



RURAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

July 2020

Ki te whānau, tēnā koutou katoa

Welcome to the first issue of *Rural Matters* for 2020. We've certainly had our challenges this year - but isn't it great to be back!

If you are new to rural principalship, then a very special welcome to you. As a rural principal, you may find yourself isolated from networks and peer groups. You may find it difficult to access PLD programmes and it may be too costly for you to travel and participate in workshops, hui, or local association events. This publication is intended to fill in some gaps, give you information you might otherwise have missed and provide some helpful tips for leading rural schools and communities.

Read on to find out about:

- Your NZPF Rural Team
- Internet Connection
- Calf Days
- Spring Homework
- Management Release
- Helpline
- Attendance
- Stories from Rural Schools

Your NZPF executive rural team comprises Karen Brisco, Ōmata School, Taranaki, karenb@nzpf.ac.nz, Jason Miles, Kaiapoi North School, North Canterbury, Jason.miles@nzpf.ac.nz; and Julie Hepburn, Red Beach School, Hibiscus Coast, julieh@nzpf.ac.nz. All three have had experience as principals of rural schools.

Internet Connection

In August, Karen Brisco will be meeting with Angela Reid, Director of Business Services at the Ministry of Education. If you have any concerns or questions about rural internet connection to your school please email karenb@nzpf.ac.nz. Karen needs to know your school's name, location and the specific issues you have and she will ask Angela to investigate.

Calf Days

There is guidance from MPI for calf days which seems very similar to last years as M-Bovis is still a crucial consideration. Schools can choose to hold calf events provided that precautions are taken to keep the calves 2m apart at all times, particularly nose to nose contact. For more information go to www.mbovis.govt.nz.

Spring Homework

Spring is a demanding time for farmers and children may be required to help more around the farm. So, think about reducing or skipping homework for the Spring season. Families will welcome your understanding and your efforts to reduce stress. Run the suggestion by your BoT Chair to get their support first and if they agree, explain in your school newsletter what you are doing and why.

Management Release

Are you using your allocated staffing entitlement for managing the school? Watch that you are not 'borrowing' from this entitlement to run other programmes or banking it to make the school more money. In the short term it may seem like a great idea but long term consequences may harm you and your school. Indications are that principals who are not fully utilising this management component are often the ones running into trouble down the track. When you squeeze out this time and use it for something else, you either don't get around to doing things you should be doing, or you end up spending every waking hour working and get tired and stressed. Being a teaching principal is a complicated juggling act and the need to balance your week is crucial or something will give. Don't let that something be you!

Helpline

Julie Hepburn coordinates the NZPF helpline for members. Please ring **0800 798 798** if you need support. You can call about personal or professional issues if you think that talking to an experienced fellow principal might help you. The helpline is not intended as a substitute for legal or other professional advice and neither the Federation nor your principal colleagues accept any liability for the decisions you make. We are just there to guide and assist you and possibly refer you on.

We also encourage you to join the NZPF Principals' Advice and Support Limited (PASL) scheme which offers you legal advice and representation should you ever need it. For more information or to download an application form go to www.nzpf.ac.nz/legal-advice.html.

Attendance - ideas about working with families to improve attendance

Below you will see an example of an email message you might send to parents, as a first step, to draw their attention to the non-attendance of their child(ren). If there is no change, we would advise that the teacher follows up with a personal call to see what the school can do to support the family to get their child(ren) to school.

This might include support with providing lunch, uniform or connecting the family to social support services. If there is still no change, the next step might be to write to the family (contact jason.m@kaiapoinorth.school.nz if you would like an example of such a letter). You may also wish to include the table of attendance percentages and how the school/Ministry rates those. It is helpful to give this information to your whole school community through the school newsletter at least once a year too.

EXAMPLE OF EMAIL TO SEND HOME INITIALLY

Kia ora

As you will be aware, attendance at school is vitally important for your child's academic, social and emotional development. At ...School, we are aiming to have every child's attendance reach 90% or higher for 2020.

So far this year, ... has been absent for% and late for% which is less than our aim of 90% attendance. As this is likely to be having a detrimental effect on their learning, we thought it best to bring it to your attention. We are happy to discuss this further with you, should you choose. Looking forward to supporting your child together.

Kind regards

NOTE: If you know a child has been unwell or away due to holidays, please acknowledge this when discussing with parents.

Attendance Information for Parents

As per Ministry of Education guidelines, we must inform you that your child's attendance for the term has been below the expected 90%.

At the end of a school year:

Attendance is seen as	Percentage	Days / Weeks of school missed.....
Acceptable	95%	10 days (2 weeks of school missed)
A concern	90%	20 days (4 weeks of school missed)
Critical concern	85%	30 days (6 weeks of school missed)
Very serious	80%	40 days (8 weeks of school missed)

DID YOU KNOW?

If a student misses 5 school days each term, or one day a fortnight, they will miss the equivalent of one year of school over 10 years.

MOE resource on improving attendance:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/School/Running-a-school/Managing-students/Managing-student-attendance/AttendanceMatters.pdf>

Stories from Rural Schools

Thanks to **Darryn Ward and Anna Webb from North Loburn School**, and **Yvonne Blair from Waikari School** for sharing these good news stories below!

North Loburn School



We're going on a Predator Hunt! We're not scared!
What a beautiful day!

A spark of interest from some learning around the impact of predators such as possums and stoats on our native flora and fauna has grown into a fabulous community project with the team of Enviroleaders at North Loburn School. Students began by wanting to find out what was lurking on their school grounds and the possible impact that these creatures may be having on our plantings and wildlife. Tracking tunnels and chew cards were made from discarded real estate signs and placed around the playground, results analysed and their interest grew. A school family, encouraged by the students' growing interest, welcomed the Enviroleaders to their QEII covenanted native bush block to explore what

predators were impacting the native birds there. The interest continued to grow and the concept of a school based Predator Trap Library began. Students researched various places to gain funding to purchase traps and were successful in gaining an Environment Canterbury grant.

Working with DoC and Predator Free NZ as well as local experienced community members, students researched the large range of traps available to purchase and explored not only the initial cost, but the robustness, how humane the mechanisms within the trap were, and the ongoing maintenance and cost of running them. Students were involved at every stage and made the final choices about which traps to buy and from where. The interest was growing into a passion. A generous and experienced local group of men who make traps for the Rakahuri River Care Group took the Enviroleaders under their wing, helping, advising and encouraging the students in the making of the box casings for the traps. Connecting with the community has been a wonderful aspect of this growing project. Back to the Whiterock Mains QEII block to trial our traps and continue to extend our understanding of effective trapping was fabulous, and with the successful capture of a number of creatures encouraged the students to continue. Students are currently involved in creating the paper work for Trap Library. Loan agreements are being drafted and Health and Safety documents are being written, all by these passionate students who want to make a difference in their own community and back yard.

Although a long process (which is not yet finished), the ownership and engagement of the Enviroleaders has been a testament to the power of student led action. <http://www.northloburn.school.nz/enviro-blog>



Bright artwork in Waikari, North Canterbury

Waikari School students placed artworks down the main street of Waikari before lockdown to try to lift everyone's spirits. We had some really lovely comments about how they made them smile!



If you have some rural good new stories to share, please email us.

Ngā mihi nui

Karen Brisco, Jason Miles & Julie Hepburn
Rural Team
NZPF National Executive

NZPF assures its business partners that, as members, you will contact them to have a conversation if you are purchasing products, services or solutions for your schools that a business partner supplies. Please support our partners as their assistance to NZPF means better membership services to you.

Gold Partners



Silver Partners



Bronze Partners

