

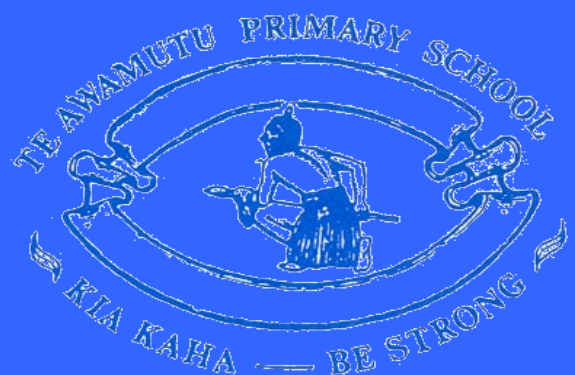
Te Awamutu Primary School

Together Achieving Personal Success

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Together Achieving Personal Success



We are all faced with challenges at some point in our life, challenges that we did not create. Challenges that happened beyond our control. The difference is how we respond to these challenges. You can adopt the attitude there is nothing you can do, or you can see the challenge as your call to action.

Catherine Pulsifer

Dear Parents and Whānau,

I've spent a significant amount of time pondering my final message for 2020 and decided on the theme of overcoming challenges.

Despite the lows of 2020, there have been many things that have been hugely positive and these are the things I would like to concentrate on today.

As I mentioned at the morning tea for our parent/whānau helpers, I believe the greatest gift out of 2020 has been the strengthened relationships between home and school. COVID created the opportunity for quality family time and increased communication between us all. It is my belief that the adults in our community have role modelled values of perseverance, respect, and resilience. So I want to begin by thanking all those of you who have seen the challenges of 2020 as "your call to action" and have worked with us, to create opportunities for our students to experience success in their own, individual ways. I feel very fortunate to work with a strong, positive community and believe *that is the foundation of success for our great school.*

To our Year 6 students...you have made us proud this year and I wish you well in your future endeavours. Intermediate is lucky to have you and I will look out for your successes, whether they are published online or in the local newspaper. Push yourself beyond what you think you can achieve, for if you can conceive it, you can achieve it! For some families, it is your last child at TAPS. This is just as sad for us as it is for you - but you will always be a part of our school and its history.

Our strategic goals this year have focused on;

1. Improving teaching and learning
2. Enhancing culturally responsive practice - making this normal and natural
3. Fostering the wellbeing of students and teachers.

During 2019 we concentrated our efforts on points 2 and 3 as this was the biggest area of need. Behaviour incidents dominated too much of our time and teachers were getting burnt out and even the students were fed up of constantly having their learning interrupted.

Therefore the school has been working with the Ministry of Education to implement an initiative called PB4L (Positive Behaviour 4 Learning). We have worked with the RTLB (Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour) to do Zones of Regulation and other, similar social skill development courses. While our behaviour statistics have improved, we still have a very small percent of our school (approximately 3%) who have been responsible for our alarming stand-down statistics. This is not an area I'm proud of, but we will continue to do what we can to demonstrate expectations for behaviour in our school, in a positive way.

TAPS also undertook professional development in Cultural Responsiveness and a facilitator helped us to check our practice and ensure that being 'culturally responsive' was a natural part of what we did. That led to the introduction of Kura Kōtahi Rā this year and a few other initiatives that are less visible to parents.

In 2019 we had ongoing mindfulness sessions across the school with "Miss Laurie". In 2020, we continued to pilot professional counselling sessions (10 children per term) through Rosetown Community Trust. Kerry ("Kerry the Counsellor") and later Sue, have been an integral part in helping our children to talk through some big feelings. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them and let them know how grateful we are to have their expertise in our school.

I'm very proud to share that through funding provided by the Ministry after COVID called, 'Urgent Response Funding', I applied for over \$82,000 to extend the counselling programme over 16 local schools (including TAPS of course) and I was awarded the entire amount! This is huge for our entire community but will only service one third of the need, identified in our local Primary Schools. We look forward to working with Rosetown Community Trust (soon to be renamed "Pathways Trust") and will be examining other sources of funding to continue this programme beyond June 2021.

Finally, our big push this year has been to improve teaching and learning opportunities at TAPS. All teaching staff have undertaken professional development in an initiative called, 'Formative Teaching Practice'. It's led us to make some changes in the ways we teach and give feedback to students and we are hoping to see an increase in students talking about *what they are learning, saying what they want to learn, knowing how they learn best and why they are learning what they are*. We are trying to move away from "because the teacher told me to", and ideally would like to hear, "my teacher and I have decided that....is my best course of action". Our End of Year data for 2020 is showing an improvement in Writing data - our area of focus, but we still have a long way to go in reducing the disparity between males and females and Māori and Pākehā results. We will be continuing this work next year and, after employing a Literacy Specialist for 4 days per week, staff will be trained in a 'Structured Literacy Approach', that you may have heard so much about in the news recently. We will share more information about this, next year.

