



A word from our Tumuaki

Mālō e lelei,

Next week we celebrate Tongan Language Week and have planned some fun activities for the children to do as part of this focus.

Yesterday we enjoyed 'Wacky Wednesday' and also started our Attendance Competition encouraging students to be at school on time. Whānau please support your children to be on time!

Thank you to everyone who has registered their child for the Knowledgathon and are helping them to collect their sponsors. This process has proved to be a great motivator for the children in the past to learn their facts as well as being a conversation starter to families in the home. If you need any help or have any questions about the Knowledgathon, please talk to your child's teacher or the school office.

Our netball season is nearly at an end and we would like to congratulate all of the children, coaches and managers who have worked together to have such a great season. Good luck to our Year 5/6 football team who are representing the school at a tournament next week.

There has been a lot of controversy about the Mathematics curriculum in the media and so I have made some comments about this in my Principals Soapbox section.

Lastly, watch out for information about our Movie Night which will be taking place on the evening of Friday 6th September. This is always a popular event where whole families come to Te Whau to eat popcorn and enjoy a movie together. More details, including how to buy tickets, will be out soon.

Ngā mihi maioha,
Neil Robinson
Principal

Term Three Calendar of Events

Week 4

Thurs 15th Aug - Y0-3 Whānau Literacy Information session 8.50am or 6pm

Week 5 - Tongan Language Week

Pacifica Arts Centre Visits to school 9am-1pm

- Tuesday 20th Aug - Kauri Team
- Wednesday 21st Aug - Rimu Team
- Thurs 22nd Aug - Tōtara Team

Fri 23rd Aug - Kauri Assembly 2.00pm

Week 6

Mon 26th Aug - Kōwhai Assembly 2.15pm

Tues 27th Aug - Rimu Assembly 2.15pm

Wed 28th Aug - Tōtara Assembly 2.15pm

Thurs 29th Aug - Pacifica Arts Visit Kowhai- 9am-1pm

Fri 30th Aug - Pacifica Arts Visit Pohutukawa-9am-1pm

Week 7

Tues 3rd Sept - Pōhutukawa Assembly 2.30pm

Week 8

Tues 10th Sept - Rimu Assembly 2.15pm

Thurs 12th Sept - Champions of Champs Gym Comp

Week 9- Te Wiki o te reo Maori

Mon 16th Sept - Kowhai Assembly - 2.15pm

Wed 18th Sept - Winter Field Day 9am-3pm

Fri 20th Sept - Kauri Assembly 2.00pm

Week 10 - Chinese Language Week

Tues 24th Sept - Pōhutukawa Assembly 2.30pm

Y6 - BBI Intermediate visit 10.40am

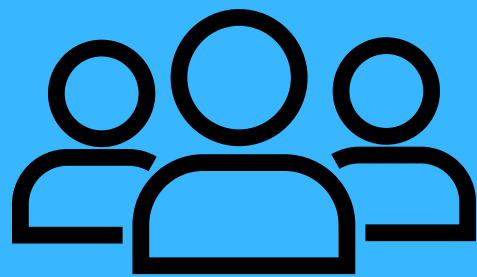
Wed 25th Sept - Winter Field Day Postponement Day

Friday 27th Sept - Term Three Ends - 3.00pm

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Blockhouse Bay

STAFFING UPDATE



Stacy McIvor, our Lead Teacher Pastoral Care and SENCo has won a position in a school in Melbourne and her last day at Blockhouse Bay School will be the 20th September. Stacy has been a valued member of the staff for 8 years and will definitely be missed. We will be very sorry to see Stacy leave the school but are excited for her as she makes this life change. Stacy's contribution to the school will be noted in a future newsletter.

With Stacy's upcoming departure, we have decided to make some changes to utilise the strengths of some other members of our school team.

Annette Bradley - Continues as Deputy Principal and her responsibilities will now include being the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo), an area Annette has considerable strength in. She will continue her role as Lead Teacher Literacy (including the BSLA structured literacy programme and Kupu Toa which is providing additional help for children in reading and writing)

Claire Schultz - Continues as a Lead Teacher. Her duties will now include Pastoral Care & a range of other jobs including Attendance, Curriculum Design, Student Leadership and Digital Technology. Claire works two days a week for the Kāhui Ako as an Across School Leader and three days a week here at school.

Jane Warne takes over all of the responsibilities for the provision of English Language Learning in the school and will work three days a week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Emma Best will continue her position as Kauri Team Leader and teacher, but will also lead provision of Gifted and Talented learning in the school.

