**Emailed Updates on the Development of MHAC (Online+)**

**Update 13**

I continue to appreciate meeting many of you online and some in person. I am also loving meeting your very cool children.

**1.** I have the privilege of doing some work with the **leadership/teaching staff** (not that they need me much) and am very excited about what they will bring together.

**Dates:**

**- February 3/4:** First Days. Focus on getting to know all, establishing our school as a community, organising groups/classes introducing staff, eradicating early glitches. Some of this will look different for the Year 11-13s. (More details early next week for all).

**- February 8:** Full-on.

**2.** **Enrolments and Inquiries** continue to flow in. A number of you have said you are waiting for things like photos, reports, etc. If you have an application ready except a few bits like that please send it in anyway (and follow-up with those things later). Just helps with our planning. When you send an application in we will respond with an acceptance and enroll your child that day. Remember;

- you don't to notify your previous school (it is done automatically)

- you do not need a Ministry home-schooling exemption for either of our provision models.

**3.** As an educator I apologise to families out there re the heavy handed declarations of the Ministry of Education. Their senior officials have simply lost touch with reality on the ground: <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-outbreak-education-officials-warn-mask-exemptions-being-abused-by-parents/P4U7SDH7U7CIISRLDVTIF25TUI/>

**4. On Monday morning (31/22) I am on Radio NZ with Suzie Ferguson and Corin Dan**.  
  
**5.** I published a Substack today "

# Pandemic through the eyes of children … what their adults can do.

<https://alwynpoole.substack.com/p/lockdown-through-the-eyes-of-children>

(remember subscription is free).

**6.** Please keep spreading the word across Middle-Earth

**Update 12**

**What our Parent Lead Families Receive**

Comprehensive Project Documents

Subject Unit plans

The day structure that you think is best

A weekly group meet with one or more of our staff

A high-quality information and activity portal

Ongoing advice

The Opportunities for group meet-ups and camps

**Update 11**

Please share through your networks.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/300503007/covid19-omicron-fears-boost-new-online-school-roll-attracts-200-teacher-applicants>

**Update 10**

The ongoing interest is so very positive and **MASSIVE**.

We begin on February 3rd and as a staff already have a great deal in place and are planning full-on. All very exciting.

There are a few great items of media for MHAC coming out in the next few days - and please keep spreading the word.

While things like this ....

• Primary and secondary school students, Year four and up, were already required to wear a mask. For consistency, these students would now need to wear a mask on Ministry of Education-funded school transport services and public transport. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-changes-announced-to-mask-rules/U3YBDUWVJ7O26JOUBTW4BOCA44/>

.... are of high concern - please keep in mind that the primary reason for doing what we are doing is that we will provide an outstanding allround education experience. Between us we will make 2022 a good year for your child(ren).

Tomorrow I am off-line most of the day but please keep the enrolments and inquiries coming in - I will get to them tomorrow evening.

**Update 9**

For us things are moving very positively, We have more staff announcements in the coming week.

**1.** Our **Trust Board** is superb: <https://www.mthobson.school.nz/trust-board> As well as her role on the Trust Board Karen Poole is the CEO of the Trust and works on all things financial and administrative. She is amazing at her job - NZ's best education administrator and does consult into other schools.

**2. Concerns re Omicon**. Clearly there are some unknowns ahead re the virus and how the government will respond. Please keep in mind that one of the reasons we launched this long-term plan when we did was to give students and families a very predictable and high quality option in 2022 (etc). **We begin on February 3 and will be superbly prepared with some of the very best teachers/leaders in the country.**

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/127553930/what-being-prepared-for-omicron-means-for-your-family-at-home-and-school>

We will not have "a year of disruption" and as well as providing great academics our people will provide a lot of care for you and your family.

<https://theconversation.com/schools-can-expect-a-year-of-disruption-here-are-7-ways-they-can-help-support-the-well-being-of-students-and-staff-174886?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR1b90un1qX4A2LB3553k9ly4cWeNlvApHsSghA4ggKB9qe3IlJCWk6pqLQ#Echobox=1642661576>

**3.** I have another **Substack** piece here: <https://alwynpoole.substack.com/publish/post/47514439> Remember subsription is free and it is a good way to share perspectives.

Thank you for all of the enrolments and contacts so far. We have enrolments coming in from as far away as Australia and Europe and from right across NZ.

For myself and the team this is a very exciting project.

