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## Paroa students step up

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Arianna Stewart

Paroa School last Thursday joined in with 22,000 students around New Zealand for the Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure programme.

Students were given their own pedometers and encouraged to take them home to get their steps up outside of school.

Teachers will be offering class walks along the cycle trail as a way to get some physical activity in during school hours and are waiting to see if the students will tap into their competitive streak for the duration of the challenge.

Children can track points with

the avatars they create to move around a virtual map, learning some interesting facts on the history of each destination they stop at along the way. There will be some mini challenges put together by Paroa School too, with prizes on offer for the Year 7 and 8 participants. The programme is all about raising healthy habits and runs over a five-week period so that children have a chance to feel the benefits of less screen time, good sleeping patterns, healthy eating and exercise — with the hope that they will choose to continue to be mindful about their daily habits.

Young and Healthy aims to engage the “iPad generation” by

offering unique technology to take each class on a global adventure in a way that is fun and will see students develop a love of being active and making good daily choices.

Some students at Paroa opted to wear their pedometers around their ankles, while others kept to the standard wrist-wearing.

This year the programme has started a Roving Reporters campaign, created to allow students to share stories about how they are using the virtual adventure on a private You Tube channel.

The Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure has had more than 120,000 children through the programme since 2018.



PICTURE: Arianna Stewart

Paroa School students from the Whenua and Taiao classes — Keton Guthrey, Harpur Andrew, Daisy Annandale, Meka Whyte, Lakyn Thompson, middle, Kohen Thompson, Taj Atkinson and Jed Gibson — show their pedometers. They will be competing against each other to get their steps in, as well as earning points for healthy habits.