

Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga
Whānau Pānui – 29 July 2020



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Uniform helps set the tone for other ways that we demonstrate respect and pride for our school. We also do that by always being respectful. Part of that respect is to follow instructions of kaimahi / staff.

We are all in this together, and consistency is necessary to make this a great place to learn and work.

New Kaimahi / Staff and Taiohi / Students

Naumai harae mai (welcome) to two new staff members. Mr Nitesh Gounder joins the Mathematics department, replacing Mr Rutledge. Ms Tracey Reed joins us as the Personal Assistant (PA) to the Tumuaki / Principal and Board Secretary, replacing Mrs Yana Silva. Mr Gounder has also taken on the role of Rōpu, replacing Mr Neufield who has been appointed as Assistant Head of Mathematics, so 9NEU becomes 9GDR.

We also welcome several new students to our school. We certainly make a big effort to help new students find their way around and get to know how we do things. There is no such thing as a silly question, so make sure that you ask whenever you are unsure.

Message from the Tumuaki/Principal

Kia ora e te whānau

I do trust that the school holiday was restful for taiohi/students and an opportunity for family time after what was a very long and eventful term. Term three is another busy term, and an important one for our senior students as they make sure that they make the most of opportunities to earn credits towards qualifications.

It is great that winter sport is back up and running this term and I know our teams look forward to our support on the sideline. Make sure you keep up to date with what's happening and where on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.

Our everyday focus is **learning** and teaching - our core business. For that to be the case we are committed to ensuring we have a safe environment for all. I really appreciate the support of taiohi / students, kaimahi / staff and whānau / family that our values and our tikanga are supported in everything that we do.

For that to be our focus we need to have a great place to learn and we all have a responsibility to make it the best we can. Part of that focus is to treat school as a workplace – and so we dress and act like a place of business, where the business is learning.

Covid-19 Update – still Alert Level 1

At the first school assembly for the term it was pointed out that, while we have made great progress as a country, we need to remember that we are still at Covid-19 Alert level one. This means that for us to STAY HEALTHY:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Seek medical advice if you have a fever, dry cough, sore throat, etc.
- Wash and dry your hands regularly
 - Hand sanitiser is still a good idea if you cannot access washing facilities
 - Bring your own sanitiser or there is sanitiser still in locations at school.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Our cleaners clean surfaces every day and ensure that regularly used areas are wiped down.

Remember young people are unlikely to get seriously unwell, but we need to keep doing these things for everyone, like our whānau and friends.

- Keep track of where you have been:
 - As a school, all visitors sign in, and we encourage use of the tracing app
 - We are all encouraged to keep a diary of the places we visit or use the tracing app.



Reports – Term 3

We will report to parents on the progress of taiohi / students on Thursday 13 August 2020. The online report will provide a summary of attitude and progress through four indicators per subject, including learning engagement and effort, learning progress, respect for others and self in learning.

Assessment results for each subject and comments are available via the [Web Portal](#).

Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences

Reserve the date **Wednesday 19 August, from 1.30 pm to 7.30 pm** (with a diner break scheduled from 5.00 pm to 5.30 pm) to **book interviews** with subject teachers. As the name suggests this conversation is best when all three participants are present.

We would like to provide this opportunity earlier in the year in future (term 2), but this year this was delayed by the uncertainty of covid-19. We hope this opportunity for a brief face-to-face update about progress and next steps will be welcomed. **Bookings** for conferences will be via the School Interviews site, which will be opened when reports are published. Instructions will be shared then.

School closes early at 1.10 pm to allow this event to occur. Those who need to remain at school may stay in the library for quiet study purposes.

Enrolments 2021

We are getting ready for our new intake of Year 9s for next year – very exciting. We are looking forward to the continued growth that was experienced this year. We appreciate getting enrolment completed as soon as possible as this means we can have the best chance of having the right staffing in place for 2021. If you have friends that have Year 8 tamarikii / children, please help us spread the word.

We start with our Open Evening on **Thursday 13 August** (6.00 pm to 8.00 pm) to allow Year 8s (and younger!) to visit areas of the school and see some examples of the types of work that can be expected. We will start in the hall at 5.30pm with presentations by head students and staff and the evening will end after walking tours around the school by 8.30pm. Tea / coffee and biscuits will be available on arrival.

Enrolment interviews

Following the open evening, our Year 9 team will visit our contributing schools over the following two weeks (schedule is being confirmed to fit in with the best time for schools). We will then hold enrolment afternoons to complete an enrolment interview to help us get to know your child and his/her needs. These will be held on Tuesday 8 September and Tuesday 15 September from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm. Interviews will be held by Deans and the Senior leadership team and should take around 15 minutes.

