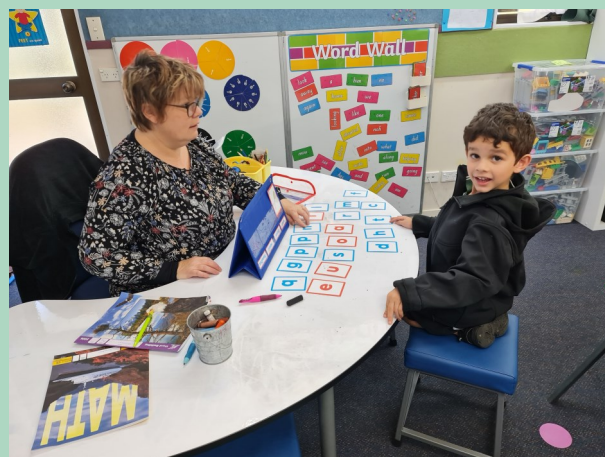
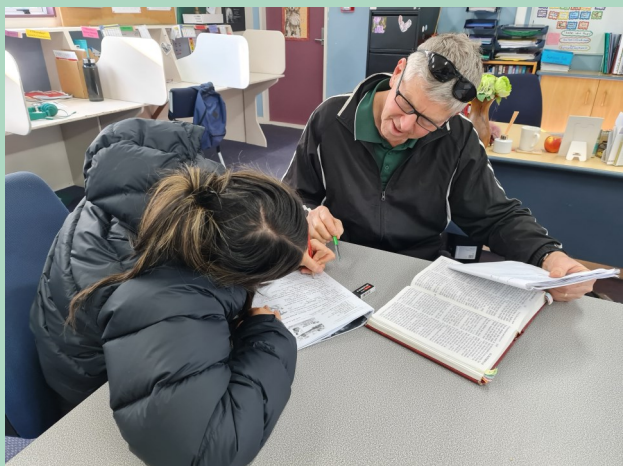
The boys are sitting towards the top of their league and generally win their games. Last week on Wednesday they had a solid win against a Boys' High team that thrashed us last year. Congratulations to **Damian Jordan** who was man of the match for his excellent offensive and defensive rebounding. It's great to see some of the younger students playing as well and getting a feel for senior competitive sport as they learn the rudiments of the game.

The girls have also won most of their games since the team started this year, and **Tanayah Hema** has been lethal on the fast break.

Cross country

Lastly from me is a reminder that next Friday (7th June) we will have the school cross country. One of our parents has helped us to realise that we do not have permission to use the dog park as we have been doing, and so we have transferred the run to our school grounds. **Mr Jonny Max** (head of Sport) has organised a running track for the students on that day. You're welcome to join us in the afternoon.

Best wishes and have a great break, Peter



PACE time
for the
students in
various
classes



The Passion
Project class busy
building the ORS
wet kitchen.
Great work guys.

Community Notices:



FREE
Community
Movie!

1pm Saturday
8th June



REGENT
DANNEVIRKE'S HISTORIC CINEMA
EST. 1918

~ With support from The Dvke Community Board ~

Please Remember...

- Friday 31 May—Teacher only day—no school
- Monday 3 June—King's Birthday—no school
- Friday 7 June -- Totara College Cross Country
- Wednesday 12 June - Cyber Safety Presentation and dinner 5.15pm to 7pm
- Friday 28 June—Matariki—no school
- Friday 6 July —Term 2 last day
- Monday 22 July—Term 3 starts

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