



**Maungaraki School**  
Board of Trustees

## **School Closure – 15 August 2018**

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As you may have heard, primary school teachers and principals throughout New Zealand have voted to strike for the full day on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018**.

The Board of Trustees has carefully considered the options for Maungaraki School including the availability of teaching and other supervisory staff and has decided to **close the school** for the full day on the 15<sup>th</sup> August.

As the school will be closed, it's important that you make alternative arrangements for the care of your child/children on the day of the strike. We understand that the Maungaraki After-Hours Care may have limited places available - For more information see Julia and the team in the school hall either before or after school, or send them an email at [maungarakiASC@gmail.com](mailto:maungarakiASC@gmail.com).

### **Why is this action happening?**

As a Board of Trustees, we are parents too and we know that this type of action is disruptive and very inconvenient for parents. However, while we are hesitant to get involved in the politics of it, we do strongly support our teachers and the reasons they (as a group throughout New Zealand) have chosen to take this action.

In our view, this isn't about just trying to get more money.

From the Board's perspective, one of the key issues we face on a day-to-day basis is retention and recruitment of staff. There is currently a huge shortage of teachers and this is affecting our school directly. Maungaraki School is a very desirable school to teach at (being of a great size, great culture, great team, great kids, great performance and many other really positive characteristics) but even a school like ours is having serious issues with recruitment – there simply aren't enough teachers in the workforce.

This is demonstrated by the fact that the number of applicants for teaching roles we advertise has diminished significantly and steadily over the last 3-4 years. We will not compromise on the quality of our teachers and our last attempt at recruiting staff resulted in no appropriate candidates. This has gotten progressively worse; something needs to change or we are going to have really significant issues that will impact all of our kids' education.

Teacher shortages impact the stability of all schools and while our school's leadership team has ensured that the impact on our school has been minimised as much as possible to date,

shortages do result in additional pressure on all teachers in the profession. NZEI (the primary teacher's union) reports that the numbers leaving teaching for better pay and conditions elsewhere are increasing right when we need more teachers to be staying or entering.

As a Board we also have high visibility of the workload of our teachers, principal, and other staff at the school. Our staff are passionate about teaching and work incredibly hard to ensure our children have the best possible start and education. They work long hours and commit tremendous energy to the job. They are there for our children and deserve our support when they need it – which is now.

So yes, this strike is disruptive and very inconvenient for parents. But in our view it isn't just about pay (although it partly is and so it should be) – it's also about the significant teacher shortage, the pressure that puts on existing teachers, and the impact that has on their ability to teach our kids. And they are not just saying this – we see it too.

These are really important issues and we hope our community will support our teachers during this action.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Matthews". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" written in a larger, more distinct script than the last name "Matthews".

**Paul Matthews**

Chair, Maungaraki School Board of Trustees