



Board Newsletter



Foreword

Welcome to our new board newsletter, we are trying a new layout to make the board updates more accessible to all families. Our aim is to continue to engage with the school community and provide information about the board's work and related school matters.

Board meeting highlights

During the last meeting the board extensively discussed the future of Years 7&8. Following the discussion the board voted on this matter. The board also approved funding for new school projects.

Please note that the minutes are approved in the following meeting. You can access all the board meetings in this [link](#).

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Years 7&8 consultation

The board has been consulting with the community on the possibility of Ridgway School becoming a Contributing Primary School (Year 1-6) rather than a Full Primary School (Year 1-8). We thank the community for their feedback. The board has also separately sought the views of staff, year 4-6 students, SWIS and other neighbouring schools. (All information can be found [here](#).)

Summary of consultation outcome:

- Staff have a variety of views in regard to the proposal. Some prefer to retain the status quo and others consider certainty (of numbers) would benefit student wellbeing at year 6 and enable management to focus on the needs of children in the school without the distraction caused each year by the choice to stay or go.
- Often the decision in Year 6 causes considerable stress and anxiety for students and families;
- There is support for a smooth transition to SWIS which would be possible if all children from Ridgway made the move together. This would allow the school to work with SWIS to provide information and celebrate Year 6 leavers;
- Children cite friendships and Ridgway/SWIS being a good school as their main reason for both staying at Ridgway or moving to SWIS;
- There is support for retention of Year 7&8 at Ridgway;
- Most people express a desire to have the choice to attend SWIS or Ridgway at Year 7&8 and many believe that some students flourish making the move to SWIS while some flourish in a smaller school;
- If we retain Year 7&8, it is possible that the impending SWIS zone will exclude part of the Ridgway zone, removing this choice for up to half of Ridgway students..

Board's decision on years 7&8

The Board has decided to apply to the Ministry of Education (MoE) for Ridgway to become a contributing primary school, with students attending SWIS in year 7&8 (the vote was: 5 in favour, 2 against and one abstention).

The reason for this decision is that the board wants to avoid the uncertainty that is created for tamariki, families and teachers by being in zone for two schools catering for the intermediate age group. This change will enable the school to prepare the children for a smooth transition while allowing the management of the school to better plan for the year ahead for the whole school. It supports our aim of all students experiencing belonging as a cohort, transitioning together to their next school.

The final decision sits with the MoE and given the uncertainty around the SWIS zoning, the outcome of our application is also uncertain. A timeframe for this decision is not set, the MoE advises this process takes approximately 3 terms. Needless to say, we will ensure there is a long lead in time for the change. More information about the rationale can be found [here](#).



Funding agreed for new school projects

The Board agreed the funding for three exciting projects:

- 1) a treetop walkway and playground equipment;
- 2) the addition of ~70 solar panels to our solar array to be installed on the new building;
- 3) the upgrade of our PE/storage shed.

We are currently working with the Ministry of Education to get a contractor on board to start on the new slides down the bank. We hope to start work on the treetop walkway adjacent to the zigzag path during Term 1 next year.

The existing array of solar panels that the school received from Genesis under the Scholgen scheme will be moved to the roof of the new school. The board are also taking the opportunity to invest in a number of new panels. This investment means that in future the school will have to spend less money on paying the power bill, meaning more funds are available for other things.

The existing storage shed outside the Tui classroom in the top part of the school is in bad repair. The state of the roof and building mean that rain often gets in, to the detriment of the school's materials stored in there. The board have decided to replace the roof and upgrade the floor and walls.

School rebuild

The board had the chance to visit the site of the new school building.

Teaching rooms are all in place and we could start imagining the tamariki in there. While we had delays due to covid lockdowns and other issues the builders are making speedy process and we will soon have more details about opening day.

Follow the building diary where you can keep up to date with the [project](#).



Covid 19- Traffic light

Following the government vaccine requirements, all staff members and volunteers working with tamariki are now double vaccinated. Children are able to come to school regardless of their vaccination status. There is information on the MoE's [website](#).

There are protocols to be followed under the traffic light system, which will be in place for schools when we return next year. These are:

For parents:

- please wear face coverings and maintain social distancing when picking up/dropping off tamariki;
- online meetings will be used to interact with parents (via Google meets) or brief in person meetings to be held outside only;
- the playground remains closed for after school play;
- vaccine passes will be required for entry to school events/gatherings.

For students:

- face coverings required on tech bus and on any other school transport for 12-year-olds and over;
- we will try our best to ensure education outside the classroom (EOTC) activities can go ahead but need to abide by any framework requirements an outside provider may have;
- please keep tamariki at home if they are sick.

End of year wishes



We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas. Thank you to the teachers, staff and Kathryn for their hard mahi this year despite covid uncertainties, building works and many health and safety requirements that come with these. We admire how you come to work filled with positivity and make us and our tamariki feel welcome and safe.

We wish you all a well deserved break and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Meri Kirihimete from the Board!

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