



## Totara Syndicate Newsletter – Term 1, 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Apologies for the slight delay with our first newsletter. It was to go out at the end of next week, but I was working through a couple of fluid situations that could have rendered some of the information below either obsolete or inaccurate. Although my wife, who works in the IT sector, would say it is better to get things out quickly and apply a patch later, I would prefer to not pepper you with amendments and updates.

As all of you will be aware it is a fairly interesting time to try and do anything at the moment. It seems likely that the country will face a surge and then hopefully a peak in Omicron cases this term. The school has taken many steps to ensure the safety of everyone at Adventure School, including the strengthening of hygiene and sanitising protocols and wearing of masks.

The students appear to be taking this in their stride and as of yet I haven't seen or sensed any raised levels of anxiety. Teachers are also rising to the challenge. Although drinking my coffee through a mask is proving difficult.

### New Personnel

Totara Syndicate has topped the 100 student mark this year. This roll growth has necessitated we bring a fourth classroom and teacher into play. We welcome Kim Swettenham to the team. She joins us from Kowhai Syndicate and has taken over Room 27. Kim comes with a wealth of experience, teaching students from Year 2 through to secondary level, both here and overseas.

### Curriculum

Much of the core curriculum subject matter being taught in class throughout this year will be placed online in some form or another. We have set up Google Classrooms and various logins to Maths, Reading and Writing programmes. Your child will become familiar with how to access this material over the first couple of weeks of this term. This approach will offer students the opportunity to continue learning at home, should they find themselves isolating, but not sick, for a period of time.

We are continuing our programme of differentiated maths classes this year. It has proved successful in the past, offering more targeted support to students that need it and extension to those who had already mastered the requisite areas of the Year 7 and 8 syllabus. These cross class groupings begin in Week 2. We will be looking at number knowledge and strategies in the first term and also focus on the strand of algebra. Students will be given an online MangaHigh account that will help to reinforce lessons taught in maths.

We will be looking at recounts in writing - personal, imaginative and historical. There will be a focus on the overall writing process as well as content and structure. This will be mirrored in our text selection for reading. Students will also be introduced to a couple of online programmes - Readworks and Pobble365. These will be used as part of our literacy rotations in class, but can also be accessed at home.

Our overarching theme for Term One will be one of citizenship and belonging to groups. This allows us to explore ideas of rights, rules and responsibilities, how we can collaborate effectively within groups to achieve common and individual goals, how these translate to individual behaviours and attitudes.

Sporting opportunities are likely to be of the in-school variety as we anticipate many of the inter-school fixtures and programmes will be curtailed. We are focusing on outdoor team sports and getting our fitness levels up for camp this term.

Technicraft got underway in the first week of term. Thank you for making sure your child arrives at school by 8.30am so that we could get our rolls done and all children on the bus by 8.45am. This year Brandon Intermediate has introduced a sixth rotation of science related activities to their programme.

Language lessons have also commenced with the syndicate splitting into four groups to learn French, German, Spanish and sign language.

### Senior Camp

As mentioned in our update earlier in the week, we will be making a decision on camp next week. I am reassured by the health and safety protocols in place at Makahika, as well as the fact we are the only group attending and the location of camp. This means we are basically self-isolating in the foothills of the Tararuas. Our “wait and see” approach simply allows us more time to assess how the present outbreak of Omicron is progressing. I would like to think we are still going ahead as the students are certainly looking forward to it.

The “wait and see” approach will also give us more time to see if we are successful with our second grant application. At the moment the cost of camp stands at \$360 per student. Please don't pay this until advised to do so as we don't want to burden the office with applying refunds, should camp be cancelled.

A more detailed notice will go home next week after the final decision on camp has been made. This will give final timelines, payment details and contain a link to a presentation with a lot more information about what they are doing over their four days at Makahika.

I am also still looking for about 25 parents to submit the personal and medical details of their child for camp. The information is important from a health and safety perspective. I also need to collate specific needs and dietary requirements and send this information through to Makahika by the end of next week. If you haven't filled the information form in yet, please do so by clicking [here](#). In the meantime, if you have any other questions about camp, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at [mhughes@adventure.school.nz](mailto:mhughes@adventure.school.nz)

I appreciate you working your way through to the end of this rather lengthy information dump. The newsletter could have run to several more pages as there is much more that we will be doing over the course of this term and year.

I would like to close by saying that there will no doubt be a few bumps in the road over 2022 as we face cancellations, postponements and possibly periods of enforced isolation, but we will endeavour to put as much of our planned activities in play as possible. We remain excited not only by the new opportunities and challenges, but also by the prospect of working with such a great bunch of students and a supportive community.

Thanks and regards on behalf of the Totara Syndicate.



**Mark Hughes**