

Hewett House Newsletter

7th May 2010

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

As I have mentioned many times, I have been looking very carefully at the way we utilize the Hostel minivan. After very careful consideration I believe that it is currently stretching our resources in the Hostel. By this, I refer to staffing. Mrs McKenzie comes on duty at 3.00pm and she basically 'hits the ground running' to deliver girls to a number of activities around the Napier area and beyond, oftentimes till after 9.00pm. Whilst we really want to encourage and support our Hostel girls in their activities, there is a limit to what we can feasibly provide. I believe that it is vital to the smooth running of the Hostel and for our girl's welfare, to have a minimum of two supervisors on active duty each evening. For this to happen, Mrs McKenzie needs to be back in the Hostel by 8.00pm at the latest. Most girls will not be affected by this; however there are a few girls who have outside commitments after 8.00pm.

I have given this a great deal of thought. To employ another staff member to drive the van would obviously have a financial impact and this would have to be reflected in Hostel fees. Taxis are the obvious solution but I do sympathize with families, as this can add up and be costly. I have met with the owners of 'Driving Miss Daisy', who can provide a service for us at a competitive rate but there are two issues. The first is that they require bookings the day prior (relatively easy to resolve) and secondly they do not have a people mover, so therefore can only carry 3 passengers at a time. They are prepared to drive our school van, and they do have a driver with the necessary P endorsement, however it would have to operate on a user pay system. They also have other clients so may not necessarily be available for us on all occasions.

Another option is shared rides; Hostel girls who are in school teams must have other team members from the school. Is it possible to organize car pooling with local families?

For those families who will be affected by this change, I would really love to hear your feedback. We will continue with the status quo over the following week, but will have to make the change in the very near future.

Last week I mentioned the Hostel Parent's dinner. After lots of constructive feedback it has been decided that this date will not work, for very obvious reasons actually! We are now planning the dinner for Term 3 to coincide with a Hostel social. I will keep you posted.

Earlier this year we invested in some leather couches for our recreation room. They do look really great and are also very practical; however, the girls and I feel that our "rec room" does not reflect the fact that it is their space. We don't want to busy it up with posters and tatty accessories but we all agree that we need more colour. One solution that the girls came up with is to cover our many throw cushions (which are now all covered in an 80's pink). Mrs Wilson in the laundry has been busy washing all the cushions and Mrs Clark and Mrs Whare are standing by, ready to sew some new covers. Now all we need is fabric. Does anyone have any remnants of fabric that would be suitable, they would like donate to the hostel? We would only need a metre or so. I have purchased some lovely fabric to get the project started but we have so many cushions I can see that it is going to be an expensive exercise. Any donations would be greatly appreciated! (Anything bright and hard wearing)

Winter Sport is keeping many of our girls very busy and as always the Hostel is a hectic place. I have been over at school a lot this week interviewing girls for Year 9 next year. It has been a pleasure talking with the girls and their families about their goals for the future, their expectations of NGHS, and our expectations of them. I truly believe that Hewett house is a great place to be and they have every reason to be excited about next year.

I hope you all have a wonderful weekend.

Kind regards

Lianne Parkinson