

KERIKERI HIGH SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 2021

Kia ora koutou, to our parents, whānau, caregivers, staff and students. All of us on the Board hope that you are keeping well and enjoying some of the freedoms we are able to have in Te Tai Tokerau. We acknowledge all of our staff who have worked so hard this year through some difficult times, and more recently, the School's outstanding efforts during Covid Alert Levels 4 and 3, providing ongoing distance and online learning for students.

The Board last wrote to you all following the school lockdown in response to the serious incident that occurred in early August. At that time, we noted that we had asked the School for a full report including restricting access, and that we would respond to our community afterwards. We also talked about our disappointment with some of the media reports on the lockdown which were factually incorrect and our intention to follow this up with the media group in question. You will also remember the community survey in which the Board sought your input on the bullying policy which has now closed. And so these are the three areas in which this newsletter now focuses on as we report back to you, our School Community.

School Lockdown Debrief and Review

Since the incident, the School has looked at what went well and what lessons have been learnt, and provided the Board with a full debrief and review report.

The Board agree with the School's view that a fence (as suggested by some parents) would not have deterred or prevented the incident which led to the lockdown. The intruders came in the front of the school by the administration block, and this is a main entrance to the school. Fences would require gates, and students would access these regularly through the school day for legitimate reasons, so a fence would not prevent unwanted entry to the school grounds. Locking and unlocking any such gates through the school day is not practical. Gates and fences mean Kerikeri Primary School students would have to travel around, instead of through, Kerikeri High School after school, which is a safety issue in itself.

The School has focussed on increasing site security, and steps have been taken which include implementation of electronic visitor sign in which generates name tags, making it clear for staff who is on site legitimately. There are an increased number of CCTV cameras in the school accompanied by improved remote access for senior staff. We know that the deterrent factor plays a strong role in reducing misconduct.

Also, changes to some procedures have now been implemented, with improvements to emergency evacuation, administration and communications. As we did in our newsletter following the incident, we acknowledge the School's professionalism, immediate action taken, and then more recently this thorough review process which was already in the planning stages when the Board asked the School to conduct a review.

Media reports

We wrote to the editor of Stuff (who ran an article incorrectly linking "gang intimidation" at the Ball two days before the incident), seeking a published retraction and apology to our School Community. The editor has said they have now removed the reference to the intimidation in the headline and noted "I am sorry to hear that this story caused upset within the school community". Although the response was not what we had hoped for, we acknowledge that Stuff has, at least, reviewed our concerns and made changes to the original article.

Policy on Bullying Prevention and Response

As you know, the School sought input from the community on this policy with a survey that closed on 4th August. We acknowledge the time and efforts taken by those who responded – there were a total of 195 responses received, which represent 6% of the total school population of 3,419. For your information, the table below gives some analysis.

Analysis of survey responses	Total number	% of total	Total school	% of total	Population response
Parent ¹	21	11%	1,769	52%	1%
Staff ²	8	4%	110	3%	7%
Student	166	85%	1,540	45%	11%
Total responses	195		3,419		6%

A considerable amount of work was then undertaken by the Board to adapt the existing policy after a logical and thorough process that included:

- (a) reviewing all comments provided in the survey responses from parents, students and staff;
- (b) reviewing a small selection of other schools' policies; and
- (c) reviewing again the document "Bullying Prevention Advisory Groups Bullying Prevention and Response: A Guide for Schools".

From this work, the draft policy was updated, finalised and presented to the Board at our meeting during Covid Alert Level 4 in early September. The Board has now approved and implemented the attached Policy on Bullying Prevention and Response together with a new Policy on Behaviour Management which sits as the overarching policy for managing behaviour.

By mid-next year, all Kerikeri High School policies will be available on the school website to read or download, as the school contracted with SchoolDocs³ earlier this year.

Our School Community

We said this in our last newsletter and we'll repeat it again now. We talk often of community here at Kerikeri High School. To our whanau and friends and the wider community; we acknowledge and thank you for your contribution to our school which is vital as we are all working together for the same goal. We continue to have significant support from families of children at our school and also our extended community. We all play a crucial part in raising our young people and setting expectations around behaviours and standards.

Hei konā mai and goodbye for now.

Sue Richards (Parent Trustee; Board Chair)
Chris McLellan (Parent Trustee; Deputy Board Chair)
Roger Ludbrook (Parent Trustee)
Emma Wise (Staff Trustee)
Axel Mabidikama (Student Representative)

Elizabeth Forgie (School Principal)
Mariaio Hohaia (Parent Trustee)
Wendy Butler (Parent Trustee)
Haylee Rhodes (Parent Trustee)

¹ Estimated 1,769 parents are all contacts, so there could be more than 2 but unlikely to exceed 4 for any given family.

² Note: 140 staff, 26% of which are parents. Assumed any staff response would be from parent perspective so only showing 74% of staff in numbers, i.e. 110.

³ www.schooldocs.co.nz/About-Us