



From the Principal's Desk

Dear Parents/Caregivers

This last week has been an interesting week at WAS, so interesting in fact that I've taken the unprecedented step of putting out a separate newsletter!

It came to light on Friday evening of last week that a number of our students had been observed 'huffing' aerosols (see page 3 for more details of what huffing is) during school time. I and other more experienced members of staff have seen the destruction and devastation caused by 'huffing' first hand and so it is something I believe we need to deal with immediately.

I want to assure the parents and community of Tuatapere that the school has indeed dealt with this issue in the ways we think appropriate. Part of this process involves the police visiting the school to discuss the dangers of 'huffing', receiving health education classes about drug and alcohol use, with a focus on 'huffing', and we are currently looking into Youth Aid being involved in the school around this issue. The students have also faced the usual consequences that 'gross misconduct' incurs within the school.

The question that you as parents might be asking yourself now is – What can I do about it? Well there are lots of things you can do:

- ▶ talk to your child about 'huffing' and its dangers (there are also lots of YouTube clips that you can watch yourselves or show your children that are pretty enlightening!);
- ▶ talk to them about making good choices.

Almost certainly as important is to LISTEN to your child. Listening isn't just about hearing, it is about filtering out and reading between the lines of dialogue. When you do LISTEN to your child bear in mind:

- ▶ you aren't necessarily hearing the whole story;
- ▶ they do exaggerate / tell porkies!;
- ▶ they also can be unflinchingly honest and detailed in their conversations.

If as a result of LISTENING you think the school needs to know something, if something comes up that you are concerned about, then PLEASE contact the school.

My door is always open. We can only do something about it at school if we know about it!

Finally, we are really grateful to Mrs Elizabeth Chittock who has volunteered her time to present study skills / exam preparation workshops to students and their families. The schedule of sessions is noted further on in this newsletter and we strongly encourage our Senior students to attend.

Ms Elizabeth Hannah, Principal

For The Community of WAS

Firstly, a slightly belated welcome back to you all. Thank you for continuing to support the school. Also, my congratulations to our students who have recently been successful in NCEA, especially those gaining merit and excellence endorsements.

As I mentioned at prizegiving, both ERO and NZQA have reported on this school recently. The latest ERO report will be available in the next two weeks and we will be putting a copy on the school website. The NZQA report is already on the school website, and is worth a read. This report gives confidence that this school is assessing senior students appropriately for NCEA. NZQA made no recommendations and will return in three years for their next visit.

Both reports show really good progress at this school over the last 18 months. Much has been achieved here in that time and I am grateful for all the effort that has been put in for our students.

My focus over the past few weeks has been to work with the Principals, Kevin and now Elizabeth, to ensure that the school Charter for 2014 and associated data are with the Ministry of Education, and also to set a budget for 2014. Also I have been finalising my paperwork with the Ministry of Education on:

- the new governance structure for the school;
- board elections;
- the look and feel of education at Waiiau Area School.

I am very grateful to the members of the Community Reference Group for their input over the past eight months. This input has helped me considerably in my deliberations, together with my own research and discussions with a wide range of people. My recommendations to the Ministry are that:

- the new school board of trustees be made up of three parent-elected trustees, the Principal, a staff-elected trustee, a student-elected trustee, and three

Ministry appointed trustees. This alternative constitution gives the board access to trustees with specialist skills and also maintains a strong parent representation.

- board elections be held sometime in May or June. The elections cannot be held until the Minister approves the alternative constitution for the board and also the Ministry is satisfied that a viable board will be created.
- Waiau Area School continues as an area school serving students in years 1-13, with an emphasis placed on connectedness and the use of information technologies.

Over the next few months I will continue to perform the necessary governance roles, and also work with the Ministry to ensure that a viable board is in place to take over the governance of the school. It is important that the whole school community think about who might be suitable Board members during this period.

Finally, I wish everyone in the school community a successful year.

