



NEW PLYMOUTH BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL
TE KURA TAMATĀNE O NGĀMOTU

Assembly
23 May 2016

Good afternoon School

As most of you will know we had the drug dogs through the school and the hostel recently. We will be continuing to do this regularly and we will be doing this randomly.

We request drug tests from students (with parental permission) whom we suspect are taking illegal substances.

I mentioned at the first assembly of the year that a sure way to jeopardise your place at NPBHS is to use drugs at school, be in possession of drugs and/or be under the influence of drugs at school or a school related activity.

I am pleased to say no one has tested that statement so far this year but I can tell you I and the Board of Trustees treat drug matters as one of, if not the most serious of offences at NPBHS.

We do this not only because it's illegal but we believe that drug use has a significant and a negative influence on your learning and on your ability to achieve your potential.

Today I want to talk to you about one of the many drugs available to you as a young person.

This drug is addictive. This drug is the most harmful one of all in our society today.

The proportion of New Zealanders aged 15 years or more who have tried this drug is 80%.

One in five (19%) New Zealanders aged 15 years or more who used this drug in the past year has a potentially hazardous pattern of using this drug.

Approximately one-third of all Police arrests involve this drug.

Half of serious violent crimes are related to this drug.

Over 300 offences are committed every day that relate to this drug.

This drug use is an important risk factor for more than 60 different health disorders.

Between 600 and 800 people in New Zealand have been estimated to die each year from this drug and related causes.

BE THE EXAMPLE



30-40 people die from an overdose of this drug every year. Most of those are teenagers.

This drug is legal for 18 years olds.

This drug is alcohol.

Unfortunately boys, New Zealand has an unhealthy culture around alcohol. We as an entire country are immature, irresponsible and weak when it comes to alcohol. And by we, I mean in general terms all of us. Adults included.

In fact I don't actually blame the youth of today for our poor alcohol culture. I blame your role models and adults before you. We have set the scene and tone for your habits and experimentation around alcohol.

We have a binge drinking culture around alcohol. I am disappointed when we see in the media sports stars going on drinking binges after winning championship trophies, we glorify that, we hear them say, looking forward to celebrating this win tonight, sculling out of trophies, popping champagne, being reprimanded for late night partying while on tours, breaking curfews to go drinking.

Celebrities appearing on talk shows intoxicated. Checking in and out of rehabilitation clinics. It's an accepted part of popular culture. We are led to believe fun = alcohol. Alcohol = fun. We sadly endorse those things even if we don't intend to. Even though we know it is so harmful.

Those who haven't drunk or never drink to excess. They are the real heroes of society, they are the tough ones. For as someone once told me - the strongest fish is the one who swims against the current.

It took us many decades as a country to understand the pitfalls and risks associated with smoking yet we still don't seem to appreciate that alcohol is so much worse and a far greater danger to society than smoking has ever been.

Some of the more immature of you, who maybe experimenting with alcohol now will be sniggering under your breath, thinking what does he know, what we do is fun, he is old out of touch, everyone is doing it, YOLO, maybe even thinking CSB.

Well this is a cool story bro's and you need to pay attention because I can tell you any person who drinks to loss of control, any person who has used alcohol irresponsibly will also usually likely connect those moments later in life to

- the times they were the most disappointed with themselves
- the times they were the most embarrassed
- the times they lost control of their actions or emotions
- the times they were most ashamed of their conduct
- the times they may have ruined a friendship, a relationship or even a career
- the times their health was compromised

Abuse of alcohol is linked to all of those events. No one is immune.

Some of you in this hall thankfully will not have tried alcohol yet, however I am sure in this hall, unfortunately, some of you may already be building up some of these negative experiences.

BE THE EXAMPLE



This makes me sad, this makes me disappointed, at the poor example society before you has set.

The hardest thing for us is to break the cycle, the hard thing for us is to influence that cycle.

Please learn from our mistakes and be better than society was before you.

Live your life to the fullest, live your life to its potential, live your life in full control of your senses and actions.

Live the life as who you are, not as what you become after partaking in alcohol.

This speech is not about a boring old Headmaster trying to ruin your fun. I may be boring and old but my motivation is genuine care for your well-being and a genuine wish for you to start to turn the tables on the most harmful drug society has ever seen.

Remember all those statistics I quoted at the beginning of this assembly speech.

Remember 30-40 people die every year due to alcohol intoxication. Most of those teenagers.

I have two young sons. I sincerely hope I can teach them the dangers of alcohol, I hope I can help them have fun without alcohol.

I hope I can do my part in reversing the cycle for my immediate family and the wider NPBHS family.

I really hope some of you can reflect on the immense pressure around you, reflect on society and make a positive change and start to change the cycle of our irresponsible alcohol cycle.

Our irresponsible drinking culture.

