



**NEW PLYMOUTH BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL**  
TE KURA TAMATĀNE O NGĀMOTU

### **Headmaster Speech July 25, 2016 - Family First**

Kia Ora Koutou

Welcome back to school. I am sure you have had a great break and are ready to commit yourself to Term 3, in terms of academic results. Time is precious. You can't afford to take your academic success lightly. Every credit counts.

Matthew Jones Year 9, is one of a small group of athletes selected to represent New Zealand in Sports Climbing at the World Youth Championship later this year in China.

Our 1st XI football team finished a creditable 4th in Super 8.

I would like to take the time to recognise some staff achievements.

Mr John Whittle is Assistant Coach of the New Zealand Secondary School Football Team, Mr David Bublitz is Assistant Coach of the NZ U16 Basketball Team, Mr Sam Moore is assistant coach of the NZSS Barbarians Rugby team. Mr Bevan Matene is an Assistant Coach of the NZ Junior Black Sox. Mr David Stones is the NZ Black Stix Manager. Ms Suzanne Scott has been appointed manager of the NZ Olympiad in Informatics team representing NZ in the International Olympiad in Informatics contest in Russia.

Over the holidays I am sure you managed to spend some time with family and friends. At least I hope you did.

Teenage years can be challenging times for families. You are discovering your independence, sometimes testing boundaries and no doubt family members patience.

The people that care about you also find it really hard to give you all the freedom you want, they try to acknowledge you are on the way to becoming a man, but at the same time have this instinct, this drive to protect you, give you advice and guide you.

Many of you won't understand or acknowledge this fact until some years after leaving school but your brains are not developed yet. Hard to believe I know.. you are a teenager you know it all, you have all the answers already... Why can't adults just see and acknowledge that.. ?

Think of your brain at the moment like a roadworks, visualise a big sign that reads 'under construction'. Road work are 'literally going on' as I speak. Some students I meet seem to have more significant works than others... But your brain is being built and shaped right now. No wonder it's bumpy, no wonder it's slow, then fast and can be unpredictable. But rest assured the road works will get finished and things will flatten out in good time. I know what you are thinking. You know this already.

Your brain right now, at this very moment, might be processing emotion like anger at a family member from an event today or last week, it might be processing disappointment, excitement about a risk you want to take, boredom from this assembly, anxiety over an assessment coming up, feelings about a girl you recently met or you simply are thinking about nothing. Thinking about nothing is not unique to teenagers though. Men think about nothing regularly. I know when wives or girlfriends ask their partners what their partner is thinking. Nothing is an acceptable and very real answer. Men can and do think about nothing regularly. But you know this as well.

While every person's family circumstances in this hall will be slightly different you all have people who care about you.

They care enough about you to make sure you are getting a good education, they care enough about you to ensure you are here, not all boys and young men are so lucky. Not all boys have shelter, have food and water. You are ahead of the game already and you have people to thank for that.

I want you to think about a parent/caregiver or mentor and think of something nice they have done for you recently.

Staff you need to do this as well. Sometime today I want you to text them or even better still tell them in person how important they are to you. Tell them how much their help and support has helped you.

Thanking your family, appreciating your family/supporters is something you should do every day.

You should never be embarrassed to give them a hug, tell them you love them. Spend time with them. Walk with them, talk with them. Boys and men sometimes find it hard to

show emotion. Love your family/caregivers and mentors every day. You will never regret loving them. You will never regret appreciating them. The same cannot be said for the reverse. Avoid the regret and guilt of not showing your care and affection.

Next time you're 'under construction' brain is letting you down, next time you feel yourself thinking the rest of the world doesn't understand you, or that you have all the answers, they don't, you are right, they are wrong. They don't understand you. Well again, you are right.

They don't understand because it's impossible and far too complex to understand most of you... the construction going on can be so major, so big and it has no plan, no logic, no reason... The only thing adults, and you know, is that the construction will be finished in a few years.

Teachers, mentors, family and caregivers, 99% of the time, are doing things that really annoy you because they care for you, are doing things because they love you, are doing things to help you. You must remember that.

Love your family/caregivers and supporters. More importantly be brave and show them that love in return.

Appreciate those who care about you. Don't fight everything. Defying your teachers, answering back, being sarcastic or argumentative to them, parents and caregivers is not acceptable. Take on board their feedback, try to listen to their wisdom. Give back to those who really do care about you.

Take the time to appreciate them.

The good thing about all this is that you know this already.

School Stand.