Chris Shaw, Commissioner

WAS 'Study Skills' Programme 2014 Term 1

Every Thursday @ 1pm in the Conference Room
(adjacent to the front door and School Office)

- 6 March: **Study Habits** — Skills and routines
- 13 March: **Time Management** — Priorities and planners
- 20 March: **Writing Skills** — Essays: brainstorming, 'answer the question', fast writing, checking your work
- 27 March: **Reading Skills** — Skimming, key words, summarising, note-taking
- 3 April: **Parents' Session** — Support your student's studying
- 10 April: **Health and Wellbeing** — Food, sleep, exercise, thinking patterns and self-confidence

Community Notices

If you have a Community Notice to advertise, please email it through to the school at newsletters@was.school.nz.

Girl Guide Biscuits

It's that time of the year again! Girl Guide biscuits are on sale from 1 March. Plain, chocolate and mini chocolate. They are sold by the packet or by the box. Please phone Dale Egerton for your orders — 2266865 or 027 3106199.

Western Combined A Grade Rugby

Names are being taken now for kids interested in playing this season. Last year this team was a combination of Waiau Star, Ohai-Nightcaps & Otautau. They won the competition!

To register your interest phone Michael Van Brecht on 03 2258484.



Rotary International

Youth Exchange Programme

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WANTED

Rotary Clubs are now seeking applications from motivated secondary school students interested in spending a year overseas as part of this long established, successful educational and cultural exchange.

- Best value of any long term exchange.
- Students receive a monthly allowance.
- Students must be aged between 16 & 18½ at departure in January 2015.
- No family Rotary affiliation required.
- Applications close 30 April 2014.
- *A life changing experience.*

For further information please contact John Faul on either 03 2175438 / 03 2189593 / 027 4332686 or at johnfaul@xtra.co.nz.

Experienced Dressmaker Available

For this year's FORMAL BALL. I have a small selection of patterns for you to choose from, or bring your own. I also offer a service for repairs and alterations. Rips, Zips and other bits that need mending. Reasonable charges. Phone Margaret on 03 2348680.

LOST PROPERTY — IS IT YOURS??

There are a number of items in our Lost Property room, including a pair of sz1 black mary-jane velcro/buckle girls shoes, and a sleeping bag ...?

Please pop into the Office to see if anything belongs at your home.

The Dangers of Huffing

Inhalant abuse (commonly called “huffing”) is the intentional inhalation of chemical vapours to attain a mental ‘high’ or euphoric effect. A wide variety of substances, including common household products, are abused by inhalers (see list below).

Inhalants produce an effect that may be similar to alcohol intoxication. Initial symptoms described by abusers who were “huffing” include:

- Drowsiness;
- Light-headedness;
- Loss of inhibition.

Further use can lead to the following:

- Dizziness;
- Hallucinations or delusions;
- Belligerence;
- Apathy;
- Impaired judgement.

Long-term inhalant abusers can suffer damaging health consequences including:

- Depression and mood changes;
- Weight loss;
- Inattentiveness;
- Lack of coordination;
- Irritability;
- Weakness.

More serious consequences can include permanent damage to the brain and other organs or even death. Sudden cardiac death from fatal cardiac arrhythmias has been reported even in teen inhalant abusers. ***Death from huffing can occur upon the first time of use or after prolonged inhalant abuse.*** Other causes of death related to huffing include asphyxiation, aspiration, or suffocation.

Chronic inhalant abuse may result in serious and sometimes irreversible damage to the user’s heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, and brain. Brain damage may result in personality changes, diminished cognitive functioning, memory impairment, and slurred speech. Further, inhalant users usually begin smoking, using alcohol, and using other drugs at younger ages and display a higher lifetime prevalence of substance-use disorders than those who do not use inhalants.

Substances commonly used by inhalant abusers fall into several categories:

- Volatile solvents, such as those found in paint thinner, gasoline, felt-tip markers, nail polish remover, glue, and other household products;
- Aerosol sprays containing propellants and solvents, e.g. spray paint, deodorant, and hair-care products;
- Gases, most commonly nitrous oxide (laughing gas);

Parents of teens need to be especially vigilant about signs of inhalant abuse (huffing), since the abused substances are simple household items and not readily identifiable as drugs of abuse. Signs of inhalant abuse include chemical smells on clothing or breath, slurred speech, loss of appetite, nausea, a drunk or disorientated appearance, pain or stains on skin or clothing, inattentiveness, and lack of coordination. Chemical-soaked rags or empty spray paint or other solvent containers may be found. Inhalants are substances that are easily purchased and are inexpensive, making them attractive to curious teens.

