



## Special Newsletter Monday 18th March, Term One, 2019

Kia ora Koutou / As-salamu alaikum / Warm greetings to you all



When speaking with young people I often refer to superheroes in an attempt to provide a context they can relate to as well as to try and let them know that all of us are superheroes in our own way. My favourite superhero is Superman. This is mostly because, on his planet, the symbol we see as an "S" is actually the symbol for hope.

I often talk about the fact that if I could choose one single superpower it would be the power to make other people kind. It is alarmingly powerful to consider that if every single person showed kindness through their words and actions, then we would not need Superheroes at all. In fact, we wouldn't need prisons, police, or soldiers. Of course, it is incredibly naive to think that we can MAKE other people be kind. The only person we can have that sort of control over is ourselves. And in doing so, we become the superheroes that are so desperately needed in society today.

*We can be the difference and we can make a positive impact on those around us.*

Our RISE values are designed as tools to help us explore issues, problems and challenges and build up the skills needed to be kind to ourselves and others. As an Intermediate School, we are well aware that many of the ideas and concepts our students have of the world around them are already well formed by the time they reach us. We see it as our job to challenge these ideas, and our students, through the perspective of our RISE values and our "High Expectations for All". We don't teach our students how to swear for example. They already know how to do this. We try to teach them control, selectivity, and concepts like Integrity and Mana. We don't teach bullying, racism, intolerance, violence, discrimination yet we deal with this on a regular basis. The role of our school is focussed as much on ensuring our students have control of their words and actions as it is on providing quality academic, artistic, and holistic programmes if we are to support them to become positive, responsible citizens. Achievement and success must be wrapped around the whole person and this is what our Sense of Self concept aims to address. As you know, every two weeks we have a new specific RISE challenge which we try to keep as relevant as possible for our students. This week's challenge couldn't be more relevant or important in my opinion. Please work with us on this, reinforce it at home, discuss it, model it and **expect** it from your children.

**RISE TO THE CHALLENGE**  
*Ara mai ki te wero*

**Current Challenge:**  
**Be Kind.**  
**Use kind words**  
**and kind actions to everyone**

*Week 7 and 8 2019*

**RISE Value Focus:** Empathy, Sense of Self, Integrity  
**Key Competency Focus:** Participating and Contributing, Relating to Others  
**Cultural Competency Focus:** Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga  
**5 Steps to Wellbeing:** Connect, Give, Take Notice, Keep Learning

The events of last Friday have shocked us all and changed how New Zealand is seen by many, both nationally and globally. Events like this are the last thing we want for our students and our community, or any community. Seeing the flowers outside our school gates at the Community House was incredibly challenging, moving and put this not only into a national context but a local context as well. This is our community. These are our people. This is us. We are a diverse community and this is to be celebrated and embraced.



**This Friday**, we will be having a mufti day and encourage our students to come to school and express their uniqueness, their freedom, their Sense of Self. One syndicate will unfortunately be on camp but we feel that we need to do this as soon as possible. We understand that many of you would have given donations already and we thank you for this. This mufti day does not have a cost. It is about celebrating diversity, tolerance and standing together. However, if you want to donate any money we will collect this over the week and get this to our *local* Muslim community on behalf of Fergusson Intermediate.

I will also be contacting a spokesperson for this community to see how we, as a school, can support and help out in anyway.

If any of you need support, help or someone to talk to please come and see us. Our door is always open. If your child / children need support we have the Ministry of Education trauma team and other agencies available. Please let us know how we can help.

My absolute heartfelt sympathy goes out to each and every person affected by this tragedy. We absolutely stand beside you all.

**Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa.**

Let us keep close together, not wide apart.

Simon Kenny  
Principal  
Fergusson Intermediate School