



# TE AROHA COLLEGE

*A purpose joyful; A courage blameless*

May 2023

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Mr Peter Jager  
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**GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR**  
Ms Schuler

**NGĀ MANU TAUPUA**  
Whaea Arleen

**YEAR 9 DEAN**  
Mrs Spindler  
**FORM TEACHERS**  
Aotea, Mr Stringer  
Arawa, Miss Halford  
Tainui, Mr Pipe  
Tokomaru, Mr Samuel

**YEAR 10 DEAN**  
Ms Gemmell  
**FORM TEACHERS**  
Aotea, Mrs Jager  
Arawa, Ms Baylis  
Tainui, Mr Bridgland  
Tokomaru, Ms Hagan

**YEAR 11 DEAN**  
Mr Aislabie  
**FORM TEACHERS**  
Aotea, Mr Rowe  
Arawa, Mrs Oliver  
Tainui, Mr Darby  
Tokomaru, Ms Scott

**YEAR 12 DEAN**  
Mr Masters  
**FORM TEACHERS**  
Aotea, Miss Park  
Arawa, Miss Maber  
Tainui, Mr Kurain  
Tokomaru, Mr Ashford-Beck

**YEAR 13 DEAN**  
Mr Masters



## Newsletter Term 2 Week 2

Kia ora e te whānau o te kura tuarua Te Aroha,  
Ko Mauao te maunga e rū nei taku ngākau  
Ko Uretara te awa e mahea nei aku māharahara  
Ko Katikati ahau  
Kei ngā kuri-a-whārei au e noho ana  
Ko Neil Harray tōku ingoa

Many thanks once again for the very generous welcome I have received since starting at Te Aroha College. I have really enjoyed getting to know the students, staff, whānau and parents so far and look forward to getting to know more of you in due course.

Nau mai haere mai to the new students and families that have joined Te Aroha College. It is encouraging to see our school roll to continue to grow this year and look forward to the school community welcoming and supporting these new students.

**A PURPOSE JOYFUL A COURAGE BLAMELESS**  
**HE WAKA EKE NOA HE TU MANAWANUI KI TE KEI O TE WAKA**



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I want to thank Peter Jager for all of his efforts over the last year in his role as Acting Principal. I have known Peter for close to 20 years and knew that he would work hard to keep things moving forward at Te Aroha College and provide a settled environment to allow a new principal the opportunity to bring new perspectives to the school. It is clear that he has worked well alongside our LSM, Ted Benton, and along with key support staff, and the board of trustees. Te Aroha College is well placed to move on from the challenges it has experienced in recent years.

Some initial thoughts. I have been impressed with how friendly and confident many of our students are. There are some very talented students involved in a whole range of academic, sporting, arts based and cultural activities, with many involved in just about everything that is on offer. Ka rawe - that's awesome, but must be exhausting at times. It has been good to get out and about, watching a few rehearsals, practices and games so far.

Our head students did a fantastic job representing Te Aroha College at the community ANZAC service with many people acknowledging how well Amber and Jayden spoke in their reflections of what ANZAC day meant to them as young people in our community. They certainly are great role models and recited their speeches again at assembly on Monday and was well received by our students.

I have also been impressed with how collegial and dedicated our staff are. Many of them have additional responsibilities to their teaching and/or administrative roles and work really well as a team, primarily focused on doing the very best for our students. This approach would be the envy of many schools and provides Te Aroha College with a great platform to adapt to the upcoming curriculum and NCEA changes that are fast approaching.

Some areas that I have identified that need strengthening. Uniform. As a uniform school the board has set clear guidelines on how our students should wear the school uniform. Haven seen many, many school uniforms over the years, I think ours is simple, smart (when worn correctly) and presents well to the community. However, I am aware that some people would like aspects of the uniform reviewed and this is something that the board will consider in the future.

At this stage I ask all parents, whānau and caregivers to ensure that their children come to school in the correct uniform so that the teachers can focus on learning conversations rather than discussions about uniform.

The other area I have spoken to the students about is the use of appropriate language around school. On the odd occasion I have heard some students use swear words in clear hearing of teachers and at times in class. This is something that I will not tolerate. As I said to students - you are able to control yourselves and while I acknowledge that the language of our young people has changed, at this school I want everyone to use respectful language all of the time. I have met with some students already to clarify my expectations about this.

In the following pages I have written a somewhat lengthy (sorry...) article about attendance. The simple version is that if students aren't at school it is very hard for them to do well. If any organisation or business experienced a 10% or more decrease in inputs/revenue there would be concerns about what the outputs/profits/value added (in our case student achievement) might be. It is exactly the same for us. From a national perspective it is clear that students need to attend at least 80% of the time to do well in NCEA.