**Update 8**

**Hello People**

**Our Reasons for MHAC**

**1.** This has been a long term plan to provide better education provision to families throughout NZ. I have been teaching since 1991 and also do considerable annual research of the outcomes of schools' leavers and that state of our system. Education in NZ has never been in a worse place. We are the last English speaking country for Math, Literacy and Science. Our politicians are indifferent and the Ministry ineffective (at best).

The quality of our schools in Auckland is simply undoubted. MHAC will be a part of positive, long-term, systemic change.

**2.** The last two years have been very disruptive for many students and their families. Despite some positive trends in other parts of the world 2022 in NZ looks completely unpredictable (e.g. the media on it has already started: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/127503746/educators-should-be-urgently-planning-for-safe-return-to-schools-and-closures-a-last-resort-expert-says>). For 2022 we will provide a stable, predictable and high-quality option.

**Key Features**

**1.** A high quality background and support team. I am pretty good at what I do but you can add to that the administration excellence of Karen Poole and her team, the qualities of the staff already working at the Mt Hobson Academy (under Dr Bruce Knox), and the experience we can draw upon across our three established schools.

**2.** An incredible team of lead teachers already recruited and soon to be announced. I am in awe of their qualities. The supporting provision teams for Well-Being and Arts/Language/Movement will also be of the highest quality.

**3.** Our education model is deeply researched and significant external research has endorsed it.

**Day-to-day for our full provision.**

**Year 1 - 4:** A varied and productive day for children with a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, arts and movement. Programmes will be significantly indivdualised and strong interaction between teachers and parents.

**Year 5 - 6:** An academic morning that is more home-room teacher based than Year 7 - 10. Brand five-weekly new projects are being written at this level by myself and someone whose creativity exceeds mine like the sun shines brighter than the moon. Very exciting. The afternoon will be activity based around Arts, Music, Languages, Movement, Community Learning and Community Service.

**Years 7 - 10:** The academic morning will be8:30. - 12:50 (with breaks). During that time she would have an hour for independent/project work and three direct instruction classes out of English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, Technology. The classes will be varied with plenty of student interaction and a very good mix of activities. We are contracting a brilliant group of staff and this will be delivered by subject specialists.

The Arts & Activities afternoon (1:30 - 3pm) will be:

- Music  
- Art  
- Health & PE

- Community Learning

- Community Service

This mirrors our in-person schools at that level and we have been delivering this programme superbly through the lockdowns.

**Years 11 - 13**

Students at this level work through a full provision NCEA Level 1 - 3 programme. They do so with the full support of Dr Knox and his in person team at the Mt Hobson Academy on Queen St. We also are appointing very high quality online staff.

**For our 2nd option - the parents overseeing daily teaching and learning with our resources.** Initially I will be the main point of contact. For parents of Year 1 - 10 students who have the time and skill set this can be a very good option (I would not recommend it at Year 11 - 13). The students will be enrolled with MHAC. One important aspect to note is that we need to monitor and evaluate curriculum delivery to meet our Ministry obligations as a fully registered Private school.

My recommendation would be that a similar day structure would be followed.

We have exponentially growing interest at present and plenty of interesting announcements coming up. Please keep sharing these options.

**Update 7**

A few quick things first.

**1.** We are locked and loaded to begin on February 3rd and in full blown planning mode. There is no prospective disruption for us from any change in response the government chooses to put in place for Covid. You can plan for us to deliver a full and high-quality school year for your children.

**2.** This is a very high-quality book for understanding the human brain and has influence in terms of what we do: <https://www.fishpond.co.nz/Books/Brain-David-Eagleman/9780525433446?utm_source=googleps&utm_medium=ps&utm_campaign=NZ&gclid=CjwKCAiAxJSPBhAoEiwAeO_fP93OAvBF8yxmn6_EOoccQqVzE4ZPoqQVtM4s5u95rEHB5I5dKpQHyRoCWysQAvD_BwE>

**3.** For those on or near the North Shore of Auckland: AMusEd is the community orchestra open to all students aged 5-18 that I have started up and this is the form that current students are using to sign up to it: <https://forms.office.com/r/ti8tPAQVv8>. This is run by the person announced below.

We are a little hindered through prolonged employment processes to announce all of our initial leadership team but below is the first one I can let you know about. **Marija Naumovska** is simply an outstanding educator and a wonderful person. She will be the **Academic Manager of Year 5 - 10** and oversee the delivery of the projects, classes and afternoon programme.