Check out this YouTube clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v+G3qUhEgsjsg>

(downloaded from [Medicinenet.com](http://www.Medicinenet.com))

Measles Outbreaks

All schools have been asked by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education to publish the following information for parents/caregivers:

26 February 2014

To all **school principals**

We understand that this is a busy time of year for schools. We appreciate your support in helping to inform your staff, parents and caregivers about measles, and the steps they can take to protect themselves, their children and their community from this preventable disease.

Between late December 2013 and 24 February 2014, there have been 47 confirmed measles cases reported in New Zealand: 29 in Auckland, 15 in Bay of Plenty / Lakes, and three in Wellington. Some of these cases have been in pre-school aged children. A total of eight cases have required hospitalisation to date. Most cases have occurred in unimmunised people, and immunisation remains the best way to prevent infection and spread within the community.

There are ongoing measles outbreaks in places like the Philippines, Australia, Europe, UK, Africa, Asia, India and North America. So international students, families travelling to these areas over the holidays, or with visitors from these countries should be aware of the symptoms.

Measles symptoms:

Measles is a highly infectious disease that affects both adults and children. Measles is more serious than many people realise. Symptoms include fever, cough, red eyes and a runny nose, followed by a rash which tends to start on the face, before moving over the head and down the body. The rash develops about 3 days after the other symptoms start. Complications can include middle ear infections, pneumonia, and, more rarely, encephalitis or brain inflammation.

The best protection against measles is the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine which is free for all children. MMR vaccinations are scheduled at 15 months and 4 years. MMR vaccination is also free for susceptible adults born after 1 January 1969 who have not received two doses of a measles containing vaccine.

What schools can do:

Prevent measles from spreading by:

- Telling staff, parents and caregivers** about the current measles cases.
- Asking staff, parents and caregivers to make sure that their immunisations and their children's immunisations are up-to-date.** Anyone born after 1 January 1969 should ensure they are fully immunised against measles. If they are unsure, they can check with their family doctor.
Pregnant women can't be vaccinated against measles while they are pregnant and are at greater risk of measles complications if they get sick.
People who are in close contact with pregnant women, or those with reduced immunity (such as people receiving chemotherapy) can help protect them by being immunised against measles.
- Updating your immunisation register.** All primary schools must keep an immunisation register under the Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995. This means you can quickly identify unimmunised children who have been in contact with someone with measles and help reduce the risk of measles spreading.

Measles at your school:

Separate unwell children

If a child becomes unwell with possible measles, separate any unwell child from other children while waiting to be taken home. This helps minimise the risk of measles spreading.

People with measles must stay home

Students and teachers with measles are infectious from 5 days before to 5 days after the onset of rash and must stay away from school and follow the advice of the local medical officer of health. Those students that have not been fully immunised (two doses of MMR) or those with no immunity to measles, who have been in close contact with a measles case during the infectious stages must stay away from school for 14 days from their last contact. It is recommended that teachers should also follow this practice. These requirements are under the Health (Infectious and Notifiable Diseases) Regulations 1966 (Regulation 14). These exclusions also apply to staff and students taking part in interschool sporting and other events.

More information:

For further health information on measles and measles immunisation please visit the Ministry of Health website <http://www.moh.govt.nz/measles> or the Immunisation Advisory Centre website <http://www.immune.org.nz>. You can also call the Immunisation Advisory Centre toll-free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) for advice.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues in this letter, please contact your local public health service. You can find more information at <http://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units/public-health-unit-contacts>

Thank you again for your support in helping to inform your staff and your community about measles and its prevention.

Yours sincerely

Dr Darren Hunt

Director of Public Health – Ministry of Health