The attendance and more often non-attendance has become a real issue in New Zealand. Please take the time to read the article and think carefully about what we are all doing collectively to ensure our students are at school all of the time. I welcome discussion with our community about this.

In closing I am feeling very positive about the future for Te Aroha College and can see many opportunities for our school to grow and improve and meet the needs of our students.

Kia pai tō mutunga wiki, have a nice weekend,

Neil Harray







### Thinking about attendance in New Zealand secondary school's and implications for Te Aroha College.

*“Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōna te ngahere. Ko te manu e kai ana i te matauranga nōna te ao.” The bird that consumes the miro berry owns the forest. The bird that consumes knowledge owns the world.*

This whakataukī, often used in education settings, reminds us that education provides a pathway beyond our own “forest” and opens up the world for our young people. If our students are not regularly attending school this limits those opportunities and can have life long implications.

In June 2022, the Ministry of Education launched their Attendance and Engagement Strategy in recognition that there were concerns with the declining rates of attendance in New Zealand Schools.

This is something that the board, senior leaders and teachers at Te Aroha College want to **identify and develop strategies** to provide the best possible learning environment for all of our students and see our awesome students enjoy success across all areas of learning and school life. This has been highlighted again recently in the media.

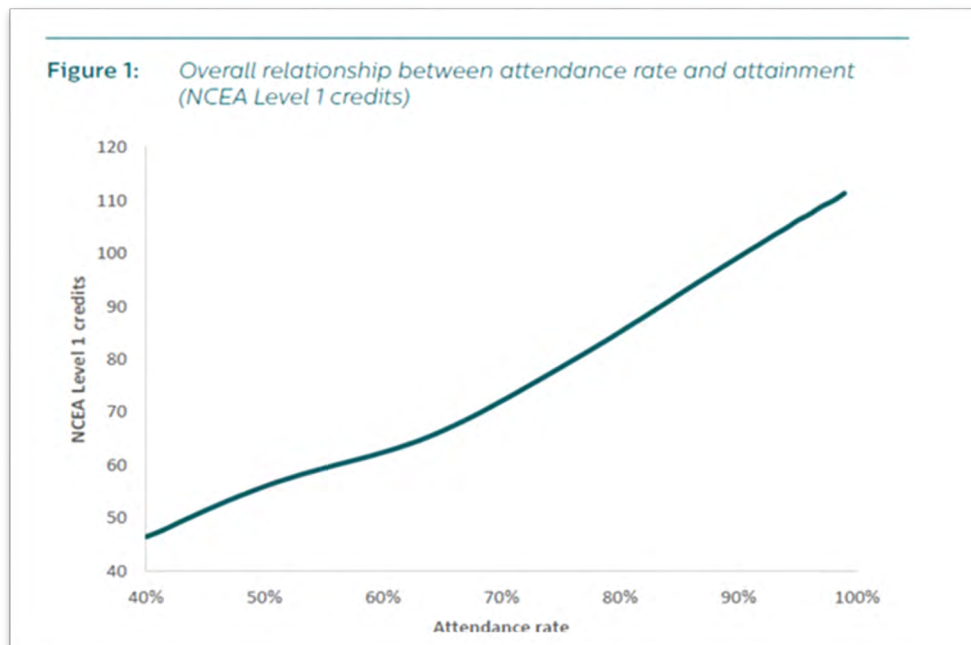
There is no question that the attendance rates across New Zealand have changed since the COVID pandemic and have become a complex issue for schools and the Ministry of Education to address and significantly improve. However, this is not a new trend - if we look a little further back in time, attendance rates have been decreasing since 2015 (Source: Ministry of Education).

This trend is a concern we should collectively share. One of the key factors in the success of students is how often they attend school. It seems fairly straightforward that the more times a student is at school, ready for learning, the better they will do and enjoy their school days more. For example, the graph below shows the average number of credits achieved compared to attendance rates for Level 1 NCEA across New Zealand.



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(Source: Education Review Office 2023, Attendance: Getting Back to School)

So, what are the factors that have influenced this change? Legally, all parents and guardians are required to send their children to school until the age of 16. Schooling is compulsory until that age. Societally, there has been a change in attitude towards schools. A recent research paper by the Education Review Office (2022) has highlighted some of the reasons:

- Nationally, some parents and students don't understand the connection between going to school and succeeding at school;
- Due to a number of factors in New Zealand at present, many parents and students are choosing to prioritise other things;

- Parents and student face real barriers to going to school; and
- Some groups of parents and students face more barriers than others.

