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Morrinsville College



1 November 2021

PRINCIPAL
J.M. INGER, M.ED. ADMIN [HONS] B.A., DIP. TCHG

A NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF MORRINSVILLE COLLEGE



FROM THE PRINCIPAL Covid Announcement

We have just been listening to the Prime Minister's latest announcement about alert levels and, unsurprisingly, the current Alert Level 3 areas in Waikato will remain in Level 3, but in Step-Down Phase 2 from tomorrow. This means that retail shops can open, public facilities can also open and gatherings outdoors can increase to 25 people. This means that the Board's current plan and rules will remain in place in the meantime. At the Board's meeting tomorrow evening, further discussion will take place to try to map a course forward for our school over the next period of time.

Difficult Times

Boards and leadership teams of schools across our nation are certainly experiencing very difficult times as we try to negotiate lockdowns, clusters of cases, case numbers, places of interest, public health orders and different alert levels. As we move into the first week of November, it is clear that this month will continue to pose a range of challenges that none of us have ever experienced before, and that there will be multiple opinions both in and beyond our schools so that there will always be some people who are dissatisfied and sometimes grumpy.

The recently confirmed public health order re staff vaccinations becoming compulsory has set short deadlines which have the potential to make things extremely challenging and emotional in our schools, and beyond that in our communities. We are also having to contend with situations where some students will be vaccinated and others will not and occasionally there will be personal exemptions due to medical/health conditions, whether with vaccinations or, for instance, wearing masks. Currently, some students are not coming to school because they feel unsafe, this despite the fact that our Level 2 school has some of the strictest conditions for staff and students being at school. As a Principal, I also have to be trying to manage the fact that some people will single-out and sometimes abuse others who choose not to vaccinate for instance, and it is my

job to try to stop this to ensure that everyone is feeling safe. This presents another major challenge.

It should perhaps be no surprise that many principals around the country are resigning, as are many other senior staff and teachers, due to the pressure and stress levels that they are experiencing. It is my prediction that with probably hundreds of teachers deciding that they will not be vaccinated and therefore almost certainly losing their jobs, and with many others leaving because of their stress levels, and with our not easily being able to bring teachers into the country from overseas, there will be significant teacher shortages.

FROM DEPUTY PRINCIPAL – MR SCOTT JENKINS NCEA Learning Recognition Response Support



I am pleased to advise parents and students that this morning we received a letter from NZQA informing us that our application for the same support as those schools in the Waikato Alert Level 3 area has been approved. This has been due to our school's unexpected closure days at the beginning of this term when we were unable to open for face-to-face learning because 33 staff members reside in Level 3 areas in the Waikato.

This approval means only a small increase in potential learning recognition credits for students across NCEA Levels 1-3, but it also qualifies our students for a reduction in the thresholds for overall endorsements, subject endorsements and for University Entrance. These changes are outlined below:

- At Level 1 (Year 11) students will receive one Learning Recognition (LR) credit for every five that they have earned in 2021, up to a maximum of 10 credits. In practice this means that our Year 11 students must now gain 70 Level 1 credits instead of 80. They still must gain 10 Literacy and 10 Numeracy credits.
- At Level 2 (Year 12) and Level 3 (Year 13) our students will receive one Learning Recognition (LR) credit for every five that they have earned in 2021, up to a maximum of eight. In practice this means that our Years 12 and 13 students must now reach

72 credits, instead of 80, (this includes of course the 20 credits that are also carried over from their previous NCEA level).

- For subject endorsements students are required to gain 12 credits at Achieved, Merit or Excellence level, instead of 14.
- For an overall endorsement students are required to gain 46 credits at Merit or Excellence level, instead of 50.
- For University Entrance, students will now need to gain 12 credits in three approved University Entrance subjects, instead of the usual 14 credits. Students are still required to also have passed NCEA Level 3, have Level 1 Numeracy and UE Literacy, as would normally be the case.
- It is important to note that the Learning Recognition credits do not come attached to a subject or have a value such as Achieved, Merit or Excellence. In practice it is easiest to think of them as un-named Achieved credits. They will be added to each student's Record of Learning in January 2022 by NZQA, not the school, which means that they will not be able to be seen on our KAMAR records until next year.

