



Welcome to 2021!

As the first term draws to a close, we have the chance to reflect on a few things and consider our new normal.

A Big Thank You

By any stretch of the imagination 2020 was a hell of a year, quite literally. As a Board, it was humbling to see the school and all its staff adapt so quickly to the ever-changing news feed from the Government. Rarely did they have longer than 48 hours notice of any impending changes. It is a testament to great leadership and a cohesive dedicated team, that they place the children's welfare above their own. We would like to thank each and every one of them for their dedication in turbulent times.

A Balanced Budget

As many of you know, Greenhithe School has run a very successful and highly regarded Overseas Student Programme for the past few years. With the closure of our borders, it came to an abrupt halt in 2020 and it would be hard for anyone to say when it might open up again. The sudden loss of these funds placed great pressure on our resources, forcing Stephen and the Leadership Team to tighten their belts and still achieve a positive financial position at the end of the year. To quote a popular phrase, most schools 'run off the smell of an oily rag' and many have had to close out their finances in a negative situation. Our situation was due to tight financial practices as well as more parents than ever before making their donations. We are grateful to you all.

We have a new PM

As a Board, we have a new Chair. Although the name of that role has changed under our current Government! The Chair is now called the Presiding Member. It has not missed anyone on the Board that this abbreviates to PM, but hopefully our new PM, Kathy Frame, won't let this go to her head! Our thanks go to Scott Rees, for guiding the Board through last year - a year in which we saw most of what we deemed normal, turned upside down!

Your Support is Essential

As parents, you will all now be used to going in and out of lockdown at a moment's notice. You know the routine now and perhaps even have little extra regard for our teachers, having tried your hand at home-schooling. With 2021, we may see more lockdowns, who knows? But please keep supporting the school by making your school donations - these make a huge difference to our budget.

We're Watching You

With lockdown came a sad increase in vandalism around the school - something no one expected. As these vandalism costs increased, therefore the school was forced to invest in CCTV cameras. To be honest, none of us wanted to sign off the expenditure, preferring to spend the Ministry property money they provide directly on the children. But the escalating costs made it cheaper to pay for the cameras than for the ongoing repair work.

On the Bright Side

It has taken over 10 years, but Stephen has finally persuaded the Ministry of Education that shade sails are indeed an important item in the schoolyard. We have received the go-ahead to install shade sails throughout the school, with 100% government funding.

We have a new phone and bell system throughout the school delivering better comms and ensuring that we can contact staff and children more easily. Of course, whether the children listen is another matter entirely!

We saw our car parking, drop off and pick up situations significantly improve as a result of the various levels of lockdown. It showed that small changes can have a significant effect on easing traffic congestions around the school at key times. With Auckland Council and Auckland Transport unprepared to make significant changes to our roading and road markings around the school, we have continued to explore and trial other measures with help from the local Police. Thank you for your support of these trials.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our amazing school.

The Greenhithe Board