

# Te Awamutu Primary School

*Together Achieving Personal Success*

Friday 3rd December 2021

Kia ora TAPS whaanau

Just like that we are at the end of Week 7 and our finish date of Wednesday 15th December is just around the corner!

The end of this year has been far more difficult than most. For our children beginning their school life at TAPS and for those who are soon to leave. Our end of year schedule has been dramatically reduced and COVID compliance is impacting the way our school and community can honour our students and staff that are leaving.

Again, there is a lot of information in this newsletter so please read it through so you can keep on top of everything happening in the next week and a bit.

Firstly, I'd like to offer our congratulations to Kathryn Picard and Sara Ripia who have both won positions at St Patrick's Catholic school next year. The ladies have both decided it is time for a new challenge and so we will farewell them at the end of the year along with Carey and Dylan. Meike will also finish in Room 21 as she is off to TAI to teach there at her preferred age group. We are currently in the process of recruiting new teachers for next year including the employment of two extra teachers to reduce our class sizes in Team 3. So far, we'd like to welcome Laura Kuggeleijn and Charlotte Borough to the team. Sadly, we will lose our Structured Literacy expert Kylie McKay too. She has won a deputy principal job at Pekerau school which is a huge achievement. Well done, Kylie!

As mentioned above. Our last day of school is **Wednesday 15th December at 12.45 pm**. After school care will begin earlier to accommodate their usual attendees requiring care after school finishes but, unfortunately, the buses will not operate until their usual time at 3pm. Those who must wait around for the bus will be supervised at school by an adult but it would be highly appreciated if alternative arrangements, such as a playdate at a friend's house, may be arranged.

Photolife is coming in on **Monday 6th December** to take the sibling photos they were unable to complete during their last visit. You might want to consider haircuts over the weekend and tidy uniforms ready for Monday. I know it's on my job list!

Next week also begins the week of prize-giving at every year level. We feel it's important to recognise our students but, as with life, not everyone can receive an award. It doesn't mean we haven't noticed the efforts of our tamariki and their families during lockdown learning. If it were possible, every child and their parents/homeschool teacher would earn a cup for resilience. Assemblies will be held outside in the fresh air, children will be socially distanced and we will be unable to host families so we will ensure we take lots of photos. Most assemblies will be earlier in the day to avoid the heat or shade will be provided. Feel free to ensure your children are wearing sunblock each school day if you are concerned.

The Year 6 Graduation Ceremony is an annual tradition where we formally celebrate the years of learning our students have done at TAPS. Almost above all else, we are disappointed that we can not continue with our usual proceedings. However, we do have a special surprise for our Year 6 students and we will have an adapted ceremony outdoors and will repeat presentations indoors for filming purposes. As a consolation, Mrs T will make one of her famous movies which we will distribute to all parents of Year 6 students as a keepsake. A permission slip to allow publication of your child's image in the movie will be distributed today. This process will occur throughout the morning of **Thursday 9th December**, so please ensure your child is in correct uniform (including all black school shoes/sandals and blue or black socks), looking handsome or beautiful for this memorable occasion.

'Meet the Teacher' is also an annual tradition whereby our expected 2022 students are invited to swap classrooms for an hour to meet their next year's teacher and their new classmates. We also invite students who are due to start at TAPS next year, particularly this time round when Wednesday Wonderland hasn't been able to happen and school visits have been reduced or affected by lockdowns. 'Meet the Teacher' is on **Thursday 9th December from 11.45am - 12.45pm**. All children will rotate to their new classrooms for 1 hour and will do a small activity to learn about each other, about teamwork or in preparation for next year (like colouring tote tray name tags etc). The purpose is to reduce the worry that some might feel about 2022 and to familiarise themselves with the physical space. New enrolments preparing to start next year may be accompanied onsite by their parents as long as parents sign in using the QR code at the gate and wearing face masks. You will go to the office and you will be escorted to your child's classroom by one of our amazing Year 6 students. For COVID protocols, we ask that once parents settle their child into their new classroom that they wait outside to reduce the number of people confined to one classroom.

