



Letter #6

Friday 18 February 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Tēnā koutou kātoa

In this letter I will introduce you to our wonderful new staff. They have written a short bio on themselves. There is also a list of the classes and teachers for the whole school.

The second part of the newsletter is focussed on the changes to managing COVID-19 in schools now that we have moved to phase 2. It is important that you read this carefully as the changes made by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education will impact on the way that we will respond to a positive case if and when this eventuates.

NEW STAFF

APRIL SMITH

Tena koe St Heliers School whanau

My name is April Smith and it is very nice to meet you. I was born and raised in San Francisco, California and have been a resident of Aotearoa for almost three years. For the past five years, my mahi has primarily been in human resources and event coordination. These customer and client-facing roles provided me with a plethora of valuable skills that I've learnt are transferable into teaching such as; communication, collaboration, organisation, creativity, technology, providing/acting on feedback, and reflection. I left this mahi behind in pursuit of focusing on the world's most important human resource of all - our tamaraki.

In 2021, I went back to school to pursue my Graduate Diploma in Primary School Teaching from the University of Auckland. It's been a privilege to be trained as a teacher in New Zealand because I have learned what a successful school community and classroom encompass. I am continuing my learning journey with Anna Kelso in Room 13 as my mentor teacher alongside Helen Banks in Room 12, both inspire me on a day to day basis. Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti aroha o tātou mahi - let the uniqueness of the child guide the work. I believe each child brings uniqueness and value to our St Heliers School community and it is my duty to help navigate their journey through the year, be that rain or shine. I am looking forward to having a great year within this community and can't wait to meet you along the way.



HELEN BANKS

Hello my name is Helen Banks and I am in Room 12, Year 3 this year. I have been a parent of our school community for quite some time, and am very fortunate to be a teacher here now. I have taught in schools in New Zealand and England, always within the junior area.

After having three children I found myself back relieving in recent years. My areas of interest are literacy, art and working with children who have specific learning difficulties. Outside of school I love walking, watching the tennis and my favourite destination is the Queenstown area.

I am looking forward to meeting you over the year.



CAOIMHE KENNEDY

My name is Caoimhe Kennedy, a good Irish name pronounced 'Keeva'. I am from Cork City in Ireland. I arrived in New Zealand in September 2019 with two of my good friends. After teaching in Ireland for three years I was very excited to teach over here and explore the country! I love to travel and have seen many beautiful places in New Zealand. My favourite so far has been our trip to the beaches near Tutukaka and swimming with dolphins in Kaikōura.

I am really looking forward to this next change and getting to know the St Heliers School community.



GEMMA LYNEX

Tēnā koutou katoa. My name is Gemma Lynex and I am a new teacher at St Heliers School. I am very lucky to be working in the Year 2 team and teaching the lovely children in Room 6. It has been a fantastic start to Term 1 and I owe this all up to the extremely welcoming community of staff and whanau at this school.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to be working in the St Heliers community. I spent most of my childhood in Wellington and then moved to Kohimarama during my high school years. Although I moved back to Wellington for my Bachelor of Arts in Education and Psychology, I was very happy and eager to come back to Auckland to complete my teaching studies and begin my teaching career.

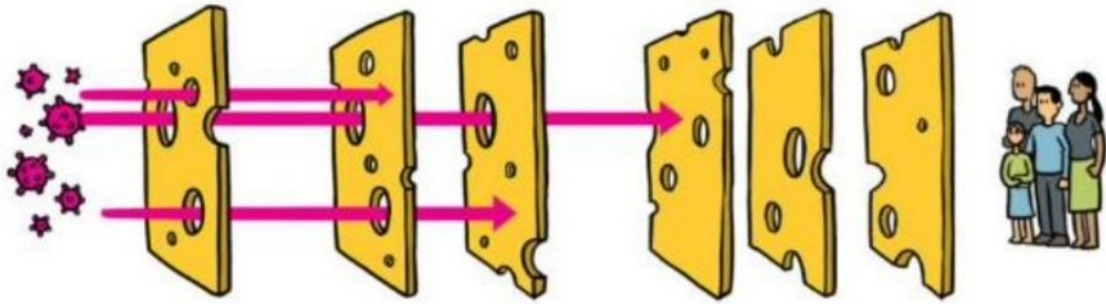
When I am not teaching you might see me walking along the bays for a coffee and an almond croissant. I also enjoy going to the gym (so I can keep up with the children), baking, painting, and enjoying dinners with my friends.

I am looking forward to the 2022 school year and I will hopefully be able to meet you all soon.

Gemma



This is a new phase,. It is time to reset your mind.



With the number of Omicron cases increasing in our communities, the Government announced that New Zealand will move to Phase 2 of the Omicron response from 11.59pm Tuesday 15 February in order to continue to minimise and slow further spread.