With this focus on attendance and engagement we are trying to understand what that looks like at Te Aroha College. In doing so, we are analysing the attendance data in more detail, aligning with the Ministry of Education's Attendance and Engagement Strategy. The information below shows our attendance broken down into how often students attend, not an average figure that has been used in the past.



## Thoughts on Attendance

Year	Term	Total Students	# of students attending (% of days)				% of students attending (% of days)			
			90-100	80-90	70-80	0-70	90-100	80-90	70-80	0-70
2022	1	321	144	78	51	48	44.9	24.3	15.9	15.0
	2	312	80	87	70	75	25.6	27.9	22.4	24.0
	3	305	116	78	53	58	38.0	25.6	17.4	19.0
	4	151	41	52	31	27	27.2	34.4	20.5	17.9
2023	1	340	178	71	34	57	52.4	20.9	10.0	16.8

(Source: Ministry of Education - Every Day Matters attendance data: Te Aroha College)

Some things of interest pop out straight away. **The good news is that the 2023 Term 1 roll is the highest it has been since 2018 which is a very good sign for Te Aroha College.** The other point of interest is if you look at the number of students that missed at least 10% or more of their learning time in Term 1 this year - this equates to 47.6% of our students. As you can see that is 162 students that have significantly missed a big chunk of learning time already this year. The important thing to remember is at this stage of the year it is not too late to make a change and catch up.

Specifically looking at secondary school students, there are additional factors that the research has identified that influence attendance. Some of these factors might be applicable to Te Aroha College and I see them as the **basis of some really healthy discussions in the future.**

For all parents the attitudes which have the biggest impact on their child's attendance are:

- How comfortable they are with their child missing school.
- How likely they are to keep their child home:
  - ⇒ if their child is being bullied;
  - ⇒ if their child is unable to participate in school activities;
  - ⇒ for a family or special event; or
  - ⇒ for physical or mental health reasons.

For secondary learners the biggest factors impacting on attendance are:

- If they think going to school every day is important;
- If they like or are interested in what they are being taught;
- If they can participate in activities;
- If they see school as helpful for their future;
- If they like or don't like their teachers; and
- If they don't like the people in their class.



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So, the big question is what do we do **collectively** to address this and improve Te Aroha College's attendance rates as part of the picture that improves students' success at school?

There are three areas that we can work on

**1. Increasing parents' awareness and expectations**

- Communicating with parents, highlighting the importance of regular attendance.
- Make sure parents know how much their child is attending.
- Deliver these messages early and often.

**2. Making learning engaging and school a great place to be**

- Create a welcoming environment.
- Promote positive relationships between teachers and learners.
- Get students interested in what they are learning.

**3. Identifying and tackling specific barriers**

- Find out exactly what is making attendance more difficult.
- Develop responsive strategies for specific barriers.
- Work together with families/whānau.

I can assure you that at Te Aroha College we will be investigating the school based factors that influence attendance and find ways to do things better. We welcome feedback from parents and whānau to help us with this.

I encourage parents, caregivers and whānau to have a good think about what is happening for your child/children and start a conversation about attendance or *non-attendance* at Te Aroha College.

We want the very best outcomes for all of our students and are committed to achieving this. Some changes will take time, however, we will be relentless in trying to improve our mahi for the students at Te Aroha College.

Please feel free to contact the board of trustees or staff at Te Aroha College if you would like to discuss this further. If you are having difficulties and would like to discuss what support we can provide then again, please make contact with a staff member that you feel comfortable discussing this with.

*Tangata ako ana i te kāinga, te tūranga ki te marae, tau ana. A person nurtured in the community contributes strongly to society.*

**Neil Harray**

**Principal | Tumuaki**  
**Te Aroha College**



### Tools to help you. Have you accessed the Parent Portal?

The Parent Portal is accessible from: <https://tearoha.parents.school.nz/>

Parents/caregivers to login using student username and parent password as provided by school. As a privacy requirement you will be required to change your password the first time you login. Please contact the school 078848625 or [office@tacol.nz](mailto:office@tacol.nz) if you do not have your caregiver login details.

Read the [Parent Portal How to Guide](#)

We strongly encourage parents/caregivers to use the Parent Portal, which allows you to:

- update your contact information / details
- track your student's attendance
- monitor Student's learning progress / NCEA results
- view accounts / fee records



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**PARENT PORTAL  
GUIDE**