



PAPAKOWHAI SCHOOL ENROLMENT SCHEME PROPOSAL TO AMEND HOME ZONE

19 August 2020

Dear Parents/Caregivers

On 21 July 2020 we advised you of a proposal to amend the Papakowhai School home zone. In light of the feedback and also new information we've received since then, the Board has decided not to continue with the current enrolment zone review. Therefore, the current enrolment scheme will remain in place for the 2021 school year.

Background

Papakowhai School has seen considerable roll growth over the past few years. Amending the school enrolment zone in 2018 did not have the desired effect of stabilising student numbers. In February 2020 the Board undertook to look at the current enrolment zone with a view to making further amendments. This action was taken due to the continued roll growth and the pressure it is putting on school infrastructure. We wanted to start the process as early as possible to allow for a robust consultation period and for affected families to have plenty of time to find alternative schooling.

The process was halted in March 2020 due to Covid-19 as it would have been impossible to ensure full community consultation under lockdown provisions.

Once students returned to school the process recommenced and on 21 July 2020 we advised you of the proposal to amend the home zone for Papakowhai School.

The amendment proposed excluding the following streets that are also zoned for Paremata School (PS) and Rangikura School (RS):

- Brora Crescent, numbers 1-9 and 2-24 inclusive (PS)
- Forth place (PS)
- Doon Grove (PS)
- Ettrick Grove (PS)
- Lauderdale Road (PS)
- Livet Place (PS)
- Whitford Brown (RS)
- Hollyford Place (RS)
- The Fjord (RS)
- Kepler Way (RS)
- Howden Place (RS)

In developing the proposed zone, the Board considered Paremata School and Rangikura School's capacity to absorb any potential roll growth. As a member of the Northern Porirua Kahui Ako it is important that we don't shift our roll constraints directly to another school. As the closest schools to Papakowhai they are more likely to be impacted by any changes we undertake. As part of the process we engaged with both of those schools, so they were aware of our proposal.

Community Feedback

We received a wide-ranging number of submissions to the proposal and have identified a number of common themes.

- **Existing Students**

Children already enrolled at Papakowhai School can remain at our school if your home is made out of zone as a result of any home zone amendment.

- **Aotea**

While Aotea is still growing, the new parts of the suburb are not zoned for Papakowhai School. Therefore, the current increase in roll cannot be directly attributed to the continued expansion of the suburb. Feedback raised safety concerns regarding walking to Rangikura School from the Fjord.

- **Papakowhai Streets**

The Board has a responsibility to ensure when rezoning that excluded streets have access to another school. The Papakowhai streets in the proposal are also zoned for Paremata School, which is within walking distance. The overwhelming feedback from submissions was that the close proximity to another school was not a mitigating factor for Papakowhai residents who considered the ability to attend Papakowhai School as an important part of the community.

New information

Since our previous communication to you, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has advised that from 1 January 2021 they will assume responsibility for all school enrolment zones. They have further advised that grandparenting clauses are likely to be included as a standard feature of any school enrolment zone amendment. This is where younger siblings of existing pupils who were made out of zone due to the re-zoning process would be treated as still being in-zone for the purposes of enrolment.

In recent years Papakowhai School new entrant numbers have been significant, while the number of Year 8's leaving school has been much lower, resulting in roll growth. Current indications are that 2021 new entrant numbers may be lower than previously expected, although this could change. Despite the potentially smaller new entrant numbers the school still requires 1-2 new classroom spaces for 2021 to accommodate overall student numbers.

The reintroduction of Level 2 Covid-19 alert and uncertainty on how long it may go on has also added to the pressure that families are under and potentially complicates the consultation process.

Next Steps

The proposal to amend the home zone was not taken lightly by the Board. We recognise the stress and uncertainty this process causes families. After considering the feedback and new information received it has become clear that the proposal in its current form, including a grandparenting clause, is not acceptable and will not achieve the desired roll reduction outcomes.

Given current conditions and uncertainty, the Board is reluctant to continue with the process. Therefore, the Board has decided that the current enrolment zone will remain in place for the 2021 school year.

However, roll growth remains a serious issue for Papakowhai School and it is highly possible that the home zone will be reviewed again next year. Any future process would be led by the MOE, but the Board would expect significant continued school and community involvement. In the meantime, the Board is working with the MOE to identify ways to accommodate immediate roll growth through further property infrastructure development. We will provide an update on this in subsequent communications.

Rodney Strong
Chair
Board of Trustees