Contact Tracing

In line with this, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health made some significant changes. At red Level, phase 2, there is a change in the way close contacts are categorised and identified, The other key change is the reduction in self-isolation periods.

For **Year 4 to 8** if there is a case in the school, children and teacher and any other staff member in the same class would be considered close contacts if they were in the class for 2 hours or more with out a break outside. The children would be identified and need to self isolate.

If students and staff have a break outside of 15 minutes or more within or at the end of that 2 hour period then the time resets. The children, and teacher and any other staff member would not be considered close contacts. The students do not need to isolate.

For Year 1 to 3, as none of these children are wearing masks, if there is a case in the class, all the children would be considered close contacts and would need to self isolate.

As you can see, it is important for children to have regular breaks during the day of 15 minutes or more

How we are keeping everyone at school as safe as possible:

- Mask wearing
- Hygiene measures
- High vaccination and booster rates within our school community
- Remaining home if unwell and close monitoring during the day to send children home if they become unwell
- Ventilation and monitoring (we now have CO2 sensors in every class which are being monitored)
- Staggered and separate break times and locations
- Mask breaks outside
- Learning outdoors
- Limiting contact with parents and visitors onsite

Isolating

Children and staff identified as close contacts must isolate for 7 days and get tested on day 5. If children return a negative test, and are symptom free, they return to school on day 8. Other household members do not need to isolate if the child or staff member is a close contact, including siblings of that household, who can continue to come to school.

Children and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for 10 days testing on day 5 and day 8. House hold members of children and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must also isolate for 10 days.

Learning while Isolating

Learning hard packs will be issued to students who are close contacts or test positive. The office staff have the contact tracing spreadsheet and will use this to contact parents to arrange delivery of hard packs.

Families who opt to keep their child at home, who has not been identified as a close contact (including siblings) will not receive a hard pack.

Communication

If a child or staff member test positive and they have been attending school the school community will be notified by email that we have a positive case and the class identified. Parents of students in that class will be asked to wait for further communications. Through contact tracing, if a child in the class is identified as a close contact, then those families would be notified directly by the school and asked to self isolate.

All communications regarding COVID-19 **must go to the office** which will be monitored constantly. This should be via email, especially after hours. Please note that these emails will be checked at all times.

Please notify us if one of your children has been identified as a close contact of another location.

I understand this is a lot to take in, in one newsletter but I wanted to be as transparent as I can with parents. I don't want to alarm parents but there were 160 schools with positive cases of COVID-19 on Monday this week and in 3 days this has doubled to 320 schools. We do need to be as prepared as we can be and I would advise families to have an isolation plan, with a support person identified outside the household, should the need arise. It is important to note that the highest rates of transmission is between household members at gatherings or functions, not through transmission at school.

I am pleased to report that students are happy and engaged in their learning and staff are enjoying getting to know their new classes. I am also pleased to say that I have learnt and remembered some student names and this increases every day. Meeting parents at the beginning and end of every day at the gates has been a highlight.

Enjoy the weekend and I look forward to meeting more of you soon.

Noho ora mai

Sean Valvoi

Principal

TEACHERS AND CLASS STRUCTURE 2022

Year group	Classes per year level	Room numbers	Staff
1	3	2, 7, 8	Jackie Lyon (TL), Sue Cran, Claire Smith
2	3	4, 5, 6	Brogan Franich, Linda Bartlam (TL), Gemma Lynex
3	3	11, 12, 13	April Smith, Helen Banks, Anna Kelso (TL)
4	3	16, 17, 18	Cathy Preston, Sherine Hall, Sarah Mill (TL)
5	3	25, 26, 27	Catherine Jackson (TL), Caoimhe Kennedy, Louise Morton & Stephanie Tong
6	3	21, 22, 23	Adrian Young, Lizanne Franklin (TL), Kellie McLean
7	3	28, 29, 30	Sam Harrison, Julie Oakford, Kate Abela & Sarah-Jane Darke
8	3	14, 15, 19	Kerry Herbert, Lisa Ward (Y7&8 TL), Ben Christie
Support Staff			Tara King, Raewyn Cozens, Philippa van Ryn, Mary Hoff, Jenny Howie, Kate Hawkins, Jeffrey Burke, Nicola Gray, Billy Shoer
Learning Support Coordinator, Learning Assistants & Reading Recovery			Sharron Buer, Ambi Siva, Joanne Rennie, Jo Macdonald, Marjon Gerson, Robyn Hope, Sarah Olphert & Kelly Blok
ESOL Teachers & International Student Coordinator			Jan Bryant, Julie Oakford
Part time teachers			Gillian Crake, Odie Johnson, Liz Kelly, Pauline Munro, Tracey Taylor, Pene Wipers & Anne Hill