



RONGOTAI COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Week 1 Term 1 (2 February) 2024

COMING EVENTS

Monday 5 February

Athletics Day 1 at Newtown Park

Tuesday 6 February

Waitangi Day Holiday

Tuesday 13 February

Student class and ID photos taken

Wednesday 14 February

Athletics finals day at Newtown Park for selected students

Thursday 15 February

Year 9 Parents' Evening 6pm

Wednesday 21 February

Parents' Association Meeting, 7.30pm in the staffroom

Thursday 29 February

Board meeting 6pm in the staffroom

Tuesday 5 March

McEvedy Shield at Newtown Park

Wednesday 13 March

NCEA Information Evening 6pm

Monday 18 to Friday 22 March

Summer Tournament Week

Thursday 21 March

Board meeting 6pm in the staffroom

2024 TERM DATES

Term 1	Wednesday 31 January to Friday 12 April
Term 2	Monday 29 April to Friday 5 July
Term 3	Monday 22 July to Friday 27 September
Term 4	Monday 14 October to Friday 13 December

Kia ora and welcome to my first newsletter for 2024! On behalf of the staff and the Board, can I welcome new whānau to the college and welcome back existing families. Following this newsletter, I will be mailing or emailing newsletters home at least once

each month. Newsletters can also be viewed on our website. School news can also be found on our Facebook page.

On Wednesday 31 January, we celebrated the arrival of over 150 new students to Rongotai College with a powhiri.

Hopefully this ceremony allowed boys to quickly feel at home and be part of the Rongotai family from their first day at this school.



New students assembling for the powhiri

STAFF NEWS

We welcomed five new teachers to the school at the powhiri on the first day of term.

- **Mr Ed Hammond** (Health & PE) comes to us from the UK.
- **Mrs Kailagh Harford** (HOD English) joins us from Wellington Girls' College, where she was Assistant HOD.
- **Mr Stavros Ikonomakis** (HOD Languages & ESOL) has been teaching at Newlands College.
- **Dr Dietmar Muck** (HOD Maths) returns to Rongotai College having left to take up positions at Scots College then St Catherine's College where he was HOD.
- **Ms Maebh O'Brien** (Maths) comes to us from Ireland, having previously worked in the Ministry of Education.

Mr Shaneel Prasad (Science) comes to us from Fiji where he has been teaching for a number of years. Mr

STUDENT ID & CLASS PHOTOS

On **Tuesday 13 February** students will have their ID photograph and class photo taken. Please ensure that your son's uniform is in good order and he is clean shaven.

Prasad will start at Rongotai College in mid-February.



from left Dr Muck, Mr Hammond, Mrs Harford, Ms O'Brien and Mr Ikonomakis

We also welcome the return of **Mr Kit Norman** (Assistant HOD English) who has been on refreshment leave in Australia for the past year.

STUDENT CELLPHONE USE

In line with advice from the Ministry of Education, Rongotai College has adopted a policy limiting student access to cell phones during the school day. This policy was successfully trialled with Year 9 and 10 students at the end of last year, and was adopted by our Board in November, prior to the Ministry advice, but with the knowledge it would be introduced by the government in the near future.

The Board made this decision around cell phone access for students during the school day based on a number of reasons, including:

1. Some instances of pastoral incidents at the college which involve organising, filming, and

sharing of problematic behaviour via cell phones during the school day.

2. Evidence that cell phone access during learning times reduces students' ability to cognitively focus on the task at hand.
3. Concerns around student addiction to cell phones.

This policy will work in the following ways:

- Cell phones and accessories related to cell phones (i.e. headphones and Air Pods) must not be used or be visible on college grounds during the hours of 8.50am and 3.15pm (including morning and afternoon breaks). They may be stored in bags, lockers, or in pockets, but must not be used or visible and should be turned off or switched to Aeroplane Mode. We would encourage students to leave their phones in their locker or bag to remove the distraction of notifications.
- If cell phones or accessories attached are visible or being used the following consequences will be applied:
 - a. First Instance: Confiscated for the remainder of the school day.
 - b. Second Instance: Confiscated for the remainder of the school day, and the student will be required to sign the phone in and out of the Deputy Principal office at 8.50am and 3.15pm respectively, for a period of one week.
 - c. Further violations will involve the Deputy Principal communicating with home to establish a strategy with the family.
- Cell phones taken from students will be given back at 3.15 pm from the Deputy Principal's office. Phones will generally not be held overnight by the school unless a student does not return to pick it up.
- Air Pods and headphones will not be allowed during school hours unless connected to a Chromebook in class time, but only with permission of the teacher.

