

KERIKERI HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWSLETTER

Greetings All

There are sure signs that winter is here. Senior and Year 9 and 10 students are facing the mid-year exams and a glimpse of the sky outside has that distinctive hue!

It has been great to watch the new Life Technology Culinary and Hospitality building take shape and Simon Hart and his team are no doubt rubbing their hands at the thought of getting in there at the start of next term and having a wonderful modern learning environment in which to extend the skills of our talented students. It is likely to be the last of the major building works at the High School for the short term.

The role of Parent Trustee on the Board is a varied one. One of the hardest parts of the job is to sit on the Discipline Committee which determines what happens to a student who the School has suspended. The School's Senior Leadership team has to take the decision whether or not to suspend a student. If a student is suspended it is then up to Parent Trustees on the Board to determine firstly whether the suspension is overturned or upheld and if the suspension is upheld whether the student is allowed to return to Kerikeri High School or whether he or she is excluded or expelled (which amount to the same thing – the student can't come back).

The Discipline Committee which hears these matters has the benefit of hearing not only the detail surrounding the events leading to the suspension but also background matters which the Committee can take into account which are provided both by school Guidance Counsellors (with the consent of the student and parents) and the parents. The additional information certainly doesn't make the job easier but it means that situations which on their face appear clear-cut often need to be viewed in context.

A number of students have recently come before the Discipline Committee for involvement with marijuana. Unfortunately the drug is widespread in Northland and throughout the community. It would be naïve of us to think that it never finds its way into the High School but nonetheless the High School takes a hard stance on the matter. This isn't simply because use of marijuana remains against the law; it is also because there is very clear medical and scientific evidence showing that marijuana has a far more detrimental effect on the brain of an adolescent than it does on that of an adult. Simply put it stops the student achieving as well as he or she otherwise could!

If a student is caught with marijuana at the High School there are always discipline consequences. What those consequences are will depend upon the facts of each case but the School wants to do all it can to ensure that students understand how damaging the drug can be and know that the School is completely against it. Part of this includes on-going education for our students. Part of it is the knowledge the students have that if they are found with the drug at School there are consequences that follow.

The High School has had to deal with a number of tragedies in recent years. It was incredibly sad to learn of the death of a recent student, Matthew Anderson, due to an accident in the United Kingdom. The thoughts of the School go to Matt's family. He is warmly remembered by staff.

The Principal, Elizabeth Forgie, always prepares a very informative Principal's Report for the Board prior to each board meeting. Parents may be interested to know that these reports are now also added to the High School's website. They are a very good way of keeping abreast of what has been happening at the High School and the rich and varied success that our students continue to enjoy.

Long may those successes continue and the Board's thanks go to the High School's hard-working staff and those who assist in extra-curricular activities who give the students the opportunities in which to succeed.

Naku noa

The Board