



21 October 2021

NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Calendar Changes For Weeks 1-4, Term 4

As with many aspects of the current COVID outbreak, compliance mandates for schools have changed regularly and the compliance requirements only seem to ramp up rather than go down. Previously we were required to adhere to all Alert Level 2 requirements when holding an event which might include anyone from outside of our student/staff school bubble. This included keeping in-school events to no more than 100 people, and ensuring social distancing and the requirements that we are all familiar with. As of last Wednesday, however, the Secretary for Education, Iona Holsted, advised all schools that they should also comply with the following additional requirements in the current COVID environment:

*“Even if your event is considered to be for education purposes, unless it is really necessary to give effect to the curriculum, we recommend that you **avoid such events until Alert Level 1**. An example of this is prizegivings – though they are an important aspect of school life, they are not a curriculum requirement.”*

The Secretary also identified school Balls as a “social gathering”, rather than one which gives effect to the curriculum.

As such, we must now follow these mandates and adapt where possible to preserve some of the important milestones that give meaning to the end of each school year. This will mean the following:

Prizegivings

The Cultural, Sports and Senior Academic Prizegivings can now not go ahead in a traditional format. However, it is very important that we recognise the achievements of our students. To do this, these three prizegiving events will be run during the school day so that they remain inside our school bubble, and so allow them to occur. Sadly, this will mean that our parents will not be able to attend this year’s prizegiving ceremonies, which we know will be very disappointing. However, we are currently planning to record each of these ceremonies and to provide a link to prizewinners and their parents. This will not be a full assembly which all students attend, which would be too risky in the current COVID setting, but will involve prizewinners and limited numbers of staff only. Classes will still continue around the prizegiving ceremonies, which will be held as follows:

- Cultural Prizegiving, Tuesday 2 November - Lunchtime and Period 5
- Sports Prizegiving, Thursday 4 November - Lunchtime and Period 5
- Senior Academic Prizegiving, Wednesday 10 November - Lunchtime and Period 5.

Senior School Ball/PTA Ball

Regrettably, the planned Senior School Ball and the PTA Op-Shop Ball have both had to be cancelled for this year. This is very unfortunate as the Senior School Ball is a notable highlight of the year for many of our senior students (and their families and staff as well). We were unable to hold this under the previous Alert Level 2 guidelines and were pinning our hopes on a return to Level 1, but any slim chance of this has now been firmly taken out of our hands by the Secretary of Education’s mandate. It is also very unlikely that we will return to Alert Level 1 any time soon. We will endeavour to make refunds to students or their parents next week. It is also very disappointing for the PTA Committee who had already done a lot of work in preparation for their Op-Shop Ball.

College Cuisine

The Senior College Cuisine evenings are currently scheduled to continue next week, as they are genuine curriculum events which have Achievement Standard credits attached to them. Students and their families will be contacted by Mrs Gwengo and Ms Snowden to notify parents of the new scheduling. These evenings were already operating under a strict COVID Health and Safety plan and we ask those attending to assist us by following this plan which you will be advised on.

Year 12 PE Camp

Our Year 12 PE Camp scheduled to begin next Tuesday has had to be cancelled, as it required significant preparation time with the students beforehand to make sure that they were safely prepared to be out in the bush.

Community Group Use of School Facilities

One bright piece of news is that after discussions with the Ministry of Education yesterday they have consented to community groups continuing to be able to use our fields and gym facilities outside of school time, despite the current COVID restrictions. The MOE accepted that it is a vitally important role for a secondary school in a rural community to share its resources to enable young students to participate in physical activities. This will be a relief to those groups who have worked with us to put in place strong COVID Health and Safety plans to allow these activities to happen.

Last Day For Senior Students

Our last day for senior students currently remains **Friday 12 November**. This will allow one week of study leave from 15-19 November where many of our senior students will be able to set up appointments to work with our teachers in tutorials here at school to best target their revision needs ahead of the external NCEA exams which start on **Monday 22 November**. The Minister of Education announced yesterday that these external NCEA exams will go ahead, even if we are in Alert Level 3, which is a new development. Further information about NCEA settings will be sent out in the next few days following further Ministry announcements.

Scott Jenkins
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL