



# Term One Newsletter

Dear Parents, Family / Whanau

This is my first official newsletter to you as the Principal of Otumoetai College. In my short time at this college, I have learnt a great many things about our culture, our staff and the students that we serve. It is my privilege to be at this college and I look forward to serving our staff, community, and most importantly our students, in the years to come.

I would like to begin by sharing a little of my educational philosophy. My goal as a teacher and Principal has always been to help young people become better learners, both in school and out. I believe in creating a culture in classrooms and in the wider school that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively. Schools exist to help young people discover those things that they would really love to be great at, and to strengthen their will and skill to pursue them. We need to work hard to strengthen young people's sense of themselves as learners, and to help them learn how to learn, in order to assist them in mastering useful and important bodies of knowledge and skill.

During this term, I have had the good fortune of rubbing shoulders with staff who are seeking out new ways of developing and delivering skills and knowledge required by our students. I have seen teachers develop in their students, the 'joy of the struggle' that new learning brings, and the consequent pride exhibited by these students as they make progress on something that matters. Our goal as a school is to continue working towards our students understanding and developing the craft of worthwhile learning so that they can make the best use of their imagination, reasoning, concentration, and collaboration, in order to make the best start in their life's journey.

To attain this goal, we absolutely need our parents, family / whanau to walk alongside us as we seek to support your child's learning journey. To this end, we would really appreciate you talking to your child about their academic achievement. I am not advocating that you put too much pressure on your child; however, it is important that you set your expectations high enough that you encourage your child to always give of their best. Reassure them that the workload will be manageable. Stay involved in your child's education and take steps to ensure they remain motivated to gain good results throughout the year. In Term Two, we will be holding parent report days and evenings, which we encourage you to attend along with your child so that we can set meaningful learning goals together.

Another area that we could use your support is by reinforcing to your child that some of the choices and decisions they make can affect them forever. Whether it is an inappropriate post on social media, or a risky decision that does not turn out well, there can be serious consequences for their choices. Show confidence in them to think before they act and make healthy decisions, regardless of what others choose to do.

I applaud you if you regularly talk to your child about their school life. If these conversations do not occur as often as you would like, the following questions may help your child to open up about their school experience:

- Tell me about your favourite subject / worst subject
- What makes a good teacher?
- What would your teachers say about you regarding your academic progress in their class?
- Is there a project, an assignment, a test that you were especially proud of when you completed it?
- What do you do when you are having trouble solving a problem?
- How do you think you can make an impact at school?

Together we can be a united front as we seek the best educational and life outcomes for your child.

In conclusion, I would like to make special mention of all of those students who have represented our school with distinction in their various disciplines during term one.

- \* On March 29, we held an Excellence Endorsement breakfast to congratulate student's academic success in their 2017 NCEA results.
- \* A number of sporting codes represented our school in the summer tournament, with our Senior Volleyball girls coming second in New Zealand national tournament being a highlight.
- \* We wish our Robotics team every success as they compete in the World Championships in America after their national championship win in March.
- \* Our triathlon team who won the secondary schools national team event for the first time.
- \* To those students who were involved in the music camp in order to hone their musical talent and represent our school.
- \* Our jazz band who played on Easter Friday at Baycourt and received a silver award.
- \* For those students who have dedicated so much time and energy as they prepare for the school production of Annie.
- \* To all of our students who have represented our school in whatever capacity, thank you for your commitment and dedication to your chosen activity / sport and thank you for sharing your talents with our school.
- \* To those students involved in our Food Festival successes.

In regards to open communication with your child, I would like to invite you to attend an Internet Health and Wellbeing presentation at our school, hosted by John Parsons. John is a leading authority in New Zealand on safeguarding children on-line and he will be addressing parents, family / whanau in our PAC on Thursday 10 May at 7.00pm. You and your child are warmly invited.

This has been a successful term for our school and I wish parents, family / whanau a pleasant term one holiday.

Sincerely

Russell Gordon  
**Principal**