

Message from the Principal



Mr F A Benton
Principal

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

Tena Koutou Katoa

Greetings everyone and welcome to the 2013 school year. A special welcome to all of the families who are new to our school this year. I look forward to meeting you all as soon as possible and to working with you to ensure the success of your child over the time that they are with us.

We are not a large secondary school by Auckland City standards so we aim to maximise the advantage of our size by knowing each student well, by making them feel known, respected and valued and by keeping you fully informed every step of the way about our expectations, course work, assignments, homework and assessments due and of course any concerns along the way. You can access information yourselves through the parent portal (see later for details), such as on-going assessment and test results, up to the hour attendance records, pastoral records including any rules breaches and extra-curricular involvement. Staff will also be in touch with you regularly about your child's on-going progress. We aim to talk to you as much about successes and next steps as we do about missed assignments. If I receive a complaint from a parent about being bombarded by messages from school about your child, then I know that we are communicating with you as I expect. As I said at the Powhiri for new students and families, the success of teenagers at school is very much a partnership between home and school. We cannot achieve this alone and where parents fully support their child's learning, the child invariably succeeds.

We were very pleased with our 2012 NCEA results which saw us achieve a better than 75% pass rate across all three levels. Overall, these were our best results yet in NCEA. We will not, however, rest on our laurels because there is always room for improvement and we will always strive to better ourselves.

The project modernising four Science laboratories and creating a Science projects room and data logging room has been frustratingly slow but is almost complete. All rooms should be back in use next week which means that we have six reasonably modern Science laboratories in use plus the additional work spaces. Work on extending the Library into the rear room will then take place to provide a Year 13 students' study area and additional computer space. Finally, thanks to the support of the Lion Foundation, work on converting the classroom next to our Whare kai into our Whare has commenced. We should be in a position to open our completed Marae before winter sets in, a project of 15 years duration. We are fortunate in being able to offer very good facilities to our students.

Finally, I want to urge you to encourage your child's involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that we have on offer, in particular sports which are getting under way right now. It is really important to keep teenagers busy in healthy pursuits. Right now we are desperate for more cricketers and waterpolo players so contact our Sports Co-ordinator, Mr Brook, on 444-9066 ext 881 or email m.brook@gc.ac.nz if you want your child included. All we require is an interest in playing, not champions or experts, that will come. While playing sports costs, don't let a fear of that stop your inquiry as we can help. Tennis, softball, baseball and tag are also underway at present. In addition to sports, students can be involved in Dance groups, Drama activities, Musical groups and Cultural groups of which Kapa haka is recruiting now.

New Staff

We welcomed two new staff to our school this year, Mrs Seeger McLeay in Maths and Business, and Miss Carryn Hojem in Maths. At our Powhiri last week we also welcomed Mr Andrew Kingston in PE and Health, Mr Guy Wishart in Science and Biology, and Miss Helena Lamason in Technology who all joined us during last year.



From left to right: Mrs McLeay; Miss Hojem; Mr Kingston, Mr Wishart, Miss Lamason

Parent Portal keeps you up-to-date with your child's achievement, attendance and pastoral record. To receive your log-in information, please email to reply@gc.ac.nz and type in the subject 'PARENT PORTAL – CHILD'S NAME'.

Communication to Students at School

A reminder to parents that students must have their mobile phones turned off during the school day. We would appreciate parents contacting students through the Student Centre. This avoids disruption in classes and learning. In addition, if students are sick for any reason and need to be sent home from the Sickbay, the school nurse will contact parents directly.

Absences

Please phone the Attendance Office on 441-9773 or 444-9066 ext 813 or email the attendance administrator on absences@gc.ac.nz to report your child's absence. This email address is now available on the school website for your convenience.

Parent Help - Environment

We are wanting to involve students and hopefully any interested parents in improving our school environment starting with our front gardens. If you are interested in volunteering for such work, please contact Mr Guy Wishart on g.wishart@gc.ac.nz or phone 444-9066.

Senior Boys Volleyball Fundraising

The volleyball team is fundraising for travel costs to the National Championships competition in which they won a silver medal in Division 4 last year. Each student has to raise up to \$700 so we are seeking parents or caregivers or local companies who wish to employ young helpers for part-time work. If you can help, please contact the school office on 444-9066.

Important Dates

Tuesday, FEB 19	New Parents/Students Evening <i>Time: 5:30-6:30pm</i> <i>Venue: Kaipatiki Theatre</i>
Wednesday, FEB 20	Whanau Hui <i>Time: 7:00pm</i> <i>Venue: Whare kai</i>
Thursday, FEB 21	Athletics Day
Thursday, FEB 28	Pasifika Parents
Tuesday, MAR 5	Sports Registration <i>Time: 6:00-8:00pm</i> <i>Venue: Kaipatiki Theatre</i>
Friday, MAR 15	Interim Reports sent home
Friday, MAR 29	Good Friday
Monday, APR 1	Easter Monday
Tuesday, APR 2	Day after Easter Tuesday
Friday, APR 19	Last day of Term 1
Monday, MAY 6	First day of Term 2
Friday, JUL 12	Last day of Term 2
Monday, JUL 29	First day of Term 3
Friday, SEP 27	Last day of Term 3
Monday, OCT 14	First day of Term 4
Wednesday, DEC 11	Last day of Term 4

NB: The July holidays are later this year with Term 2 finishing on 12th July and Term 3 commencing on 29th July. There will be a mid-term break including Friday 31st May and Queen's Birthday on 3rd June.