Jane Warne used to work Fridays in Takahē A but Angie Cannon will go back to being 5 days a week in this room.

Claire Schultz used to work Fridays in Huia but Sarah Hunt will take over these days. Sarah worked in Huia last term and is excited to be returning to work there again more often.

2025 TERM DATES

We like to remind parents about when our terms are, so that they can plan their holidays in the break times. Unless the Ministry of Education changes our dates, these will be our organisation for next year:

Term One - Monday 3rd February to Friday 11th April

- *Monday 3rd February - Meet the Whanau meetings*
- *Tuesday 4th February - All children start school*
- *Thursday 6th February - Waitangi Day (No school this day)*

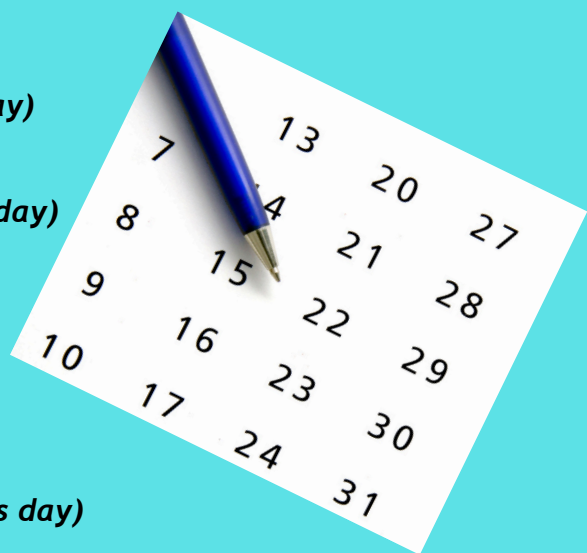
Term Two - Monday 28th April to Friday 27th June

- *Friday 30th May - Kahui Ako Conference (No school this day)*
- *Monday 2nd June - Kings Birthday (No school this day)*
- *Friday 20th June - Matariki (No school this day)*

Term Three - Monday 14th July to Friday 19th September

Term Four - Monday 6th October - Thursday 18th December

- *Monday 27th October - Labour Day (No school this day)*
- *Friday 21st November - Teacher Only Day (No school this day)*



ATTENDANCE COMPETITION



In Term 2 71% of learners were on time to school every day.

In Term 2 72% of learners were on time to school every day.

Target: To have 85% of learners on time every day

How are we going to do this?

Some Year 6 students have designed a competition to encourage learners to be on time.

If the learners arrive before the music plays at 8.50. they put a token in their 'Team' jar. On Friday we announce the winning team and they all get a prize!

Whānau, please help your children to be on time!
Ngā mihi nui



PACIFIC MAMAS

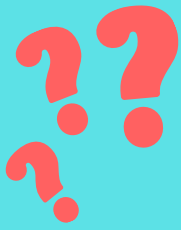


Starting next week, we will have visitors from the Pacific Mamas group and this should be great way to extend our current inquiry. The Big Idea from our current inquiry is ... People tell stories and pass these on over time. Different cultures tell these stories in different ways, through dance, music and drama. The way we tell these stories changes over time and will continue to change in the future.

Our visit from the Pacific Mamas coincides with Tongan Language Week (next week) and will focus on music, drums and dance in Pacific cultures.



Congratulations to some of our students who took part in the Kids 4 Drama show in the holidays here at school, The SpongeBob Musical. Kids 4 Drama has been part of our school community for 32 years this year with Director Stephen Dallow starting classes in our old school hall when he was just 18. They run classes in Te Whau, our Performing Arts Centre every Thursday from 3.30pm to 4.30pm. Staff are on site just after 3pm so students can head there and have their afternoon tea before class. They teach practical performance skills that build confidence in a safe and fun environment. You are welcome to trial the class, to sign up for a trial or a term head to <https://kids-4-drama.classforkids.io>



KNOWLEDGEATHON 2024

We are raising money for seating and shelter outside the Manukau Block. If you haven't done so already, [click here](#) and create a fundraising page for your child(ren). We have spot prizes every day just for signing up! There are also cool [prizes](#) the top fundraisers will win. Thanks for your support.



Closing of the Auckland Council - Blockhouse Bay Public Library

Parents might be aware that the public library will be closed for 8-9 months so that they can carry out repairs and improvements to the roof and other parts of the building. This work is expected to start late October/early November. The library will however be running programmes for children during the upcoming holiday break so whānau might want to watch out for news about these.

During the upgrade, the library will be able to be used, although around 5 carparks will be required for the staff who are completing the work.