Children visited their 2021 classrooms last week and I would like to commend the children on showing resilience if they did not get the teacher or friend they expected. We carefully place all children and it takes weeks of work and consultation to get it right. It may not always be obvious as to why we've chosen a specific teacher or a certain friend dynamic, but I implore that you give it time in the new year, before you get in contact and express your displeasure. It's no mean feat and I appreciate the hard work of the Senior Leaders, Team Leaders and Office Administrators for their hard work. Of course, compliments are always greatly received! Online reports were sent home last Thursday afternoon too. If you haven't received your child's report, it may pay to check if your contact details are up to date with the school or that the notification hasn't gone into your spam folder.

I do hope we will see large numbers of our community at our annual Christmas in the Park this evening. I hope that our newest staff members will be able to attend, so we can make introductions and the weather is looking much better than the past 2 years.

All staff at Te Awamutu Primary work so hard, and with best intentions to make our school a great place to learn and thrive. I thank them all for their hard work, positive attitudes and for the care and empathy they show our children, and for our environment. The school is looking amazing, and we know it will look better once our new classrooms finally arrive and are ready to use (hopefully by Term 2, but I have learned anything over 2020 it's patience).

To our wonderful families, I wish you a safe, restful, happy and memorable Christmas with your loved ones and I look forward to seeing you again in 2021 on the 3rd of February at 8.55am.

Sharon



TIMATANGA NEWS

Timatanga—The beginning of the learning journey for our pipi paopao (tapping out of the egg shell)



Timatanga has had a very busy few weeks!!!

Our WHEELS Day was a H U G E success.

The excitement on the children's faces was contagious for all. Some of the 'Wheels' we had for the children to enjoy (in between decorating and riding their own wheels), included an ambulance, a fire truck, a limousine, a stock car, a motorbike, a police car, 2 trucks and a couple of tractors.

A special thank you to...

- Julian Dranguet and his fire team for the fire truck.
- Constable Ryan Fleming for the Police Car.
- Dave Jones and Richard Sykes for the Ambulance.
- Karen and Kerry Sykes and NYPD Trek Team and GT Radials Trek Team for the Limos
- Jason Inness from JWI Earthmoving and logging for the Bin truck and Logging truck.
- Mitch Fabish and the Fabish family for the ministock speedway car
- Courtney Quinn for the Motorbike
- Eleri Williams for the Little Tractor
- Fred Thomas and Power Farming for the Tractor

We appreciate your support in helping to make our day successful!!!!

All of the children in Timatanga practised enthusiastically their Run, jump and throw skills in preparation for our ATHLETICS DAY!!! We are proud of their efforts! The skills and sportsmanship on display were something to admire. We wish you all a very safe & tremendous Christmas and we hope you all manage to have an amazing time with family & friends.

MERI KIRIHIMETE

Your Terrific Timatanga teachers!



TAIOHI NEWS

Taiohi—Young minds growing, developing their flight feathers and learning to fly

Thank you to all the parents who came and supported us at Junior Athletics. It was our first event this year with families on site. The children all participated well and we saw many children showing excellent sportsmanship.

Mrs Picard and her Enviro group have been working hard. A couple of weeks ago we had the 'Silver Reflection'. TAPS has now moved from a Bronze Enviro School to a Silver Enviro School. Congratulations Mrs Picard and her group! Our next step is GOLD!!!!

Remember we have our community garden full of vegetables. You are welcome to come and pick some of these and take them home, even over the summer break.

Taiohi wish you all a safe & Happy Christmas and New Year.



TAUIHI NEWS

Tauihi—First flight of the young Karearea, gliding and developing flight confidence



Wow! Here we are nearing the end of another school year and on the countdown to Christmas. Excitement levels are growing as the Christmas Season is on our doorstep.

We had a very successful day at our Interschools Athletics day. Many thanks to Mrs Ellis and Miss Sabin for organising and looking after our athletes. In between showers of rain, we had some great results with our students representing our school with pride. Congratulations to all the athletes involved. TAPS managed to take out the overall highest school points.

Final day of school Tuesday 15th December finishing at 12.45pm.



On behalf of The Tauihi Team we wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope you have a great holiday.

Merry Christmas
The Tauihi Team

TOPA NEWS

Topa—Soaring for excellence



Merry
Christmas