



# Wadestown School

## Kōwhai Team

### Newsletter

#### Term 1 2021



**Dear Parents, Caregivers and Whānau,**

Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to 2021 with the Kōwhai Team. This is the first of our team newsletters for the year. Its primary purpose is to keep you informed of the organisation, expectations, key events and learning your child will be engaged in throughout the first school term.

It has been wonderful to see the students and families back in our school, refreshed and relaxed following the holiday season. We extend a warm welcome to the new students and families who are joining the Kōwhai Team: Hauraki Kawharu-Wells, Seb Grace Evans, Toby Grace Evans, Hailey Young, Sophia Weston and Conan Hodgetts.

The focus for the start of the school year has been on familiarising the children with their new classrooms, routines, classmates and expectations. Already the teaching team have had numerous opportunities to see the enthusiasm, initiative and supportive attitudes of the students. As we reflect on the beginning weeks we are feeling very fortunate to be working alongside a special Year 7 and 8 cohort.

#### **Kōwhai Team**

The Kōwhai team comprises of four classes this year:

Rm 13 - James Shelton	<a href="mailto:james@wadestown.school.nz">james@wadestown.school.nz</a>
Rm 14 - Amber Pullin	<a href="mailto:amber@wadestown.school.nz">amber@wadestown.school.nz</a>
Rm 16 - Tim Whimster	<a href="mailto:tim@wadestown.school.nz">tim@wadestown.school.nz</a>
Rm 17 - Cathrine Wilkinson (Team Leader)	<a href="mailto:cathrine@wadestown.school.nz">cathrine@wadestown.school.nz</a>

#### **Curriculum Overview**

Our school wide theme for 2021 is 'Diversity' (Rerekētanga). The term one focus is on understanding diversity in our own context and this will be woven through all curriculum areas.

#### **Literacy**

Throughout the year students will develop an appreciation of the nature of language and literature, the many influences of language and its power and beauty.

An ongoing focus is developing the students' ability to write in a range of genres such as formal paragraph writing, letter writing, descriptive, persuasive, creative, narrative, dialogue and opinion-based writing. Literature activities will aim to encourage the development of imagination and creativity through self-expression.

The writing programme will begin by examining formal letter writing. The letter writing will help our Year 8s prepare for their leadership application letters and it will give the Year 7s an opportunity to introduce themselves both formally and in a fictitious scenario. Students will have opportunities to write about their lives, interests and concerns. We will write journal entries as we draw closer to camp and during our time at camp. Later in the term, we will delve into descriptive writing and recounts. Where possible, we will integrate literacy across the curriculum.

Kōwhai students will be encouraged to recognise that proficiency in language is a powerful tool for communication. Building a 'Toolbox' of skills that includes spelling, grammar, punctuation, listening and organisational skills will be a focus throughout the year. Weekly lists of spelling words will be analysed and learnt in class this year. This will replace the homework spelling component.

## Reading

All classes will begin with a unit based on the highly acclaimed novel, 'Juggling with Mandarins' by V M Jones. It is a novel about growing up and asserts the importance of living life on your own terms and of competing for enjoyment rather than reward. Key quotes and messages from the book that will be examined and discussed include:

- 'Whatever you do, do for yourself - and remember: there's no such thing as failure.'
- 'It doesn't do to keep things bottled up'
- 'Relationships aren't algebra - and even if they were, some combinations don't add up.'

## Mathematics

The mathematics programme is underway in our home classes. In Week 3 an interchange between Rooms 13, 14, 16 and 17 will begin to target the different learning needs with greater depth. These groups may change during the year depending on the topics being studied and the needs of the students.

Our first leaning focus is on 'Number'. Students will review number operations and learn how to use patterns to solve perplexing problems. Students will extend their knowledge of numbers by working with factors, multiples, primes, decimals, the order of operations, directed numbers, fractions and proportions. Varied activities will provide the students with practical scenarios to apply knowledge and investigative strategies.

- All Year 7 and 8 students will have the opportunity to participate in the Otago Problem Challenge.
- Mathletics activities will be set as homework activities each week.
- Students will use their Dragon Maths workbooks in class to reinforce new and prior learning. At times, students may be required to catch up on any unfinished work as part of their homework tasks.
- We would also suggest that additional homework time will be beneficial for those students who are not yet familiar with their basic facts.

