

AN OPEN LETTER TO WHĀNAU/ AIGA

7th February 2024

Greetings, Kia Ora, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Malo e lelei, Talofa lava, Aloha, Kia Orana, Ni Hao, Buenos Dias, Chao, Malo ni, Habari Dobor Dan, Namaste, Salaam....

AND so, with a bottomless supply of optimism, I am excited, and I hope you are too, about the possibilities 2024 will bring for your child here at Manurewa Intermediate! We have all been through some bizarre times the past four years BUT I encourage you all to maintain the strength required to adapt to whatever the circumstances present in the future and to remind ourselves we accept what we are facing, and we just get on and deal with it, and do what we must at school, BY being at school every day!

I am writing on the first day of the new 2024 school year to welcome you and your whānau to another year of involvement with Manurewa Intermediate School, or if this is your first involvement with us, to especially welcome you to our community! I would also like to use this opportunity to inform you all of a number of things and to let you know right from the outset that we want AND actively encourage your support, ideas and skills to help make Manurewa Intermediate School the very best it can be as we continue the focus we have had the last fifteen years, of increasing student engagement, increasing student presence, increasing student involvement and ultimately increasing student achievement; with our vision to develop our students into *'adventurous risk takers; with persistent focussed achievement'*. However, to do this it is important that you are involved! I also ask you to spend time with, and on your kids! DO you play with your children? Do you lose track of time with your children? One way you can do so is when you are playing and laughing and communicating with them – they need your time and love and I urge you to exert some on them.

That does not mean it is easy though. We know this. Some days we really are not in the mood... and that is okay. Be kind to yourself – but at the end of the day your child **needs** to be at school – at school every single day, unless they are sick, and it is important we are all as strong and resilient as possible. So, let your own resilience inspire you to get your children to school, and on time, because you can do this, and this prompt start now will give your child the best chance of ongoing success at school all year. If you are finding it tough to get your child to school contact us, or if your whānau need any support from us here at school around anything, including your child's mental wellbeing, happiness and motivation or food and the like, or your own and/or wider whānau wellbeing then do not hesitate to contact us and we will try to help! In the first instance, contact can be made with Lois Hawley-Simmonds, our Poutoko Hapori: Community Engagement Coordinator (a vital professional learning connection between home and school that our board funded last year) or any other pastoral care staff you feel comfortable with. All these people and their roles and contact details are listed on the attached flyer.

I am excited and really looking forward to the start of my 16th year at Manurewa and I trust it won't be too long before I get to meet you all – and to remember names! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those parents/caregivers and whānau who have supported the school so enthusiastically over the years and I strongly encourage this continued involvement and support. We have a staff who want to be here and who want to work with your child and even the Education Review Office found this when they last reviewed our school, resulting in a back-to-back four-five-year review, when they said: *'Staff model optimism and authentic relationships that set learners up for success, wellbeing, citizenship and enhanced life experiences'*.

In case you weren't aware in 2017 we had great success winning the 2017 Prime Minister's Supreme School Award, as well as winning the Excellence in Engagement award, and that coupled with our back-to-back 4–5-year ERO review has spurred us on to continue the great work we try to do for your child/ren

every single day. We know, based on years of experience, and trial and error, that the systems and structures in place really do work. As that latest ERO report said: *“The school’s processes and actions very effectively help to achieve excellence and equity for learners... attributable to highly effective school leadership; a deep commitment to strong engagement between the school and its community; a responsive curriculum, effective teaching and opportunities to learn; the building of professional capability and collective capacity that increases teachers’ knowledge, skills and adaptive expertise; and the use of internal evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building for improvement and innovation”*. As you can see all staff were affirmed in this and we want and need this to continue, with our community’s help!

I encourage your feedback on what we do, and we are open to your opinions or ideas. Over the course of the next few weeks, it is my intention that you will become familiar with all that we do through face-to-face events, newsletters, Facebook, Insta, the MI Night Market, and perhaps our very best public relations people – your tamariki, who are **always** our best PR!!

Our staff work hard for your kids, but to do the very best we can do we need all your support and involvement as well, so that ultimately our children will be the recipients of a relevant, well balanced and productive education which will ensure they feel happy, secure and successful! I also believe that the learning process must be exciting, fun, and motivating for all children! This will be a real focus in our school, coupled with academic excellence – happy, interested, and motivated children are successful children, and this means they are attending every day and learning!