The information below is supplied by Marija.

**Bio**

Born in Skopje, Macedonia, I developed an appreciation for music early on. I completed a Bachelor of Music degree, double-majoring in composition and conducting, a Secondary Teaching Diploma and a Masters in Education from the University of Auckland. I have held the roles of music teacher, dean, HOD of Music and HOD of Visual and Performing Arts over the last 18 years, in various Auckland high schools and am a mother of three.

I have collaborated with various teacher training programmes over the years and have a real passion for conducting, music education, developing educational music resources and presenting. For the past three years, I have created documentaries and educational resources for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, supported by Metlifecare, and have had the pleasure to present a selection of their live concerts as an educational specialist.

**Hopes and Aspirations**

I am honored to be joining the **Senior Management team of Mount Hobson Academy Connected as an Academic Manager**, and look forward to collectively establishing an educational facility that doesn't just strive to provide academic excellence but aims to develop life-long passion for learning in our students, with a strong focus on wellbeing. We deliver the NZ curriculum through integrated, cross-curricular and engaging projects that encourage critical thinking, interaction, and reflection.

Marija

**Update 6**

**Hello People**

**1.** The last two weeks have been very positively busy for the school - and I am sure the next three will be superbly manic. We have been able to employ an outstanding leadership team and very good progress is being made on our Well-Being team and Arts/Movement/Languages team. More detail to come on all of that in the coming week. The meeting I had with 8 of our people last week was one of the very best professional 90 minutes of my career and it was simply by listening to the passion and expertise of these people.

A quick reminder here on our overall plan. We will be very, very good!

**2.** The child vaccine roll-out begins on Monday. I am no expert and offering no advice. It should be noted that the CEO of Pfizer has indicated this is now the wrong vaccine given Omicron. It is unclear how schools will respond to all of this so please keep in mind that a key aim for us in 2022 is to provide a very high quality of education that is PREDICTABLE. There is some powerful challenges coming world-wide:

You have destroyed the education of our children and their future. You made children feel guilty, scared, smoke, drink, get addicted, drop out, and quarrel, as school principals around the country attest.

<https://brownstone.org/articles/ehud-qimrons-powerful-letter-to-the-israeli-ministry-of-health/>

**3. House-Pooling**

Some of the families enrolling are already bringing their creativity to this venture.

Where there are a few students in a location they are looking to "House-Pool" and have the students hosted at a different house each day to work together and also free adults 4 days out of 5. As we grow this seems like a great idea.

Please spread the word in your community.

**4.** With the help of a wonderful business advisor in Christchurch we are making very good progress towards a **Pledge-Me Campaign** (<https://www.pledgeme.co.nz/>) to support the school and the provision teams. It will give many an opportunity to invest and to make a return.

**5.** On <https://alwynpoole.substack.com/p/how-you-child-can-do-superbly-at?justPublished=true> (remember subscription is free) I give away a huge set of secrets on how **students at qualifications levels can thrive**.

These secrets were the basis for teaching a number of Year 13 students through the years who topped the country in their subject.

Please note - myself and other staff are more available at this point for online meetings.

**Update 5**

**1.** Apology for making a change but upon rechecking I felt that the Application Form for students was a little confusing on the enrolment options. This has now been corrected on [www.mthobson.school.nz](http://www.mthobson.school.nz/) and attached here too.

**2. A very Important article in Stuff this morning.**

Over the last 15 years it has been incredibly hard to get politicians or Ministry leaders to see, understand and act on the demise of our teaching and learning. I process and distribute a data set of the school leavers of every high-school in NZ. The demise is NOT covid related but things have never been worse.

You can read Gaven Martin's credentials at the bottom of the article.

There are a couple of the key comments:

First, there should be no doubt that our national teaching of science, technology and mathematics (henceforth just “science”) delivers cruel results.

In 2018-19 our 13-year-olds scored their worst-ever results in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (60 countries); and 15-year-olds had their worst-ever Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results in reading, mathematics and science (about 90 countries).

We have been in both relative and absolute decline for more than 20 years. The economic costs to the nation and the impact on individuals of this are truly appalling. Read [*An empirical portrait of New Zealand adults living with low literacy and numeracy skills*](https://workresearch.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/522827/An-empirical-portrait-of-New-Zealand-adults-living-with-low-literacy-and-numeracy-skills_report.pdf), by an AUT study group, and then weep – I did.

