

RAUMATI BEACH SCHOOL

August 2017

Dear Friends & Whanau,

SCHOOL ENTRY

You may be aware that the Education Act recently has been '*amended to enable schools to fully adopt cohort entry following consultation with their community. For schools which introduce cohort entry, new entrants can start school as part of a cohort at the beginning of the term closest to their fifth birthday rather than on their fifth birthday or soon afterwards.*'

Currently, most schools in New Zealand practise 'continuous entry', whereby a child enters school on the day they turn five. This has allowed for the classroom teacher to develop a personal relationship with the individual child and their whanau, and to integrate the child into the class based on their needs.

Over the past few weeks, Raumati Beach Kindergarten and Raumati Beach School have been discussing the issues around cohort entry, and reviewing the current school policy.

We believe that continuous entry is the best way to meet the diverse needs of the students in our community.

- Teachers from both the kindergarten and school are able to focus on the needs of individual children as they transition into school.
- Time can be given to developing relationships with individual families.
- Children are viewed independently – assessment, conversations and observations can all be targeted to identify their specific requirements.
- Children integrate naturally into their class group – the students already in class are able to help new children learn what it means to be a student at Raumati Beach School
- There is copious research that supports a later starting age for formal schooling. A cohort entry runs the risk of having students start school substantially younger than currently, and perhaps before they are ready.
- Cohort entry to school would mean that a large group of students would depart Kindergarten at the same time. This would undermine the supportive nature or the relationships between older and younger students.
- It would also mean that a correspondingly large group of children would begin kindergarten at the same time. Currently children begin kindergarten individually rather than in groups. This enables teachers to support children and their whānau to have a smooth transition into this new environment.

We are seeking feedback from our community about entry to school. Please email your thoughts to feedback@raumatibeach.school.nz (with School Entry in the subject line) or pop a letter/note into either the school or kindergarten by Monday 25 September 2017.

Nga mihi,

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