



RONGOTAI COLLEGE

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

Week 2, Term 1, 2011

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday 16 February

Parents' Association meeting 7.30pm
in the college's staffroom

Monday 21 February

Samoan Parents' Association meeting
6pm in the college's staffroom
Whanau Group Meeting 6pm in Tangi
Te Keo

Monday 21 to Friday 25 February

NCEA Week

Tuesday 22 February

NCEA information evening for parents
– 7.30pm in the Renner Hall

Thursday 24 February

Board of Trustees' meeting at 5.30pm
in the Mackay Library

Tuesday 1 March

McEvedy Shield Athletics – all
students at Newtown Park

Wednesday 9 March

Year 9 Parents' Evening

Friday 18 March

Interim reports sent home.

Monday 21 March

Half term holiday – no school

Tuesday 22 March

Celia Lashlie presentation at 7pm in
the Renner Hall

Thursday 24 March

Board of Trustees' meeting at 5.30pm
in the Mackay Library

Monday 28 March to Friday 1 April

Summer Tournament Week

2011 TERM DATES

- Term 1* Tuesday 1 February to
Friday 15 April
Mid Term Break - Monday
21 March
- Term 2* Monday 2 May to Friday
15 July
- Term 3* Monday 1 August to
Friday 7 October
Mid Term Break – Friday
26 August
- Term 4* Tuesday 25 October to
Friday 9 December

Welcome to my first newsletter for the 2011 school year and a special welcome to parents of new students to the college. Following this newsletter, I will be mailing or emailing newsletters home in the fourth and eighth week of this term.

On Tuesday 1 February we welcomed our new students and staff members with a powhiri in the Renner Hall. Hopefully, this allowed them to feel at home and be part of the Rongotai family from their first day at this school.



Year 9 students at the powhiri

In my welcome, I pointed out that to get the best out of their time at Rongotai College, our boys

- should all aim to be the best they can be at all times;
- should fully embrace and involve themselves in all that the school has to offer;
- should show pride in themselves and the school at all times;
- should take advantage of the fresh start that moving to a new school can bring and that they should look to become "the man they would like to be"; and
- should aim to have left their mark on the school, and for it to be a better place when they leave.

GYMNASIUM FIRE

As many of you will be aware, the Rongotai College Gymnasium was burned to the ground in the early hours of Boxing Day, 2010. Due to the hazard presented by the roofing iron, small quantities of asbestos and the forecasted high winds, a decision was made to demolish what remained of the building as soon as possible. This occurred within three days of the fire, and the site is now fully cleared of debris.



We may never know the cause of the fire, because a consequence of the speedy demolition was that no detailed investigation into its cause was able to occur.



What we do know, however, is that all of our Physical Education equipment (including all the weights in the Weights Room) was lost in the fire. We are currently working with our insurers to replace the lost equipment. We have started this process already, by purchasing new Athletics equipment for the start of the term – and to be ready for McEvedy Shield!

We are currently in negotiations with the Ministry of Education to put in place a solution for our Physical Education classes for this year, and also to finalise the arrangements for building our new Gymnasium.

I am anticipating being able to update you on both these matters in my next newsletter.

STAFFING CHANGES

We welcome the following new staff to our school this year:

- **Mr Ken Ball** (History);
- **Mr Mark Greig** (Head of Department, Hard Materials Technology);
- **Mr Ben Koloto** (English and Social Studies);
- **Dr Dietmar Muck** (Mathematics);
- **Mr Colin Palamo** (Art);
- **Mr Scott Richardson** (Co-Curricular Coordinator); and
- **Mr Mike Wallace** (Food Technology).



Mr Palamo, Mr Richardson, Mr Wallace, Dr Muck, Mr Greig and Mr Koloto.

Within the school, Ms Anne Brailsford (Year 11), Mr Kit Norman (Year 12), and Mr Andrew Tilby (Year 13) have been appointed as Academic Mentors for 2011. Congratulations to these staff on their appointments.