If you need to contact your son during school hours you can call the school office and a message will be

sent to his class. Students will also have access to their school email address via Chromebook or laptops throughout the school day. If your son needs to urgently contact you during the school day, he may go to the front office and use the landline.



Instead of 8.55am, school will start at 9.15am. No form time will be held on this day so only five minutes of class time will be lost to allow for this professional development. The school day will finish at the normal time and buses will run as normal. The school will be open at the normal time, of course, meaning that your son will simply have 20 minutes to fill in before classes start if he comes by bus. Students who do not arrive by bus must be at school by 9.15am. This will start next Thursday.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP 2024

Prefects were announced at Senior Prizegiving last year and, at assembly today, we acknowledged our student leaders for 2024 and they were presented with their badges. Prefects give leadership and provide support to other students in the school. Our prefects have an important role and may well instruct your son to follow proper rules and do the right thing when this is not happening. However, their main role is to be a role model and provide an example to other students. They also assist with the smooth running of the school and organisation of events. We are pleased to announce our prefects for 2024:

Head Prefect

Nysi Soulis

Academic Leader

Rico Taylor

Cultural Leader

Xavior Sola

House Captains

Heron – Noah Teahen

Mackay – Ayman Zewada

Prefects

Callum Baker

Nic Ball

Oli Stewart

Deputy Head Prefect

Jack Leong

Arts Leader

Markus Quarrie

Sports Captain

Charlie Crawford

Lock – Manawa Mitcalfe
Matthews

Renner – Harry Florentine

Rishi Patel

Tom Bollinger

Jumarone Matini Iti



TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING - THURSDAYS

To provide time for staff professional learning, lessons will be starting slightly later on **Thursdays**.

WEEKLY REPORTING

From Week 3 we will be providing a weekly overview of your son's work at school. Teachers will provide a grade from 1 (poor) – 5 (well above

expectations), outlining how your son has worked in class over the previous five days.

These will be emailed to parents on Friday afternoon each week. If your son has been absent during the week, he will not receive a grade. At the end of term, you will receive a report with the average for the term.

We believe by this style of reporting, you should have a better understanding of how your son is working throughout the term, week-by-week, and you will be able to see if his level of performance in class has dropped or has improved.

YEAR 9 PARENTS' EVENING

All parents / caregivers of Year 9 students are invited to the college on the evening of **Thursday 15 February**. This evening is held to give you the opportunity to understand our college's structures and systems so that you can best assist your son in his learning. You will also be able to meet your son's core subject teachers. The evening will begin at 6pm in the college's Renner Hall.

NCEA INFORMATION EVENING

Parents often ask questions regarding how NCEA operates. I think it is vital that you understand NCEA and what is needed for your son to succeed. To ensure that you are informed, Mr Reddy (Deputy Principal) will be hosting an NCEA Information Evening for parents on **Wednesday 13 March** in the college's Library at 6pm.

It is important that whānau of Year 11, 12 and 13 students who wish to gain a better understanding of NCEA attend particularly given that NCEA is changing; parents of students in Year 10 are also most welcome.

BYOD

Rongotai College continues to encourage students to bring their own digital device to school for learning purposes. In 2024, we are again focusing our teaching on using devices, and any student at any level may bring a device to enhance their learning.

While we have not specified a device that your son must use, we recommend that Year 9-11 students have a **chromebook**.

I know security is an important issue for parents. Students are



responsible for the security of their devices. They are able to rent lockers from the College Shop for \$20 if they wish.