It’s about the way our children are taught, and the knowledge and skills teachers bring into the classroom.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/300485895/we-are-having-the-wrong-debate-over-how-we-teach-science>

My promise to the Mt Hobson Academy families is that in every subject (including Maths and our staff will be well prepared, highly qualified, use rigourous/proven methodology, and have the highest expectations. We will be a part of NZ's solution - one child/family at a time.

**3.** I have written and posted a review on **Matthew Syed's** wonderful book for young people, ***You Are Awesome***, here: <https://alwynpoole.substack.com/p/book-review-you-are-awesome-matthew-28e?justPublished=true>

**Update 4**

I know I promised to hold off until the 10th but things are happening fast.

Within the schools staffing/establishment:

**1.** We are the signing and announcement timing with a Mt Hobson Academy Associate Principal who will have full oversight if the Connected (Online) nationwide programme.

She is a brilliant educator. Inspiring, positive, very reflective of best practice. The sort of teacher that if I had been in her classes I would be a much better man today.

**2.** We are close to final/contracting discussions for "Academic Manangers" of Years 1 - 4, Years 5 - 10, Years 11- 13. All three are, again, people you would be prepared to shoot yourself in the foot with a spud-gun for to have them work with your child.

**3.** We have contactracted the person who I believe is New Zealand's very best International student recruiter and management. This is not only important for those students and families; children from other parts of the world add to the education and aspirational experience.

**4.** We are developing a team to deliver: Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Languages, PE & movement. This will be not only to our students but on offer to students/students across NZ who find it hard to provide these subjects).

**5.** We have a strong set of well qualified people in the Well-Being area to assist our staff and students - and to again offer to assist schools throughout the country.

**6.** We have some very good teachers who are developing their own niche "Villas" based on both geography and skill set.

Enrollments are coming in and lots of interest.

Please keep in mind that a small part of our response is the uncertainty of the government's response to covid and the ability that we have to provide a very high quality and predictable school/academic year. This article will be very challenging to NZ schools.

I also spoke out a bit here: <https://thebfd.co.nz/2022/01/05/the-coming-chaos-in-our-schools/>

An online school to improve the nation's qualitative and quantitative education response was always one of our aims. I do believe that you "GO BIG OR GO HOME". In that case we are close to launching a <https://www.pledgeme.co.nz/> campaign for people who would like to invest in what we are doing. I have wonderful help on this from a business advisor called Paul Hill. Thanks Paul. You are gold.

Please spread the word. I believe all of us together will be New Zealand's best education story of 2022 ... and the country needs one.

**Update 3**

**Hello People**

A great week in terms of progress.

There are a number of points here but I will try and be brief and accurate on each.

**1. Enrolments**

The application form is here: <https://www.mthobson.school.nz/>

Thank you for all of those who have applied for places for their children so far.

We are definitely looking at **Years 1 - 13.**

We are also considering Cambridge as well as NCEA.

We are very well equipped through personnel and experience to work with neuro diverse learners and those with identified needs.

We can work well with NZ families who are overseas.

Please share our web-page and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MtHobsonAcademy/>)

**2.** **Private provision** is - to some extent - a numbers game. Please keep spreading the word. The more families that know about us and show interest/enrol the more wonderful staff we can employ. Private schools have much greater freedoms. University Entrance is achieved at 86% in NZ Private schools. We see the spend as an investment in the future opportunities for the young person.

**3.** By the end of next week I hope to announce a **Principal**. For those teachers/educators who would specifically like to be considered for that role please confirm to me by Wednesday at noon. I will be announcing other leadership/advisor roles on Wednesday afternoon.

Some teachers are already working in their region to develop their own sub-provision within our structure. It is a good plan.

We are by no means just reaching out to teachers who have chosen not to follow the mandate. The Villa Education Trust has long had an online programme in mind. This is just a very opportune time. This is not a stop-gap. We will hit the ground sprinting and grow/develop from there. From the beginning our online provision will be high quality. It will also become one of NZ's largest "schools".

**4.** Things are happening quickly. I want to assure all that this is a work of passion and we have unlimited energy. **We will work right through December and January** to be sure that everything is in place.

**5.** If you no longer want to receive this information please email me to **unsubscribe**. Below are the two other updates.

