**Kia ora tatou from the Counsellors.**

We had a great response last week to Pink Shirt Day, with many students taking the opportunity to wear a pink wrist band or pink sticker in support of the day’s message: ***Speak up, Stand together, Say NO to bullying.*** Some spectacular pink shirts too from many of the staff!

Following on from this, we will soon be undertaking bullying surveys at each form level. This is an opportunity for all students to have their voices heard about this important issue. Bullying surveys are non-identifying and findings are followed up by the deans and counsellors.

A message we hope our young people have taken from Pink Shirt Day is that of tolerance and respect for difference and how we all benefit when diversity is celebrated and upheld. The challenge now, is to enact these values beyond this week and throughout the year.

In my work with students it often strikes me that children and young people assume a role as “the difference police”. Those individuals who stand out as different in some way, often physically, sometimes because of special ability, or perhaps because they’re socially “quirky”, can often be a target of intolerance. As adults we have a big role to play in promoting the message that difference is more than just OK. It’s what enriches our world. Perhaps in helping to grow this awareness in our young people, our challenge as adults, is to make sure that the words we speak and the actions we take, model this tolerance and respect.

Na mihi nui kia koe,

Nancy Macmillan and Neil Carter.