

Te Awamutu Primary School

Together Achieving Personal Success

Monday 8 November 2021

Hi everyone and welcome to week 4 of the final term.

We've corresponded directly with you over relevant issues over the past few weeks. Now it's time for a general newsletter to keep you apprised of the events and decisions being made behind the scenes.

Firstly, thank you for your positive feedback relating to the learning programmes we have offered during the latest level 3 restrictions. All of the staff have worked hard to make the best out of tough situation, regardless of if they are onsite providing bubble teaching and supervision, or undertaking cleaning and maintenance, paying the bills, answering the phones, creating hard parks, or if they are at home planning and teaching tutorials to the best of their ability while managing their own families. I'm sure you will join me in thanking them for applying themselves so selflessly.

Unfortunately the reach of Delta is far and wide and it has resulted in the cancellation of some pivotal events in our student's lives. This week I have had to make, perhaps, the toughest decision of my principalship. I was approached by Totara Springs who asked us if we would relinquish our booking for a school who were certain they would be able to attend. After agonizing over the decision for two days, and consulting with the Board, I have decided to allow that to happen. Times are tough for all businesses, as many of you would know and that is no different for Totara Springs who have missed out on a lot of the income they rely on to stay operational. We have no surety that we would be down in level 2 by the end of November, and now the mandate for compulsory vaccinations for all staff and **volunteers** working with children has added extra layers of compliance making an already big event, twice as tricky. My staff are constantly organising a 'Plan A' and 'Plan B' for everything and it's often disappointing and always exhausting, much akin to parent helpers having to constantly readjust their work commitments. Our children are coping with change to varying degrees. Some are resilient and would have been prepared for camp in a flash, others more unsure and some outright reluctant. The final straw that broke the camel's back was the finances. At the end of October, schools start to wrap up their accounts for the end of the year, allowing November and a bit of December for final bills to be paid. This means our accountants can accurately work out our end of year figures to inform next year's budget. With the cancellation of camp, we can now reimburse the families that made their \$100 donation which may be a welcome reprieve before Christmas. We will send a separate email regarding the process of reimbursing parents via Hero. Totara Springs understands how important this camp was to us. They have said, if we do manage to get down to level 2 before the end of the year to call them and they may be able to help us arrange something special for our students. Now our staff will focus their attention on organising a Plan B to compensate. I'm sorry for the disappointment you and your children may feel.

This also leads to the fact that postponing the production is no longer sustainable. The students would need time to practice their classroom dances and we don't have enough time, nor could we all sit in the hall and enjoy the performance as it would breach numbers in relation to the government's COVID protocols.

We will reimburse all ticket costs, but you must have the ticket to be able to do this and payment must go to the person who paid for them in the first place. If the lockdown continues, you can put the tickets in a sealed envelope, writing your name and a nominated bank account on the tickets and drop them into the school mailbox on Teasdale Street. Kimi will work towards reimbursing those immediately so we can wrap up our end of year budget as soon as possible.

Considering we are four weeks into a nine week term (and a six week touch season), we are withdrawing from the touch draw and dodgeball competition so we can reimburse parents who enrolled their children to play - further instructions will be sent directly to those parents who enrolled and paid via Hero.

The final blow, I can not see how we can conceivably plan to have our Year 6 Graduation ceremony either. At present, we are working on a plan for how we can recognise our graduates in a safe and memorable way. This is a top priority!

About this time each year, we invite parents to write letters to us regarding their child's / children's learning and personality so we can make good decisions about their classroom placements in 2022. When placing children, we consider learning, relationships, gender, ethnicity and behaviour. We do not accept letters that request specific teachers. You are welcome to write to Kim Tautari-Scott on kimt@taps.school.nz if there are further considerations you would like us to know.

Sadly, we are losing Dylan van Deventer and Carey Magalei next year. Both have made the brave decision to step away from Te Awamutu and teaching in general. Dylan is off to Taranaki to start a business with his parents and Carey is moving back to the far north to be near her whānau. Both are amazing teachers and great colleagues and we will miss them dearly. We wish them success and happiness in their endeavours. Sarah Hutchins has also resigned from her position as one of our extraordinary teacher aides to concentrate on her studies next year. We wish Sarah all the best and thank her for caring and nurturing nature shown to everyone at TAPS.

Last Friday, teachers at TAPS had one of their two classroom release days. Many teachers spent the day writing their report comments for the end of the year. There has been a slight adaptation of usual practices as the level 3 restrictions have changed our reporting expectations. Teaching online prevents teachers from completing end of year assessments or having the same insight to their student's level of skill or understanding. Each teacher is going to write a large general paragraph summarising the child's learning and attitude over the course of the year. Remember, Hero shows your child's individual learning goals in reading, writing and maths. The detail you may be looking for in their learning is at your fingertips 24/7.

Earlier this term, I was contacted by Jade from Kenpo 5.0 in Cambridge. They have paired with local businesses and are offering the chance for one of our Year 4 - 6 students to be sponsored for a term, in this form of martial arts. Kenpo is a comprehensive self-defence system. The values we hold and teach in life through Kenpo are; Wisdom, Strength, and Kindness. Parents, please nominate a child who you think would benefit. They must be in Year 4-6 and you must be willing to commit to drive to Cambridge each week for your child to attend. This sponsorship is for one child, for one term.

Individual, class and sibling photos were taken at the end of Term 3. With the large amount of orders, we were not able to complete all of the sibling photos within one day. We have since made two new dates for these but unfortunately both dates have been during the extensions to the level 3 lockdown. With this in mind, Photolife are looking for alternative dates to complete the sibling photos. It is hopeful that the photos that were taken will be processed and the 'shoot key' information be sent to us as soon as possible. The shoot key is a form with a specific code relating to your child. Once these have been sent to us, you as caregivers/parents can go online and purchase any pack size you wish. When these have been collated, the ordered photos will be delivered directly to school for distribution. Be warned that last year this was within the last few days of school and we have no control over that.

Calendar Art has been collated and couriered off to Kids Art Works in Auckland. These will be processed and hopefully back in the coming weeks. Kimi will keep in contact with the production team and relay that information onto parents as it comes to hand (including Photolife).

Stay safe and we hope to see you all again soon.



Nga mihi
Sharon