

Te Awamutu Primary School

Together Achieving Personal Success

21 February 2022

Today marks the beginning of Week 4 of Term 1.

It has been another unusual start to the year but, inside of the gates, it's relatively business as usual. The students are coping remarkably well, but we are mindful that the stress of the unknown may be contributing to a few wobbly mornings for some of our children.

I'd like to begin this year's first newsletter by welcoming our new staff. We have enjoyed getting to know them and learning of their teaching strengths and we are looking forward to a successful future working together. For Room 12 parents, you are very lucky to get two experienced and talented teachers in a job sharing role. Michelle Galbraith is completing her Masters in Education and has won a study grant award. Her teaching is complimented three days per week by Jonelle Seeney, who worked in our school as an ORS teacher last year. Both very accomplished, amazing teachers!

COVID

It's likely that many of us are sick of the topic of covid but we need to keep it in the forefront of our minds to ensure we are prepared. Tomorrow we will send home a hardcopy of this newsletter and attach a copy of the TAPS Covid Response Plan detailing what we will do if and when we get cases. Being transparent, so far TAPS has had no positive cases at school. Granted, we are being very cautious but we do so with vulnerable children in our minds and the desire to keep all students and staff as well as possible so they can attend school.

If a number of staff become ill (i.e. any more than five to seven over a period of three or more days), we are highly unlikely to have enough cover to relieve in each classroom. Therefore we may ask for parents to keep their children home in this instance but we will provide online learning, or even hard packs, so learning can continue. If this happened, we would communicate that request via Hero/email and Facebook.

Staff have been working very hard behind the scenes to gather resources and create emergency hard packs to pre-empt the worst case scenario. Today, Team 3 and 4 parents can expect their child to bring home learning tools such as a book (could double as their homework book), pen, glue stick and login details to Mathletics and Steps Web. Some may even include a laminated sheet of white paper to use as a whiteboard. Teachers have prepared hard copies of learning tasks too, but will send them home as needed. Team 1 and 2 were able to make use of the excess of Ministry hard packs that we accidentally over ordered last year - there is enough for one each for our current students in those teams. **We ask that you simply put these packs aside and save them for a "rainy day" should school have to go to hybrid/learning from home in the weeks ahead.** TAPS are also purchasing a copy of the "Dragon Maths" text book for all children in Year 3-6. These books will be used in class and sent home in the event of "Step 2 - Hybrid learning" being activated. the impact of staff absences too.

Likewise, if we are understaffed in After School Care due to illness, we have some plans in place to ensure ratios of caregivers to students maintain safe levels. If you do not need your booking on any given day, please advise Lailie so that 'casual' attendees can fill empty spots. We will need to cap the number of children we can care for each afternoon to reduce the impact of staff absences too.

The disabled car park on Teasdale Street continues to cause issues for our parents and caregivers. Please refrain from using the disabled car park unless you are displaying the appropriate signage to demonstrate permission to use the park. With a thousand parents and a number of grandparents and caregivers associated with the school, there are multiple people who legitimately need this spot. Please be respectful of each other. Do not use the car park unless you have a disabled windshield card. All complaints in relation to the misuse of the car park should be directed to the Police with the registration number of the vehicle. The road is not within the schools jurisdiction to control but we do our best to keep it safe for our whānau.

Unfortunately, I have received a resignation letter from Caroline Jones who is off to see the world. Caroline began her teaching journey at TAPS and is a much loved member of Team 1. She will finish at the end of this term. We have already begun to advertise for her replacement AND for another teacher to begin a **new**, new entrant classroom in Team 1.

With much excitement we can announce that the administration refurbishment is due to be finished and handed over on Wednesday. We will make a video and share the new look soon. Disappointingly, Room 17 has been delayed by the contractors due to lack of materials. Ground work should start in the next holidays.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate all of our students on a successful beginning to the year. All teachers are amazed with their great behaviour, willingness to learn or to try their best. TAPS is a great place to be! Thank you to all of our wonderful students for making your teachers so happy.

Nga mihi

Sharon