The education of your child IS a two-way process and by working together, we can make a difference! The staff for their part will be working very hard to meet the needs of your child and your assistance and interest is encouraged and needed – making sure, they are at school every single day, on time, ready and prepped by about 8.20am for an 8.30am start! Positive relationships with teachers and other students are critical – this is an area that we are continually looking at, as we know when your child likes their teachers, likes their class, and have good friendships then they are ready to be the learner they need to, and can be. It is all our responsibility, including yours, to constantly work hard at addressing the needs of our kids in all ways. Therefore, I invite you to dig into the huge mixture of things on offer for your child and whānau and to get involved throughout the year and I encourage you to drag every gram of enjoyment from these experiences and events. Your involvement makes a big difference to your child’s attitude towards school, and ultimately their achievement!

Thank you for taking the time to read what I know is a rather lengthy letter, but a dialogue that I believe is vital in ensuring you know exactly what is going on for your child, and for ensuring our school is seen in a positive light by celebrating all the events, achievements and experiences our children have had the past five weeks. This dialogue between home and school will always continue to be frequent, extensive and, I hope, interesting. Look out for the first full school newsletter, *‘Manurewa’s Monthly’*, coming home after camp, in week 5, on Wednesday 6th March, and which will continue to come home in week 5 and 10 of each term. In each newsletter, there will be information about the next month, general information and notices, affirmations, class reports or samples of work, event reports, general school reminders and community notices. This next full newsletter on 6th March will have all details about class teachers and rooms, and the various programmes operating. Also, keep an eye out on our Facebook page for real-time up to date information (<https://www.facebook.com/Rewalnt/>)

There is a fair bit of information coming home over the next few days, so I urge you to check in with your child each afternoon! Your child also gets their full free stationery this week, as well as the personal individual one-to-one use of a laptop every day in school, so I trust you are appreciative of these being provided for free from the school! In lieu of all this support to your whānau, we really hope you will be regularly involved in all that goes on at school, as we also do not charge for camps, zone sports comps or school wide trips. And in addition to all this your child is provided with a fresh lunch every single day so there is no need to make their lunch from home or drop off an expensive bakery or a local or international takeaway store (read KFC or McD’s!!) bought lunch during the day! However, a substantial morning tea snack is a good idea as our lunch time is a bit later than what most students are used to, starting at 1.25pm. Our tuck shop is however open at morning tea times for students to buy their morning tea snacks with their own money.

For now, I enclose a copy of the **Years Calendar**, which I suggest you stick to your fridge immediately! Whilst it is not a definitive list of all that is happening over the year it does include all things as known today. If there are any new events, these will be advised well in advance via the newsletter and Facebook. Also attached is a reminder about the uniform standards and a flyer inviting you to our ‘South Auckland famous’ ***“MI Night Market”***, which is on THIS coming TUESDAY (13th February) 4pm –

6.30pm on the school field. This is also an opportunity to hear about our school's strategic direction and provide input into this, as well as an opportunity to meet your child's form teacher if you did not do so on MI Whānau Day - and even have a conversation about our renown School Survival Camps which are on in:

Week 3 for **Kowhai: Monday 19th – Wednesday 21st February**

Rimu: Wednesday 21st February - Friday 23rd February

Week 4 for **Kauri: Monday 26th February – Wednesday 28th February**

Tawa: Wednesday 28th February - Friday 1st March

We are so excited to be back having our camps as we have not been able to for several years due to the COVID situation, and last year with the Auckland storms! If you have had previous children attend this camp you will have been aware we used to go with two whānau groups together, but now, since our school roll has got so large, we must go in individual whānau groups ie. one at a time, as the camp site cannot accommodate over 500 people per camp. All students attend these camps, without exception (see shade box below), as Outdoor Education is part of the NZ School curriculum (and I would hope if you have a reticent child, or if you are about your child attending, that all whānau motivate and ensure they do attend as there are many schools now across NZ who do not do Outdoor Ed, and they should as it is so great for kids in so many personal and learning reasons!), hence we fully fund these camps, with no charge for this to you, but we do need lots of adult helpers!! This is the start of what we hope will be a fruitful relationship between the home and school and continuing this face-to-face relationship in term 1 with Student Involved Conferences in week 10, on Tuesday 9th April. Details will come out closer to the date, but for now keep some time aside that day so you can attend these very important conferences with your child. These start at 8am and end at 8pm, and every parent/caregiver can book a time slot in that time span for 20 minutes. See you there!

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

Iain Taylor
Principal

Compulsory School-Wide Event Attendance

If for any reason your child is absent from or not contributed to a school-wide event they have committed to or are required to attend and have no genuine reason for their absence as determined by school leadership, **they forfeit the privilege of attending the end-of-year Whānau Fun Day**. They will be supervised for that day at school. If there is a genuine reason please write to me, via the form teacher, stating the reason for absence. These experiences are all free of charge, and part of our Manurewa Intermediate School local curriculum.

The events are advised to you each term, and for term 1 these events are: **MI Night Markets, Mini Athletics, Swimming Sports, and MI Survival Camp**.