Uniform expectations

While the weather is colder, we have seen an increase in the behaviour of wearing non-uniform items. We have been making great progress, and we need to keep up that focus. Whānau and Rōpu kaitiaki / teachers, along with Year level Deans / Kaitiaki / teachers will contact **whanau** to see how we can work together to achieve great uniform standards. We really appreciate your support, and if we can help please make contact. There are limited funds to help support families experiencing financial difficulties. Please contact your child's dean or contact one of the deputy principals to discuss. Previous pānui have highlighted the key areas that we need to see improvement. Please refer to the website for our [uniform expectations](#). Please refer to the [pānui dated 1 June](#) to get guidance about underclothes, shoes, and other aspects of the uniform.

Remember that any exemptions requested must be temporary, with a plan to return to correct uniform.

Non-uniform items may be confiscated and collected by parents/caregivers. Items that are most likely to be confiscated are the wrong coloured hats/caps, non-regulation jewellery, hoodies, and non-regulation thermals. We want students to be warm, but the uniform standards must also be met, and after numerous attempts to get things right we need to try other ways to get it right.

Any issues in meeting the standards should be discussed rather than make an issue for teachers to address. Thermals or undergarments are not be visible whilst wearing the uniform. The torso is the most important area to keep warm, so vests are very effective in achieving both aims. For clarity:

- Navy blue or black thermal short sleeve singlets or thermals may be worn under the Years 9-12 uniform tops (as they are navy blue tops).
- A white singlet or short-sleeved thermal vest may be worn under the white polo short for Year 13.
- *If a long-sleeved thermal is worn it must be under the school **jersey** or **jacket**.*
- No hoodies are allowed either above or below uniform items.

Remember when you are looking to replace shoes, please do not replace with the flat style skater shoe, especially those with the rubber toe. Not only are they very casual, they do not provide arch support. Sports trainers, Vans, Converse (or similar) styles are not allowed.

Shoes are meant to be tidy as per the prospectus, **not casual shoes**. See below for some examples (these show the 'look' and are not meant to be an exhaustive). We welcome inquiries to **check that shoes are suitable**, rather than the disappointment of being asked to provide new shoes.



Boys styles of shoes (examples only)



Girls (examples only)



Punctuality and Presence

For learning to be the focus we all need to be at the **RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME, READY TO LEARN**. What this means is we need to always attend school (unless sick, or similar reasons).

Attendance is the biggest factor in making sure that young people are engaged and successful in learning. More time 'away' means loss of learning that is very hard to catch up. The more that someone is away the harder it is to keep up.

When there are absences, Kaiako/teachers can support taiohi / students to catch up. This takes effort, but it is worth it. If you have any queries, please contact your child's teachers.

90% is not enough! Missing one day in 10, means missing 10%. Over a school year that can be 40 days of lost learning. That is almost 200 hours of missed learning. If that is repeated over five years that is 1000 hours. The best rate of attendance is 100%.

In a paid job you may get only 5 days of paid sick leave. If that were the criterion for attendance in a school year (i.e. missing only 5 days) then that would mean an attendance level of **97%**. We appreciate that sickness can mean missing more days

If there are reasons your child is missing kura / school please contact us, and we will do everything we can to help support him/her back to the best attendance possible. We must get this right as the loss of learning is something that is the single biggest reason many of our taiohi / students have trouble gaining qualifications or the foundation of learning to get ready for success.

Lateness

Likewise, **arriving late to school or class** is also a big loss of learning or a disruption to the learning of others and to the teacher. For this reason, along with unexplained absences, we need to have consequences for being later to school and class.

Consequences for lateness and absence

To help address this issue, unexplained absences, or skipping classes, that are classified as truancy must be caught up on. We will do better to advise parents when classes are missed and ask for your support when we have 'catch up time' for students. This may be required by the class teacher, the department or by the year level Dean. These opportunities to catch up may be at breaks or may be afterschool. Other consequences for lateness will include not removing privileges, such as Year 13s being allowed offsite at breaktime.

Staying on site

Taiohi / students are to remain at school all day so that we can assure their safety. The only exceptions are for Year 13 taiohi / students that may leave at break times and for some study times, so long as they maintain an attendance rate of 92% and demonstrate great values and adhere to all our expectations. Lunch passes for other year levels will only be issued in very special circumstances; any requests must be directed to the deputy principals.

Student Support is the place

From next week, Monday 3 August, taiohi / students must sign in or out at Student Support office, not at the main reception. This is also where students must obtain any exit passes for appointments – this must be request by presenting a signed note or by parents / caregivers sending an email to the kura / school: studentsupport@thameshigh.school.nz. Taiohi / students must sign out and back in, as we all must when leaving the kura / school site.