Learning of your child's next year's class is a big deal for parents too. We understand that but please know that we have put a considerable amount of work and consideration into these placements. Please don't rush to call us on Thursday afternoon complaining that your child is not with who you expected them to be (teacher or friends), as sometimes there is a very good reason for that. Unless there is an obvious error, we will ask you to trial the classroom placements for at least the first few weeks of Term 1. Often, it is we adults who role model resilience and positive thinking.

Your child's or children's reports will also go live on this day. They will be posted on your personal Hero page and a notification will be sent to the email address you provided at the time of enrolment. Even our reports are different this year. Your child's teacher has written a comment related to their learning and one related to their effort, participation and demonstration of school values. We hope you enjoy these comments.

You may have noticed that the main office door is closed up and dark. After months and months of planning, we are about to start the refurbishment of our school office that was last done over twenty years ago. This will begin next **Tuesday 7th of December** and will go over the holiday period. It is expected to be finished in mid-February. For now, we have relocated the school office to the staffroom. You can enter that via the stairs to the left of the blue fencing around the staffroom deck. We have had a sign made up by one of our awesome Mums, Emma Peterson to make the entrance obvious. We can't wait for the grand reveal.

Kim Fabish will continue to work most of the holiday period, except when on annual leave for a few weeks over Christmas and New Year. You can organise school uniforms at any time during the break. She will answer emails when she returns from leave. Sue and Kim will open for a late night on **Thursday 27th of January 2022 until 6pm** for those of you who can't get there during the work day.

Also over the summer break, we are expecting the groundwork to be done for our Room 17 bespoke build. This has been an exceptionally long time coming and unfortunately, we have to wait a little longer due to shortages in building materials and delays in the trusses. The start date for the actual building is supposed to be in April.

Manu has done a lot of work to get the pool up to scratch. We've had a lot of problems with some ducks this year, especially them pooping through the pool and the surrounding area, impacting our water test results. We believe this issue is solved now. Each year we have problems with kids jumping our pool fence to sneak a swim on hot days. This isn't ok for many reasons and we'd appreciate it if parents could reiterate this message with their children who are likely to be free to explore the local area over the break. Often it's older kids that don't attend TAPS. They are wrecking our pool cover, and putting themselves at danger as they don't know the chemicals etc that Manu may have added. If local families do see people in the pool that aren't being supervised by a staff member, take a photo if you can and we will report them to the Police and trespass them. We don't sell keys because Manu is often on annual leave over summer and isn't present to keep the water healthy. There are also issues with timing of water treatments, safety protocols and policies among other things.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the volunteers who have supported the school in many and varied ways over this past year. We would normally acknowledge you with a morning tea, but that's another thing COVID has affected. So to all those who have fundraised, created, planted, supported the production, supervised, taught, painted, driven, cleaned, coached, managed, organised, cooked, donated etc - THANK YOU! We just wouldn't be who we are as a community without you.

Personally, I wish to thank our Board of Trustees (now known as just "The Board") for their amazing contributions this year. It's been a tough year in leadership and they have all been wonderful colleagues who have gone above and beyond to support our school management. So to Sarah Hoyes (Chairperson), Chris Grenfell (previous Chair), Maree Parkes (Staff Rep), Dione Houghton (Finance), Wium Mostert, Ryan Williamson, Meredith Stewart and Kim Fabish (Secretary) - you are much appreciated and I look forward to working with you next year.

Finally, much love and appreciation to all of the staff at TAPS who are a passionate, smart, caring, clever team of educators and support staff who do so much more than words can say.

If I'm not in touch again before the end of the year, I wish you many happy returns for the holiday season and fingers crossed that next year is a smooth one!!

Meri keremete

Sharon.