**As Monty Python said: Now For Something Completely Different**

**a.** During the week there was, in the NZ Herald, an article that is of the traditional form of a "hitjob". It was uncredited, highly inaccurate and no comment was sought from the Villa Education Trust prior to posting. If you read it please discard it. It is of high credit to the rest of NZ media that they did not pick it up. Complaints are being laid. I have nothing to do with any financial aspects of our work and can promise incredible integrity from those that do.

**Update 2**

**Hello Teachers and Families**

Thank you for the ongoing contacts and support. I don't mean to sound like an answering machine but your contacts are really important to us.

I promised an update. The last 6 days have been incredibly positive. There has been good media and a very good response from many remarkable teachers and families looking for a very high quality and predictable education situation for their precious children.

Karen (our Trust CEO and the best person I know) has been working in Auckland this week. She is back in Russell and we will meet at length tomorrow and have the application form both on the website and emailed to you. We are working hard to make the fees very reasonable - but also ask questions that reflect your situation.

The online part of the Mt Hobson Academy, I can confidently say, will be a wonderful provision. I am not telling you something that you won't already know but the more families we have with us - the more staff we can employ. Please continue to spread the word. We have no upper limit in terms of students - we will employ within our rations to provide for all.

I thought of writing a lot to explain how we work. Hopefully these videos - explain things well enough - or at least give the right impression.

**Our Curriculum Explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnwcR0EuDNY&t=1s&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**Our Growth-Mindset Explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sp91hV8x0qo&t=10s&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**Our Care for students/families explained**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVjL7NrfVh4&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**A South Auckland Middle School Performance from one of our "Trust Live" events**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS7a767UTiI&ab_channel=MonTianzandkids>

**A Middle School West Auckland (feat Teachers) from one of our Trust Live events**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDcXRYwTzfY&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**Our Learning Philosophy described through Paddle-Boarding**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlFFjBRwYhs&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**We are not always Serious**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9x4wi8XFsI&ab_channel=ProjectBasedCurriculum-VillaEducationTrust>

**Update 1**

1. **Hello Teachers and Families**

I am very sorry to be a few hours behind the promised time.

This week - so far (and it does seem like a long one) has had significant positives but I am very conscious that many of you have been through a cyclone. I have read all of your emails and understand as much of what you are feeling as I can.

We have had very positive media.

I have reached out to the Teachers Council, the Ministry, and the teacher unions - to see if we can talk about the best pathway for the next 1 - 2 years for teachers in this extraordinary situation. I have heard from Lesley Hoskin for the Teachers Council that they would be willing to talk. I have not heard from the Ministry, NZEI, or Perry Rush at the Principals Federation. I have heard negatively from the PPTA. You may want to give these people a nudge as it would be a good sector move to preserve all career aspects for teachers who have chosen not to comply with the mandate at this time.

I have spoken to a number of Principals today who have lost staff. They are hurting too. If we can find ways of working with them we would be delighted.

**We will go ahead with the online option** and will accept enrolments through the [www.mthobson.school.nz](http://www.mthobson.school.nz/) from Monday. Financial information will be included but we are working very hard on that aspect at present. We intend to offer Year 1 - 13 with a full range of subjects.

We have had two very good sector leaders come on board in the last day. Will announce soon.

**For Teachers**

The group who have contacted us so far are of the highest quality. I have built a contact database but now need to get a very good structure to enable us to work as quickly as possible to help provide certainty.

Please resend your email to me in the following form:

Subject line: Interested teacher: Primary/Secondary/Specialist/Leadership (or combination)

Email body:

- Level and subjects.

- Statements on skill set/experience/qualifications.

- Location

- Neither confirm nor deny but if you are willing to tell us that you are vaccinated we can work on planning in person events.

- A personal statement.

- Attach CV.

(please note your confidentiality will be fully respected).

**For Families:**

- please stay in touch and ask whatever you need to. Please also spread the word. (e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/MtHobsonAcademy/>) We will do a very good job and provide the needed quality and predictability that children deserve: <https://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/on-air/heather-du-plessis-allan-drive/audio/alwyn-poole-villa-education-trust-families-teachers-want-the-stability-that-comes-from-online-schools/>

From myself and the Trust. Our life-work is providing high quality education to the very limit of our ability. At times we have been seen as "disrupters". That is accurate and there is no apology for it. At present NZ's system is in a previous place through no fault of the many brilliant teachers. The covid pandemic/response has added challenge. It would be our privilege for you to work with us for good.