While the school has a number of devices available for students to use, we cannot provide a device for every boy. Over the past few years, a growing number of boys have made the relatively selfish decision not to bring their devices to school even though they have them. This reduces our capacity to help boys who do not have devices. **If you have a device for your son, please ensure he brings it to school.**

HOME / SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Establishing and maintaining good communication between parents and the college is essential for your son's learning. If you have any concerns or questions, you should contact his form teacher in the first instance. If further communication is necessary, please contact the appropriate year level dean. Our deans for 2024 are:

Year 13 Dean – Ms Anne Brailsford
Year 12 Dean – Mr Pemerika Leiataua
Year 11 Dean – Ms Michaela Smith
Year 10 Dean – Mr Whetu Henry
Year 9 Dean – Mr Sean O'Connor

Email addresses for deans and all staff are available on the college's website.

For serious concerns contact should be made with the Deputy Principals, Mr Geoff Hall (Director of Pastoral Care) or Mr Venkat Reddy (Director of Teaching & Learning), or myself. We welcome contact from you.

RONGOTAI COLLEGE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

This group of parents meet throughout the year, raising and distributing funds to support the boys in their learning and enjoyment of school life. New members are welcome – this group is a great way to continue to be involved in your son's school. Two popular fundraisers are held each year with tasks distributed amongst the group. We endeavour to share the load and ensure that no job is too onerous.

The next meeting will be held in the college's staff room on Wednesday 21 February at 7.30pm. All new members are welcome.

ATHLETICS SPORTS

Our Athletics Days will be held on Monday 5 February and Wednesday 14 February.

Both Athletics Sports Days will take place no matter what the weather is – they will NOT be cancelled.

Monday 5 February is our participation day.

- Students are required to make their own way to the park and to report for a roll call at 8.50am.
- If your son is coming by bus, he should ask his bus driver to drop him as near to Newtown Park as he can. Students will be dismissed from Newtown Park at the conclusion of the day (approximately 2.30pm) and are required to make their own way home.
- Please make sure that your son dresses appropriately for the weather and, if it is sunny, provide him with sun block and a hat.
- Students are encouraged to wear clothing in their house colours but may NOT wear bandanas. No face paint is permitted.

Parents are, of course, most welcome to attend our Athletic Days. We are looking forward to these enjoyable days.

Wednesday 15 February will be the finals day for those students who have qualified. This finals event will be held in conjunction with

Wellington College, at Newtown Park.

McEVEDY SHIELD

This is an annual athletics competition contested between Rongotai College, Wellington College, St Patrick's College (Town) and St Patrick's College (Silverstream). This event will be held at Newtown Park on **Tuesday 5 March**. Updated information will be advised in our next newsletter.

SPORT

I am sure 2024 will be another exciting year of sport at Rongotai

College. Whether boys are new to sport, play socially or competitively, there are wonderful opportunities for them to get involved. Sport is a great way to make friends, build confidence and have fun. We strongly encourage every student at Rongotai College to take part in sport; with a wide variety of sports on offer from the competitive to the social, there is something for everyone.

Parent Support

Sport at college is only possible thanks to the support of the parents and volunteers. We encourage all parents to be involved and engaged

in their son's sport, whether that be through coaching, managing, scoring, refereeing, helping with transport, joining a committee or fundraising. There is a field on the registration form where you can indicate how you can assist.

Ngā mihi nui

Kevin Carter
PRINCIPAL

NOTICE BOARD

ATTENDANCE EMAILS

The college has an email address for absences - attendance@rongotai.school.nz Please use this address as a means of advising the school of your son's absence. Please also advise the reason for his absence.

COLLEGE SHOP

The College Shop (selling uniforms and stationery) opening hours, during term time, are
Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

STUDENT LOCKERS

The Parents' Association have provided funding for lockers for students' use. Students can hire a locker for the year by bringing \$20 to the College Shop. They must provide their own padlock.



SNAPPER CARDS & STUDENT ID



Students can apply for a Snapper ID card or an ID card once ID photographs have been taken. Snapper ID cards cost \$25 and ID cards cost \$10. These can be ordered from the College Shop. Payment must be made at the time of ordering. They will take approximately two weeks to arrive.

RONGOTAI COLLEGE

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