No gum & Community Service

Respect for the environment includes not bringing gum to school and chewing it. Sadly, a proportion of that gum winds up on the ground or under desks. Both are unhealthy and unsightly. Consequently, we will be instigating community service for those who are chewing gum. The service will involve using scrapers to remove existing gum from the ground and desk. A plastic glove will be provided and students who are issued this imposition will need to wash their hands afterwards. Once again, your support for this is much appreciated.

There will be other ways we will be using community service as a reparation for not following our values and our tikanga as we continue changing unwanted behaviours.



Thanks Thames Valley Rugby Union

Many thanks to the Thames Valley Rugby Union for their recent donation. Along with seven other secondary schools, we received \$2000. The donation was presented to teacher-in-charge of rugby, Mr Harrison, at the secondary schools' 10s tournament at the Paeroa Domain on Saturday 4 July.

The donation is intended to ensure that taiohi / students that want to play rugby are not disadvantaged by financial difficulties that may have resulted from Covid-19. This we certainly help ensure rugby continues to grow at Thames High School, as we work towards to having a senior First XV.

[Stuff article about this donation](#)

Use of taiohi / student cars for sports or other use

One of our main priorities is that our taiohi / students are always safe. This includes transport to and from sports events which they are attending as part of Thames High School.

In alignment with our sports policies, which have been signed by our whānau / families, we would like to reiterate that if you do have a drivers license, either restricted or full, that taiohi / student drivers do not transport their friends or sibling/s to and from events. If we do hear that this is occurring, this will be treated seriously.

Spatial Plan Workshop

Thames High School was represented at the recent Spatial Plan Consultation workshop held by TCDC on Monday 29 June 2020. Year 13 taiohi / students; Sam Oxford and David Brockbank represented our youth. David reported that:

The workshop was great! It was very interesting to hear different perspectives on the issues that Thames and the surrounding region face now and in the future. The group we were involved in came up with several possible solutions to these issues and it was informative to see and be a part of the process that local government goes through when faced with a problem. The plans to attract more young people to the region as well as help with the inundation problem in some areas looked very positive to the future of Thames and I am excited to see them in action.

Contributing to the Community

It was great to see that many of our taiohi / students, including sisters, Kylie White (Year 12) and Kirsten White (Year 13) have been involved in the project to digitise the archives held at The Treasury. It is worth noting that they are always keen for more volunteers. Contact info@thetresury@gmail.com

[Stuff article about Thames High School Students volunteering at the Treasury.](#)

Memory Study – Years 9 and 10

One of our former taiohi / students, Christiana Hartley, is a research assistant in the Applied Developmental Psychology Lab, at Victoria University of Wellington.

They are completing a study that looks at how tamariki / children remember events that change over time. They have made a request to find people interested in being involved in this study.

"We are running a study with researchers in Canada and in the UK, to see how children remember the different phases of COVID-19 Alert Levels. If you were interested, we would set up a video call with your child (you can be present) to ask them about a typical school and weekend day before the lockdown, during the lockdown, and now. We would also ask you to fill out a brief survey.

If you are interested, **click on this link:**

http://vuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eA5DXxQj90izVSB to read more about the study. You can sign up there if you would like to take part. You may contact the researchers directly at Applied-Developmental-Lab@vuw.ac.nz."

As always, I invite and welcome comments. Please email me (principal@thameshigh.school.nz) or call me (07 868 8688)

Ngā mihi

Matua Michael Hart
Tumuaki/Principal



Key dates

Mon 20 July	Term 3 begins
Wed 29 July	THS Cross Country (competitive)
Wed 12 Aug	Careers Expo
Thu 13 Aug	Year 8 Open Evening
Mon 13 Aug	Term 3 Reports published
Thu 13 Aug	Bookings open for report conferences
Tue 18 Aug	Photolife Sports & Groups photos
Tues 18 Aug	Mufti-day - Term 3
Wed 19 Aug	Student-parent-teacher conferences (1.30 pm – 7.30 pm) <i>School closes early at 1.10 pm.</i>
Tue 8 Sept & Tue 15 Sept	Year 9 2021 Enrolments
Sat 19 Sept	General Elections - voting centre in THS Hall
Fri 25 Sept	Last Day of Term 3
Mon 12 Oct	Term 4 begins
Sat 17 Oct	THS Senior School Ball
Wed 11 Nov	Senior Prizegiving
Mon 16 Nov	NCEA external exams start
Wed 25 Nov	Teacher Only Day - no classes for junior students
Fri 11 Dec	Junior Prizegiving and Last Day of Term 4

*Dates are subject to change and will be
advised.*

