



1 February 2024

Kia ora koutou

Our students are now heading towards the end of their first full week of school in 2024. We had an excellent pōwhiri on Monday morning, welcoming all new students, staff and whānau.

At the end of 2023 we had a number of retirements, as well as two teachers moving to Australia, and three teachers from one family moving back to Wales, their home country. I am very pleased to welcome the following 12 new teachers to Whanganui High School:

- **Sandra Murray** (SENCO & HOD Learning Support) from Awatapu College, Palmerston North.
- **Olivia Wright** (Teacher-in-Charge Junior Health & Awa House Dean) from Whanganui Collegiate School, Whanganui.
- **Eve Coltman** (Physical Education & Health) from Hato Pāora College, Feilding.
- **Pamela West** (English) from Queen Elizabeth College, Palmerston North.
- **Shelley Clark** (English) from Whanganui Intermediate School, Whanganui.
- **Franklin Falcular** (Mathematics) from Surabaya Cambridge School, Indonesia.
- **Teresa Diolosa** (Physics) from Melville High School, Hamilton.
- **Sharuna Devi** (Mathematics) from Swami Vivekananda College, Fiji.
- **Manisha Gounder** (Mathematics) from Swami Vivekananda College, Fiji.
- **Gordon Hall** (Digital Technology) from Tawa College, Wellington.
- **Emily Mayhead** (Mathematics) – First Year teacher from Otago University and also an ex-Whanganui High School student.
- **Artika Narayan** (Physics & Mathematics) from Korovuto College, Fiji.

Mobile phones 'Away for the day' rules

The Government has recently introduced regulations requiring all students to put mobile phones 'away for the day' during normal school days.

For nearly the last two years we have had very similar rules in place regarding mobile phones and airpods (or similar) not being allowed to be used during subject class time – we also successfully trialled this during Form Time with our Junior students at the end of 2023.

The new Government regulations also require mobile phones to be 'put away' during student Break Times, i.e. our First and Second Break of each school day.

As a result, from today onwards students have been asked to put any mobile phones into their bags during Break Times, as well as during Form Time and subject classes. The response from students has been overwhelmingly positive.

The request will be made politely by staff members, and all students are expected to follow this instruction. The staff member will then move on to continue with his or her own Break Time or active supervision duty. As is our normal practice, House Deans and Senior Leadership Team members will follow up with any non-compliance.

Parents may wish to seriously consider asking their children to leave their mobile phones at home before coming to school. A few teachers may ask students to bring phones to school from time-to-time as part of a valid assessment process, but parents/caregivers will receive advance notice of this request from the subject teacher.

Vaping

I always take a firm line on vaping at school or at any school-associated activity. Students who vape are formally stood down from school for two days and must attend a re-entry meeting back into school in the Principal's office with me, adult family members, and the student's House Dean and/or House Deputy Principal. The students also receive literature on the harmful effects of vaping on the growing teenage body and need to complete a question/answer activity on the effects of vaping.

Form Time

Your son or daughter's House Form Teacher is an extremely significant figure in the education of your child. I have asked all Form Teachers to make email contact with the parents and caregivers of all students in their Form Classes before Friday, 9 February. Please let me know if you have not heard from your son or daughter's House Form Teacher and I will personally follow-up with the relevant teacher.

School will be closed on Monday, 5 February

Please note that we will not be open for instruction on Monday, 5 February due to the Waitangi Day Public Holiday on Tuesday, 6 February. Many student families will be going away for an extended weekend – and we have added one more teaching day onto our end-of-year last day of school.

Year 9 Parents' Evening

Please note that on Tuesday, 20 February we will be holding a Year 9 Parents' Evening in our School Hall – the evening will begin promptly at 6.30 pm. We will present key information that is relevant to all parents of Year 9 students – book into your calendar as soon as possible.

Up-to-date contact details/changes

Please let our Student Centre (06 349 0177) or our Main Office (06 349 0178 or office@whs.ac.nz) know as soon as possible if you change your home address, email addresses, mobile/home phone numbers or any other key relevant information.

Newsletters coming directly from me are always placed onto our Main School Facebook page and onto our Whanganui High School Website (under the News and Events section).

Wishing you and your family all the very best for 2024.

Ngā mihi nui

Martin McAllen
PRINCIPAL