Sadly, I accepted the resignation of Mrs Gabrielle-sisifo Makisi early January. Mrs Makisi, who joined our staff in 2002, taught History, acted as Assistant Head of Social Studies and was our Liaison person for Pacific Island students. She led a number of initiatives to improve the learning of Pacific Island students at the College, and was in charge of our hugely successful Poly Club. Mrs Makisi is taking up a position as a Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Education. This is a great opportunity for her, and we wish her well for the future.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING - THURSDAYS

To provide time for staff professional learning again this year, we will be starting slightly later on **Thursdays**, starting on Thursday 17 February. 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.

ATHLETICS SPORTS

Our Athletics Sports were held at Newtown Park on Tuesday 8 February. While I will comment more fully on Athletics day, the behaviour of our students was excellent, and the participation pleasing.

It was excellent to see a number of parents at the Athletics Sports, and I trust that they enjoyed themselves.



NCEA WEEK

In order to ensure that all students entering for the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) are fully organised and prepared for the assessment programme required, we are holding an NCEA week in the fourth week of this term (i.e. 21 to 25 February). Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 will be issued with a booklet containing all assessment statements for all subjects and options. Your son will be required to select the relevant assessment statements and enter assessment details on a year planner. He will also be given a tracking sheet to record

YEAR 9 CAMP CANCELLED

As you will be aware the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement Contract has not been settled and is under negotiation. PPTA (the teacher's union) has advised us that industrial action will be continuing in Term 1. One of the actions means that PPTA members are unable to work between 5.00 pm and 8.00 am. Given that virtually all our staff at camp are PPTA members, the camp we had planned in early March is now no longer viable as staff are not able to work during those hours.

I know that this will be a huge disappointment to our Year 9 students. However, it is our hope that we will be able to do at least one day of activities, possibly at Lyall Bay. While I am not able to confirm this at this point, I will advise parents of our alternative plan towards the end of February.

This is an extremely regrettable decision but unfortunately it is beyond my control.

the credits he has earned this year.

It is vital that you, as a parent / caregiver, understand the NCEA system and the organisation required by each candidate. To ensure that you are fully informed about this I will be conducting an NCEA Information Evening for parents on Tuesday 22 February in the college's Renner Hall at 7.30pm.

It is important that all parents / caregivers of Year 11, 12 and 13 students should attend. Any parents of students in Years 9 and 10 who wish to find out more about NCEA are also most welcome.



STUDENT LEAVE

We are fortunate that Wellington is a vibrant city with many cultural and sports events being held here.

A number of these events are held during the school day. It is a legal requirement that all students enrolled at a school must attend when it is open. If you would like your son to attend an important event during the school day, you must have the school's permission to do this. This must be obtained prior to the event. **If you wish your son to attend such an event, please write him a note which he must bring to me at least one day prior to the event, or send an email with the details.**

YEAR 9 PARENTS' EVENING

All parents / caregivers of Year 9 students are invited to the college on the evening of Wednesday 9 March. 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. The evening will begin at 7.30pm in the college's Renner Hall.



Year 9 students at the powhiri

McEVEDY SHIELD ATHLETICS

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 on **Tuesday 1 March**. All students are required to report to Newtown Park at 8.55am on this day to compete or to support our team. Students are required to wear school uniform.

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

Your son 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 wears his uniform appropriately for the weather and, if it is sunny, provide him with sun block and a hat.

PPTA PAID UNION MEETING

Wednesday 23 February

The Board of Trustees has been advised by the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) that there will be a meeting on the afternoon of Wednesday 23 February involving all members of the PPTA. This is an entitlement under their Collective Employment Contract and it impacts on the teachers at Rongotai College.

Please note that normal timetabled classes will not operate from 1.30pm on Wednesday 23 February due to this PPTA Paid Union Meeting, and your son will be excused from attending the college in the afternoon. Students will be released at 12.30pm for the day.

Classroom supervision will be provided by teachers who are not PPTA members so the college will remain open for instruction. Should you require your son to be supervised please contact the office by email (the.principal@rongotai.school.nz) or by phone (9393050), so we are aware of your requirement for us to supervise your son during the afternoon.

The buses will run as normal at 3.30pm so if your son travels by bus, in order to return home earlier in the day, you will need to arrange alternative transport, or he may travel home at 3.30pm as usual.

