

4th February 2019

Dear Parents/Caregivers

On behalf of The Gardens School Board of Trustees, teaching and support staff, we extend a warm welcome to you all, especially to those students and families who have just commenced with us. The summer holidays may be a distant memory, however, we are certainly looking forward with much excitement to the year ahead.

The school opened with just under 560 students and we anticipate our roll increasing as the year progresses.

STATIONERY

Once again, thank you to all the parents who have utilised the 'OfficeMax My School' option to order stationery. Itemised lists are accessed through OfficeMax (online and in stores) and we request that students have all their stationery requirements by the end of this week.

MATERIALS FEES

These costs will be entered on to your child's Linc-Ed account and we ask that they be actioned as soon as possible:

- * **Booklets/Worksheets:** \$25 per year per pupil covers costs for all specific projects or activities worked on during 2018.
- * **Technology:** This is part of the curriculum where Senior (Years 4/5/6 - \$40 per year) and Intermediate (Years 7/8 - \$45 per year) students have greater access to our Food Technology, Hard Technology and Soft Materials spaces, with work produced either going home or displayed at school.
- * **Mathletics:** This internet-based programme is \$20 per year per pupil (an annual cost of about \$100 is payable to access Mathletics privately, however, we have been fortunate to negotiate significantly reduced rates for our school). ALL pupils must register for this initiative; check out www.mathletics.com or email yolandem@thegardens.school.nz (Years 0-3) or sepata@thegardens.school.nz (Years 4-8) with any queries you may have.

SCHOOL DONATIONS

In a perfect world, the Government would cover the cost of all the things we expect our taxes to pay for – the reality is quite different. Careful management by the Board of Trustees of the funding (Operations Grant) received from the Government covers the school's overheads, employment of support staff, special needs, day-to-day operations and maintenance. Teachers' salaries are funded separately with any extra staffing paid out of the operational grant. There is very little funding left for teaching resources e.g. library books, readers, Maths and Science equipment, PE gear, musical instruments, art materials, etc. As a decile 8 school, we receive limited funding per child and parent donations are an essential part of making ends meet in our school. Without this financial support from our parents, the quality of programmes for areas such as Music, Second Languages, PE or other special initiatives can be limited as extra learning materials are out of the reach of the Government funds received. Parent donations also ensure we can purchase these resources to meet the learning needs of our children – **our figures have not increased since we first opened in 2002** – and we thank all our parents for this financial contribution.

PAYMENTS

The banking of cash has changed considerably over the years with lengthy banking processes now in place to deposit coinage and notes, along with security measures that encourage us not to hold large amounts of cash on site. With new internet-based finance systems that provide faster and more accurate processing of accounts and, most importantly, for the ease and convenience of our parents, **we strongly recommend payment of fees, donations, etc be made direct to our school bank account (The Gardens School BOT: 12-3083-0357534-00) or via your Linc-Ed account** (please ensure you have signed up for this). All finance queries to reception@thegardens.school.nz.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

We work very hard to ensure we are providing regular and timely information to our school families and community members. Our website (www.thegardens.school.nz) gives specific details about our school and curriculum, as well as links to our social media pages and Hapori blogs. 'Skoolbag' is the free school App we use for smart-phones/tablets (just search "The Gardens School" in the Apple App or Google Play Stores) with our weekly Bulletin, team newsletters, alerts and updates coming through this information source.

Thank you for your continued support of our school as we work to deliver the best in learning and educational programmes for your children. If you have any questions at all, please contact me (principal@thegardens.school.nz).

SUSANNAH FOWLER, PRINCIPAL