



RONGOTAI COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Week 1 Term 1 (30 January) 2026

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday 28 January
Leadership Assembly

Thursday 29 January
Board meeting 6pm in the staffroom

Friday 30 January
Academic Awards Assembly

Tuesday 3 February
Athletics Day 1 at Newtown Park

Friday 6 February
Waitangi Day Holiday

Wednesday 11 February
Year 9 Parents' Evening 6pm

Friday 13 February
Athletics finals day at Newtown Park for selected students

Tuesday 17 February
Student class and ID photos taken

Wednesday 18 February
NCEA Information Evening 6pm

Thursday 26 February
Board meeting 6pm in the staffroom

Monday 2 March
McEvedy Shield at Newtown Park

Monday 23 to Friday 27 March
Summer Tournament Week

2026 TERM DATES

Term 1 Monday 26 January to Thursday 2 April

Term 2 Monday 20 April to Friday 3 July

Term 3 Monday 20 July to Friday 25 September

Term 4 Monday 12 October to Friday 4 December

Kia ora and welcome to my first newsletter for 2026! 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 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.

School started for the year on Monday 26 January with a mihi whakatau, when we celebrated the arrival of over 180 new students to Rongotai College, including 145 new Year 9 students.

Hopefully this ceremony (which was held in the Gymnasium for the first time) and the activities that followed it, allowed boys to quickly feel at home and be part of the Rongotai family from their first day at our school.



New students at the powhiri

All students were on timetable and in class on Tuesday 27 January. While it is early days, the school already seems calm and all boys have settled into work.

STAFF NEWS

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

- **Mr Charles Ashford** (English & Drama) comes to us from the UK.
- **Mr Jacob Gates** (Digital Technology & Music) is a new teacher who was at Rongotai in 2025 as a trainee teacher.
- **Mr Ben Koloto** (Asst HOD English) rejoins us after having taught at Aotea College and spending time overseas.

STUDENT ID & CLASS PHOTOS

On **Tuesday 17 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.



from left Ben Koloto, Charles Ashford and Jacob Gates

STUDENT CELLPHONE USE

Can I remind you that, in line with the Ministry of Education policy, student access to cell phones is not allowed during the school day.

This policy works in the following ways:

- Cell phones and accessories related to cell phones (i.e. headphones and earbuds) must not be used or be visible on college grounds during the hours of 8.55am 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 Flight 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 (including headphones and earbuds) 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 8.55am 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 3.15pm 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.

- Headphones and earbuds will not be allowed during school hours unless connected to a Chromebook in class time (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 chromebooks 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.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING - THURSDAYS

To provide time for staff professional learning, lessons will be starting slightly later on **Thursdays**. 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 usual. The school will be open at the same 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 from **Thursday 12 February**.

WEEKLY REPORTING

From Week 3 we will be providing a weekly overview of your son's effort 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. Descriptors can be found on the school's website.

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 with 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 improved.

YEAR 9 PARENTS' EVENING

All parents / caregivers of Year 9 students are invited to the college on the evening of **Wednesday 11 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

STUDENT LEADERSHIP 2026

Prefects were announced at Senior Prizegiving last year. At assembly today, we acknowledged our student leaders for 2026 and presented them with their badge and cap. 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 focus 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 2026:

Head Prefect

Lewis Brown

Academic Leader

Thomas Sadler

Cultural Leader

Tahu Lowe

Deputy – Willie Uelese

Sports Captain

James Aitken

Deputy – Joseph Fry-Hall

House Captains

Heron – Monty Shirtcliffe

Mackay – Casey Buck

Deputy Head Prefect

Desmond Reddy

Performing Arts Leader

Billy Smith

Community Service Leader

Edward Florentine

Lock – Dion Leslie

Renner – Joseph Fry-Hall

Prefects

Jackson Garland

Hunter Taylor

Carlos Vakaloloma

Upuia Lualua

Hamish Tukaki-Campbell



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 18 February** in the college's Library at 6pm.

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

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 2026 are:

Year 13 Dean – Mrs Michaela Johnston Welch

Year 12 Dean – Mr Whetu Henry

Year 11 Dean – Mr Sean O'Connor

Year 10 Dean – Mr Stavros Ikonomakis

Year 9 Dean – Ms Brianna See

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 11 February at 7.15pm. All new members are welcome.

ATHLETICS SPORTS

Our athletics days will be held on Tuesday 3 February and Friday 13 February at Newtown Park.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD PREFECT

Tēnā koutou,

My name is Lewis Brown, and I am incredibly honoured to serve as Rongotai College's Head Prefect for 2026. Rongotai has played a huge role in shaping who I am today. Over the past ten years, the school has been a part of my family's life, shaping not only me but my older brothers as well. Being given the opportunity to give back to this school means a great deal to me. Most of all, I am excited to give back to the boys of Rongotai because what truly makes this school special is its people.



Over the year ahead, the Prefect team has some strong goals we are committed to achieving, including leading the school to continue our upwards trajectory at McEvedy, introducing a few new school-wide legacy events that reach a broader range of students and creating a school culture where everyone feels welcome and challenged to step outside their comfort zones. I feel extremely privileged to be the Head Prefect for 2026 and look forward to leading Rongotai College into another successful year.

Mā te mahi tahi ka tutuki ngā moemoeā.
Through working together, our dreams are achieved.

Lewis Brown

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 Level 1 of NCEA recently changed; parents of students in Year 10 are also most welcome.

BYOD

Rongotai College continues to strongly encourage students to bring their own digital device to school for learning purposes. In 2026 we are again focusing our teaching on using devices, and any

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

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

Tuesday 3 February is our participation day.

- Students are required to make their own way to the park and to report for a roll call at 8.55am.
- 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 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.

Friday 13 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.

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

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 **Monday 2 March**. Updated information will be advised in our next newsletter.

SPORT

I am sure 2026 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, be active, 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

RONGOTAI COLLEGE

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www.youtube.com/RongotaiCollegeNZ



RONGOTAI COLLEGE

NOTICE BOARD January 2026

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.

STUDENT ID CARDS

Students can apply for an ID card once ID photographs have been taken. ID cards cost \$10. These can be ordered from the College Shop. Payment must be made at the time of ordering.

SCHOOLBRIDGE

Rongotai College uses an app called SchoolBridge. If you have not already done so, you can download this app via the app store. From here you will be able to report absences, view newsletters, access the Parent Portal, permission slips and a range of other functions.

RONGOTAI COLLEGE

Download Our App

- Scan the QR Code to download. Or
- Search "**schoolbridge**" on your mobile AppStore or PlayStore.

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Once you have downloaded the app, you can sign in using your school account information. Please contact the school if you need help with your account details.

The banner features a QR code, the SchoolBridge app logo, and two smartphone screens displaying the app's interface. A kiwi bird is also present in the graphic.

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