



Wanganui
City College

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Customer:

Wanganui City College has a rich Maori culture, music and sports emphasis.

Need:

To increase the efficiency of communication with parents.

Solution:

Instant, convenient communication between the school and parents integrated with KAMAR student management system.

Outcome:

Immediate communication that parents can relate to.

School-links and KAMAR integrated communication a winner for school and parents.

Customer:

Wanganui City College has a history which dates back to 1911. The school encompasses a rich Maori identity which is expressed through a strong involvement in Kapa-haka (Maori performing arts), and integrating Maori language and culture into everyday activities. They even have a purpose-built whare, (traditional Maori meeting house), with intricate carvings, which has been designed to represent all of the cultures within the school community. Sport and music activities are also very popular amongst the students of Wanganui City College.

Need: To increase the efficiency of communication with parents. Technology upgrade needed for quicker communications.

Like many secondary schools Wanganui City College used to distribute notices via printed newsletters the children were responsible for delivering to their parents, mailing out information and posting it on their website. These methods were slow and often unreliable. They also lacked the involvement of technology such as texting that their parents were accustomed to using.

When a student was marked as absent from school, making an enquiry phone call to their parents, found through their student management system KAMAR, wasn't always straightforward. Deputy Principal Doug Ewing says "When we phoned we weren't always getting in touch." This was not only a problem regarding the child's safety but was also time-consuming and frustrating for the office staff making the calls.

The school was in need of a new, quicker way to easily communicate with parents.



Solution: School-links text messaging API for KAMAR enabling fast, convenient communications between the school and its parents

Doug was introduced to the School-links software at a KAMAR conference. It was the solution to his communication difficulties with the added bonus of integrating into KAMAR. Doug says “School-links marries in nicely with KAMAR.”

The staff at Wanganui City College has found that with School-links it is extremely easy to manage issues that usually took a lot of time and effort.

Doug says “The number one benefit to using School-links is the immediacy and the convenience of contacting parents for attendance matters. Rather than calling parents when a child is absent, secretarial staff send a text to parents about the issues. Email is a bit beyond where our parents are at as they’re mostly connected to texting on their cell phones – so texting is the most effective way to get a hold of them,” says Doug.

Organising parent-teacher interviews used to be a nightmare for teachers, parents and support staff to set up and schedule. They are now much easier to set up through the new ‘Parent Interviews’ online booking system that School-links had partnered with. “It’s accessed using a simple code providing quicker and immediate online access to their interview bookings 24/7,” says Doug.

Since the implementation of the School-links KAMAR API, meetings, student issues and other events are now communicated via text messages sent by the teachers or administration staff. Doug explains, “For example, if a teacher of social studies wants to send a text to the parents about a student not doing their homework, they can go into KAMAR and send a text saying ‘Johnny hasn’t done his homework today’.” This type of notification usually would have been sent via Johnny taking a paper note home to his parents – which he may not have chosen to deliver. The School-links texting system integrated with KAMAR allows parents to be more involved in the school life of their child.

Outcome:

Doug has found one of the best outcomes of School-links is the freedom of when, where and how they can communicate with parents. “For the last set of report meetings I sat down on a Saturday morning and sent out one bulk text to all the parents I wanted to see and within a few minutes I had 10 parents who had replied to me,” says the Deputy Principal.

School-links’ seamless integration with KAMAR has resulted in exceptional time efficiency for administration staff. “With this system we can deliver a text message to our whole school in about 5-10 minutes. One secretary can organise to send texts out about an incident, event, cancellation or to all the parents whose children aren’t in school. It saves lots of time,” says Doug.

Easier distribution, quick message delivery via School-links has created a stress-free way for Wanganui City College to communicate with its students’ parents.

“School-links API marries in nicely with KAMAR”.

Doug Ewing

Deputy Principal of Wanganui City College.

About School-links

School-links is a New Zealand-owned and education focused software product that provides affordable communication tools for education providers, from early childhood centres through to tertiary institutions. We are recognised by the Ministry of Education as an official provider for early notification services, and integrate with the mainstream student management systems. We offer extensive training and local helpdesk support.