

Mr Cochrane gives an inside of how the new school year is going for 2021

Tuesday, 23rd February 2021, By Erika and Izzy

Alistair Cochrane the Waihi College principal shared his thoughts on how the new school year is going with new changes and future projects for Waihi College. Due to the shock Covid-19 gave to Waihi College, everyone was a little nervous starting into the new school year but the impression Mr Cochrane gave so far is that the year is going very well!

This year, many new things were added into the school and one new change were the new Senior hubs classes for Year 12's and 13's. He describes it as a way for "students who are looking to get out into the workforce to work much more closely with the skills that they need".

Mr Cochrane also introduced the new free food in schools program that is starting next term. Where "every child will get a free lunch". He seems very excited to get started with the program. With the surprise of Covid-19 it was hard to see beloved teachers let go and even harder for Mr Cochrane. "It's never a nice thing to do", he said. But with a lot of organisation, the school is running happily with a couple of new teachers to the Waihi College family. Such as the new music teacher Mr Randell and the new art teacher Ms Paterson. With fewer teachers around Mr Cochrane also has a class this year saying "This is the first time I've had a class in fifteen years". He is now running a building class and wishes to upgrade the staff outdoor area.

The next question we had for him was about how the new vertical Ako classes were introduced into the school, as it was a big change that many students didn't like. Mr Cochrane said it is too early to tell how the ako classes are going, but the feedback he is getting is quite positive although "It seems that everyone seems to be really quiet." With not many people talking to each other yet, he hopes that students are able to get to know each other as time goes on. For seniors to be "big brothers, big sisters for the younger ones".

We also asked him about new and upcoming projects for the future of the school. At the moment he is more focused on the state of the toilets as some people "have created an environment that is stopping people from using them". He also mentioned that the toilets might be fully redeveloped into unisex bathrooms.

Looking more into the future, he also discussed the idea of getting rid of D-block. Mr Cochrane said "it's exciting to get rid of those horrible little rooms." He also commented about wanting to remodel the library and make it more of an open space so people are able to access it easier.

With an end to a contract the new uniforms have been seen all around school. Mr Cochrane hopes that they are an improvement to the last uniform as he has seen the complaints about the warmth and comfort of the old uniform. With the success of the new jerseys we asked if there were any more additions to the uniform and he suggested "an ankle-length skirt?" We both strongly disagreed with that idea! Mr Cochrane added if anyone has any ideas regarding the uniform "feel free to come and tell us about those".

Overall Mr Cochrane says "I'm just really impressed with how the school year has started". We are there for the students and we hope the rest of the year goes well.