The extra LR support will come as a relief to a number of our students and in particular our Year 13 students looking to attain University Entrance. However, this should not be seen as a reason for our students to 'take their foot off the pedal' in terms of their external exam preparation. A lot of hard work has been put in across the year and we want to see our students finish the academic year with the success that they have earned.

Junior Assessment Weeks

This year our Years 9 and 10 students will be undertaking in-class assessments during their normal timetabled class times. As with last year, we are unable to have traditional-style junior exams in the PAC due to competing demands and COVID restrictions. Teachers will be discussing the individual subject requirements with their students around their particular assessments. These assessments will mostly only be undertaken in the core subjects.

- Year 9 students will be undertaking their assessments in Week 4 from 8-12 November.
- Year 10 students will be undertaking their assessments in Week 6 from 22-26 November.

Prizegivings

As advised in my Special Newsletter about the revamped calendar for Term 4, our Cultural Prizegiving will go ahead tomorrow afternoon, and our Sports Prizegiving on Thursday afternoon, with only our prizewinners and a few staff present, due to advice from the Secretary for Education that we must avoid holding public events until Alert Level 1. As previously advised, sadly, this will mean that our parents will not be able to attend this year's prizegiving ceremonies, which we know will be very disappointing. However, we will be recording each of these ceremonies and providing a link to prizewinners and their parents.

Scott Jenkins

New Zealand Vaping Problem

Principals and staff members across the country have been alarmed at the results of a recent survey on youth vaping, which was the biggest ever survey of youth undertaken re the vaping habits of secondary school students. The survey of 19,000 students in Years 9 to 13, which was anonymous and voluntary, found that:

- 26% of students reported vaping and 15% reported smoking cigarettes in the past week

- Nearly 20% of students are vaping daily or several times a day, the majority with high nicotine doses
- Over half of those vaping were vaping more frequently and at higher nicotine doses than last year.

The report was initiated by the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation (ARFNZ) in partnership with the Secondary Principals' Association of NZ (SPANZ). The survey was carried out in response to growing concerns raised by parents, teachers and schools around the epidemic of teen vaping which all schools and communities are facing.

"The results show a marked increase in vaping rates compared with surveys which collected data two years ago," says Letitia Harding, Chief Executive of ARFNZ and co-author of the report. "While vapes can be a useful tool to help adults quit smoking when combined with behavioural support, this survey makes it clear that many young people are picking up high nicotine vapes without ever having smoked a cigarette, and swiftly becoming addicted to nicotine."

"It's also really worrying how easily young people are accessing vapes, with the majority buying their vapes at dairies. Given that sale to under-18s is prohibited, and the vast majority of students surveyed are under 18, this is really concerning."

It is hoped that the recent regulations around limiting flavours that can be sold by general retailers such as dairies will help to curb this trend.

ARFNZ runs the vaping education website Don't Get Sucked In (DGSi), which informs and educates young people about the risks of vaping and encourages them not to try it in the first place. The site has seen a surge in page hits and new users this year, as students, schools and parents, both here in New Zealand and in Australia, search for reliable information on vaping and e-cigarettes.

"Education is so important, and DGSi is a vital part of that," says Ms Harding. Professor Scott Harding, cardiologist and co-author of the report, agrees. "We are seeing new evidence emerge all the time about the harms caused by e-cigarettes," he says. "While they might be less harmful than combustible cigarettes, they still expose users to toxic substances that have been shown to adversely affect the heart and lungs."

There are also specific risks for adolescents, whose brains and bodies are still developing. "While vaping is often perceived as harmless by young people, there is increasing evidence showing significant health risks," says paediatric respiratory physician and co-author Professor Philip Pattemore. **"For example, vaping with nicotine has been consistently associated with depression, ADHD and conduct disorders in adolescents, and nicotine exposure has been shown to impact learning and memory."**

ARFNZ has made several recommendations to curb the rise in teen vaping, including limiting the nicotine content in vaping products to a maximum of 20mg in line with the EU directive 2014/40; raising the legal age to purchase vapes to 21 years; and banning in-front-of-store window advertising and product display by retailers. They also recommend preventing the sale of vaping products within a 1km radius of schools.

John Inger
Principal