



Mr E A Benton
Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Parents, Guardians and Caregivers
Tena Koutou Katoa

Senior Prize Giving Speech

Here is an excerpt from my address to Senior Prize Giving which may be of interest to you.

"2011 has been a different year in the life of schools throughout New Zealand. It has been the year in which we hosted the Rugby World Cup and shifted school term dates forward by two weeks. This seemingly small change made a huge difference to our school year. It meant that teaching and assessment programmes had to largely be complete by the end of Term 3. It has also meant a very short Term 4, especially for senior students. The RWC has also been a major distraction for us all and while our nail-biting victory has undoubtedly been very satisfying and the whole event, great for the country, it has been more stressful in schools and we are nervous about the extent to which senior students have been side tracked from the important business before them.

Every year has its highlights and here are a few from 2011. In January we digested the 2010 NCEA results and found that our pass rates were ahead of our decile at Levels 2 and 3; and for UE, that our Level 1 endorsements were above decile and our Level 1 pass rate was the best for five years! A very pleasing set of results but there is always room for improvement. We are working very hard to support our Maori and Pasifika students to improved outcomes and to support our top students to gain more Excellence and Merit endorsements. In January, Head Boy, Simon Thomas, earned himself the opportunity to travel to London in July to attend an International Science Forum. Simon was one of two chosen from 160 of New Zealand's best and brightest who attended the National Science Forum hosted by AUT and Auckland University. Since then we've had Pita Rona being selected for and touring the USA with our senior Black Sox softballers, making the same team that his father has long been a member of. Our U-15 Boys Basketball team became Auckland Regional Champions and our Girls' 1st X1 Hockey team won the North Harbour Senior A title for the second time in a row with our stand out player Kate Southee being part of the national champion North Harbour Womens' B Hockey team. Netball and rugby enjoyed greater playing numbers than in previous years with rugby having the most North Harbour representatives for a long time, especially U-15s. Our dancers once again showed their class in winning the Auckland Secondary Schools Bollywood Competition on all counts, people's choice and judges' choice. They were then chosen to perform at two RWC related events and for Christmas in the Park 2011. We enjoyed an excellent dance concert late last term and music concert two nights ago. Kapahaka opened the year with the annual rush to get a performance ready for Festival and our International Week highlighted our diversity with performances and food. Mrs Jones-Major and willing students once again became coaches and tutors of local primary school children in after-school activities. We might be small but we can certainly punch above our weight. I want to thank the staff, parents, community volunteers and students who became coaches, managers, tutors, players and taxi drivers in order to enable all our extra-curricular programmes to operate. Busy, involved teenagers are healthy and successful ones.

I want to return briefly to a matter that Mr Dunning raised last year and that is, the reputation of our school, its place in our community and your role in promoting it. I am aware that more secondary school age students leave this area each day to go elsewhere to school than actually come here and while I respect the right of parents to send their child to any school of their choice, I do question the way in which some make those choices. In the five years that I have been here, our enrolment material has always included an open invitation for prospective parents to come and have a look around for themselves on any working school day of their choice. No one has ever taken up that offer. I suspect that often decisions about secondary school are based on old gossip, past reputation or what friends are doing. There are those in our community who think that they must ship their children out to school elsewhere because it must be better and they couldn't bear their youngster to mix with the local troubled youth for any longer. The truth is that our students are overwhelmingly pleasant, well adjusted young people wanting to get the most out of life. The few challenging ones that join us either settle and flourish here or unfortunately are moved on. I'm biased you see, because I believe that we have an excellent small secondary school here. We have a school where students will do as well if not better academically than they would anywhere else. In addition, we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities for students to do, from which no one will be turned away. We are ethnically diverse, cater for both genders and have a deep sense of respect underpinning all that we do. Our students work side by side amazingly well day in day out. We have clear expectations about achievement and behaviour and provided students accept these, they will flourish here. I believe that the very best political and business leaders come from an environment like ours where they learn to mix with a cross-section of society, where they learn that many others may not be as fortunate as they are. They grow up with an empathy for humanity that will lead them to make the very best decisions and lead to the sort of inclusive society that I would like to see, not one where various ethnic and socio-economic groups live in separate communities and clear divisions exist. Schools which are much more mono-socioeconomic and mono-cultural cannot provide that. Our job here is to ensure that all our students can flourish and while we take no nonsense, if students meet our expectations, we will fight for them every inch of the way. I would like to see more local students attend Glenfield College. As members of this community and hopefully as believers, you can help by ensuring that the message over the back fence or in the supermarket is positive for us."

Teacher Only Day 23rd November

The second such day that the Minister allowed for staff to work on changes to Level 2 NCEA takes place on Wednesday, 23rd November. This is the day before Junior Exams commence, so all Year 9 and Year 10 students should be at home studying.

Junior Exams

These run from Thursday 24th November until Tuesday 29th November inclusive. While all students should have exams on the Thursday and Friday, fewer will have exams on the Monday and Tuesday due to subject choice in option subjects.

It is important that all students take these exams seriously as they are excellent preparation for NCEA over the years ahead. Year 10 students should be striving to gain the very best grades to boost their graduation points.

Year 10 Activities

Over the days Tuesday 6th December to Thursday 8th December, Year 10 students will have a choice of activities to do, some of which carry a cost. The details will be sent home soon. Year 9 students will be involved in a special cross-curricular programme.

Junior Prize Giving

This takes place at **10:00am on Friday 9th December**. Students will be able to collect their reports from their tutor teacher and head home for the year immediately after the prize giving ceremony.

Database Update

Please inform the school if the contact details that we currently hold for you have changed in any way. We have accurate email addresses for about 60% of you only. Your child can hand in a note from you to the Student Centre, or you can send an email to reply@gc.ac.nz alternatively, please call the school office on 444-9066.

ABSENCES

Please contact the Student Centre on 444-9066 ext 813 or email the attendance administrator on absences@gc.ac.nz to report your child's absence.

Key Dates

November 23 rd	Teacher Only Day
November 24 th	Junior Exams begin
November 29 th	Junior Exams finish
November 30 th	NCEA Exams finish
December 1 st	Check-Out Day (Seniors)
December 6 th	Leavers' Dinner
December 9 th	- Junior Prize Giving - Last Day of Term 4
February 1 st	2012 Term 1 begins

DRIVING LESSONS

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Learner – Restricted – Full test training

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