

# AN OPEN LETTER TO WHĀNAU/ AIGA

8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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....

For those of you who were here in 2021 as Year 7 whānau, or for our new Year 7 whānau, your Year 6 year at primary school, what a year we all had eh?! Firstly, a bit of time to reflect on that and to thank you all for your commitment to your kids and the resilience and energy you continued to project for the benefit of them. Our staff, as would have the primary school staff joined with you in supporting your kids and I want to thank you all for that! Our kids really needed us all to step up and maintain the status quo and consistency! Thank you... here's hoping 2022 won't be interrupted like 2021 was.

AND so, with a bottomless supply of optimism, I am excited, and I hope you are too, about the possibilities 2022 will bring for your child here at Manurewa Intermediate! 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. This acceptance is crucial, as it is the resistance of what we cannot control that causes us the most angst and unhappiness.

That does not mean it is easy though. We know this. Some days we really are not in the mood for acceptance at all... and that is okay. Be kind to yourself. Connect with others even if you are feeling too grumpy to do it. Get out and be active, even if you have never felt less motivated. Keep expectations and goals manageable and celebrate the tiniest of successes, whilst we keep on keeping on, doing the absolute best we can, in the circumstances we find ourselves in, for the benefit of our kids, but looking after ourselves as well as we can whilst doing the job we all know we need to do! 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 our pastoral care staff, who's details are listed on the attached flyer, which on the other side has all the health and safety measures we are following to ensure our school is as safe as possible from COVID-19 transmission. However, we are also not naive enough to think we will remain immune from a case or transmission in our school. I am sure it will happen, but be assured we are all ready and prepped and capable of responding to this should we need to, enabling us to carry on as normally as possible. The best defence, as we have all been told now for months and months, is to be vaccinated, so if you or your child is not yet, then do it! All staff at school are fully vaccinated and amped to give your child the awesome Manurewa Intermediate School experience!

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 as I believe the start of the year may be difficult for some of our kids after being out of school for so long. So, let your own resilience inspire you to get your children to school, because you can do this, and this prompt start now will give your child the best chance of ongoing success at school all year. Again, if you are finding it tough to get your child to school contact us.

I am writing on the first day of the new 2022 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 thirteen 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.

I am excited and really looking forward to the start of my 14<sup>th</sup> 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, the MI Night Market, and perhaps our very best public relations people – your children!

Our staff work hard for your kids, but to do the very best we can do we need all of your support and involvement 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 has to 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 of 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 our school is seen in a positive light. This dialogue between home and school will continue at all times to be frequent, extensive and, I hope, interesting. Look out for the first full school newsletter coming home after camp, on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, *'Manurewa's Monthly'*, and which will continue to come home, roundabout the last Wednesday every month. In each newsletter, there will be information about the next month, general information and notices, affirmations, class reports or samples of work and community notices. This next full newsletter on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 likely to be 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, so I trust you are appreciative of this 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 we are also one of the lucky schools who are now provided a fresh lunch for every student, every single day! We will let you know more details about this in the first main newsletter, but these lunches have already started, so there is no need to send a cut lunch from home. 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 1.55pm. 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 monthly newsletter and Facebook. Also attached is a reminder about the uniform standards and a flyer inviting you to our **“MI Night Market”**, which is on THIS Friday (11<sup>th</sup> February) 4pm – 6.30pm on the school field. This is also an opportunity to meet your child’s teacher and even have a conversation about our renown School Survival Camp in week 3 (Monday 21<sup>st</sup> – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February) that all students attend (there is no charge for this, but we 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 is able to 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 Local School curriculum.

The events for this term are **MI Night Markets, Mini Athletics, Swimming Sports, MI Survival Camp**.