It has been a busy yet satisfying start of the school year. Thank you for your part in helping your son settle into the 2011 school year.

Kind regards,



Kevin Carter
PRINCIPAL

Board of Trustees – Casual Vacancy

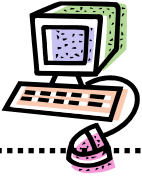
The Board of Trustees has requested I inform you that there is a casual vacancy for a parent representative.

Rongotai College has been fortunate to have been well governed over the years. For the continuing good governance of the college, it is necessary to have trustees with a wide range of skills, experiences and perspectives. I would encourage all parents and caregivers to consider whether they wish to contribute to the governance of our college.

For more information about being a member of a Board of Trustees, visit the School Trustees Association website (<http://www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-governors/>). If you are interested in joining our Board of Trustees, please feel free to contact our Board Chairperson, Lynn McBain, via the school.

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.

UNIFORM & STATIONERY SHOP

With the Stationery Shop and Uniform Shop now combined and adjacent to the new reception area, opening hours, during term time, are now:
Monday to Friday
8.50am to 2.50pm.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION: A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

The first meeting of the Parents' Association is on Wednesday 16 February, at 7.30pm in the college staffroom.

The aim of the meetings is to enable parents to become a part of the Rongotai College family. Parents can meet with other parents, learn about school systems and get a general feel for the school, as well as help to support exciting initiatives through enjoyable fundraising events.

Please come along!
Aileen Hunia, Chairperson

WHANAU MEETING:

The first meeting of the Whanau group is on Monday 21 February, at 6pm in Tangi Te Keo.

Parents of new and existing students are welcome to attend.

SAMOAN PARENTS' ASSOCIATION:

The first meeting of the Samoan Parents' Association is on Monday 21 February, at 6pm in the college staffroom.

Parents of new and existing students are welcome to attend.

STUDENT LOCKERS



The Parents' Association provides a limited number of lockers for student use. Students can hire a locker for the year by bringing \$20 to the Deputy Principal. They must provide their own padlock.

CANTEEN

The school canteen is now open with great food on offer, including daily specials.



SNAPPER CARDS & STUDENT ID



Students can apply for a Snapper ID card or an ID card. Snapper ID cards cost \$20 and ID cards cost \$7. These can be ordered from Ms Randal. Payment must be made at the time of ordering. They will take approximately two weeks to arrive.

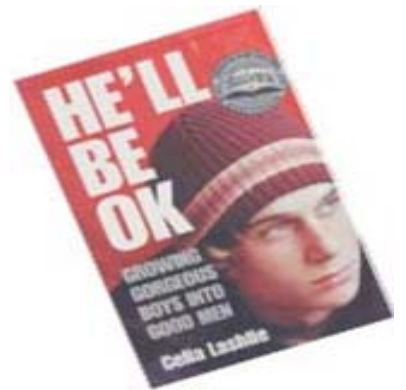
GROWING GORGEOUS BOYS INTO GOOD MEN'



Rongotai College invites you to a talk by Social Commentator **Celia Lashlie**

Celia Lashlie, author of 'He'll be Ok! Growing Gorgeous Boys into Good Men,' will give a talk at Rongotai College on Tuesday 22 March.

With 15 years' experience as New Zealand's first female prison officer in a male prison, Celia worked on the "Good Man Project" with 25 boys' schools throughout New Zealand aiming at creating a working definition of what makes a good man in the 21st century. The result was a significant insight into the minds of teenage boys and what they are feeling in this period of their lives. There are challenging suggestions for parents if they want to see their sons become the good men they want them to be. Celia is a great speaker and her talk gives parents plenty of food for thought and plenty of hints at how to work with their teenage sons. All parents will find something valuable in this talk - regardless of whether they have sons or not.



Tuesday 22 March

Renner Hall, Rongotai College, Coutts Street, Kilbirnie, Wellington

Time: 7pm sharp

Tickets: \$15 per person - from the Rongotai College office
(limited door sales from 6pm on the night unless sold out prior)