Families are encouraged to use either the New Lynn or Avondale Libraries until the work is completed around the middle of next year.

Also, here is the link for details of the BHB Library maintenance and upgrade:

<https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/news/2024/07/upgrades-coming-for-blockhouse-bay-library/>

Calling for volunteers!

Auckland Council are looking for keen volunteers to join them in preserving and enhancing our local parks along the Manukau Harbour foreshore. Activities include rubbish clean-ups, pest control, tree planting and ecological restoration

If you would like to help improve our environment, gain valuable skills and leadership opportunities through free training programmes, enjoy the benefits of being outdoors and connecting with nature, and build a community of like-minded people, we want you!

Email Teresa.davenport@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to register your interest.

Parks include:

- Manukau Margin Reserve
 - Karaka Park
 - Green Bay Beach
 - Taunton Terrace
- Blockhouse Bay Reserve
- Taunton Terrace Reserve Island
 - Gittos Domain
- Endeavour Reserve along the Manukau foreshore

PRINCIPALS SOAPBOX

Parents may have noticed comments made in the media about an increased emphasis on the teaching of Mathematics in New Zealand and some have asked me what I think, so I thought I would put this in writing.

Recently, the government announced the following

- Because of poor assessment results across the country, the implementation of the new Mathematics Curriculum has been brought forward a year to 2025.
- Resources were going to be provided in the form of student and teacher workbooks to help with this.
- Twenty million dollars was going to be provided for professional development for teachers.

BACKGROUND

The Mathematics Curriculum has been in review for the last few years and the draft was due to be released to teachers in the second half of 2024. It was then going to be finalised and training for teachers carried out in 2025 ready for adoption in 2026. This same process has been carried out with the English curriculum that was due for adoption in 2025. Spreading them out like this was an acknowledgment of the additional time it takes for teachers to learn and adapt to the changes in delivery and content when a new curriculum is being implemented.

As the rationale for bringing the implementation of the new Mathematics curriculum forward, the government has used the results of a recent assessment carried out across the country. It is important to note that this assessment was carried out using the new Mathematics curriculum, not the one taught to children up until now. Schools in New Zealand have not even seen the new document let alone been able to teach to it so I feel it is more than a little unfair to use this data as a rationale for change. These children have not been taught these things so is it fair to assess against them?

In addition to this, a recent statement from Dr Charles Darr from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research stated *"We've been tracking student achievement in mathematics at Year 8 for more than 10 years, and in that time, there has been no evidence of improvement or decline"*.

MY RESPONSE

Overall, we welcome any additional resourcing that might be provided to schools to help us provide the best possible education for our students. In my opinion, lack of funding is the biggest barrier to learning in New Zealand schools and any extra money that the government wishes to allocate is very welcome.

However, in answer to the above

1. Teachers are life-long learners and spend hours every year on professional learning and development. They have no issues at all with extra training but it is exceptionally hard (actually impossible) to find time to do both the Mathematics and the English curriculum effectively at the same time.
2. Having the same workbook for each child does not take into account the differences in ability that children have, nor does it allow for things such as children who are new to speaking English. For this reason, we use a range of resources including Mathletics which is far more responsive and motivational for children than any workbook could ever be.
3. I did the maths on what \$20 000 000 would look like when divided across the country. Depending on how many teachers are trained this would provide around \$300 per teacher so in terms of release time, this is nearly enough for one day released out of the classroom. I would argue that this is woefully inadequate to make the changes that the government is claiming are required.

But what about at our school?

For the last couple of years at Blockhouse Bay School, we have been monitoring the development of the draft Mathematics curriculum and providing some professional development for teachers in preparation for this. We have been including this into our planning framework and where possible, integrating it into our other areas of learning to make it relevant to what has been going on in the classroom, not just as a stand-alone subject. For deep learning to take place, children need to see how learning is linked to real life and this applies to mathematics as well.

It was quoted in the media that schools have been hiding information from parents. This is both insulting and inaccurate and I notice that no evidence was provided for this claim.

Conclusion

In my experience, the teaching profession is more than happy to improve the service we provide to children and parents and will work hard to incorporate new learning into what we do. To do it properly, the implementation of a new curriculum takes time and to try and do two at once will mean that neither is done as well as it could be.

The Minister of Education has been meeting with educational leaders to discuss this new announcement and the implications that it will have for teachers in schools. I am hoping that they can work together to come up with a plan that will ensure that the implementation of the Mathematics and English curriculum documents can be completed effectively.

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