## Science

In the first term, we will be exploring the nature of science and science skills. We will look at the kind of skills, attitudes, models and processes required in science and will carry out experiments related to the four different strands; The Physical World, The Material World, The Living World, and Planet Earth and Beyond. These will be engaging, hands-on experiments, selected to excite the students about the subject and provoke their curiosity. The experiments will also provide models for the children as they begin to think about how they will conduct their Science Fair investigations.

## Social Sciences

The key focus for term one is our Leadership programme. This has commenced with 'student voice'. Students have had the opportunity to reflect and provide suggestions for developing an effective and refreshed Leadership programme.

The current structure sees the programme organised into three components:

- STEP UP (Leadership positions, formal communication, organising and leading meetings)
- SPEAK UP (Debating, formal speech-making, impromptu speaking, Toastmasters tutorials)
- ACT UP (Year 7 and 8 production, drama activities, theatre sports, musical soiree)

At the forefront of this programme are the School Leadership roles. The students are currently examining leadership skills and styles and are writing their application letters for their individual roles. All the Year 8 students will go through an interview process and will receive their roles before the end of the first term.

## Te Reo Maori

The focus for study this term is Ko Au which means (I/me /myself). The students will be extending their knowledge of vocabulary relating to immediate family and wider whānau. This will include simple phrases, sentence structures, questions and answers.

Hemi Prime our kapa haka kiako will again be teaching all Kōwhai Team students Kapa Haka on Thursday mornings from 9.00 am - 9.45 am.

## Visual Arts

We have begun by looking at the style of Chuck Close to produce pixel portraits for their classroom walls. Further, into the term, we will be exploring a range of techniques and styles used by New Zealand artists. The students will be building a portfolio of artworks, building towards the School Art Exhibition later in the year.

## **Technology**

Technology is held at Karori West Normal School and we will be travelling by bus. The children will need to arrive at school at **8:30 am** to have the roll taken. Buses leave school at 8.40 am. For each rotation, there will be a group of 16 students staying at school to do a Coding class with Mr Shelton. Children arriving late will join this class and stay with them all morning. Students will require hair ties if they have long hair and all students will need footwear that needs to be closed in, i.e., no jandals, sandals, etc.

## **Health and Physical Education**

Weather dependent, each Monday, Wednesday and Friday will begin with a Kōwhai Team fitness session. On Thursday afternoons the students join together for P.E. lessons. Activities this term are focused around the skill of 'Target Throwing'.

For Health lessons there is a 'Growth Mindset' focus to allow the children to discover the power of the brain.

We will be looking at developing a positive mindset through turning negative self-talk into a positive empowering thought, as well as overcoming a fear of failure, challenges and setback.

## **EOTC - Year 7 and 8 Camp (22 - 26 March)**

Initial information regarding the 2021 Green Pastures Camp in Whanganui was sent to parents at the end of last year outlining approximate costs, general information and offers for parent help. We are extremely fortunate to have 16 parents available to assist with the week-long camping experience in Whanganui.

Once all the pre-camp arrangements have been confirmed there will be further correspondence in the next few weeks. This will include the final costs, programme details, gear lists and a Google Health Profile form that needs to be completed for each child.

## **Homework**

The homework activities are designed to be flexible and allow each student to manage and organise their time around after school commitments and their individual passions. Activities will be set on a Monday and are due on Friday. Homework will begin next week (week 3). Each class teacher will send a brief outline of the weekly activities through the students' Google Classroom accounts, along with a copy via the parent emails held by the school.

Students will receive Mathletics activities and Action English tasks each week. Additionally, a significant portion of time is expected to be spent reading. Reading, even in the digital age, is crucial to learning. Vocabulary, spelling, language skills knowledge and imagination can so easily be expanded through reading. Being able to enter imaginatively into the world of fiction encourages empathy and understanding and builds the character of our students.

## **ICT in the Classroom**

All the students in the Kōwhai syndicate have been given email addresses and passwords. These will enable them to access gmail and all of the related Google applications. We will be using Google Docs (or 'Drive'). This will be used for learning purposes and to access shared documents. Emails are only to be used for school purposes. Students have been allocated the use of one Chromebook between two students. It is their responsibility to look after it and use it in accordance with the school ICT agreement.

## **BYOD (Bring your own device)**

Students are allowed to bring in their own devices to use during class time and they must sign in through their school accounts. They need to ensure that their devices are fully charged each day as it becomes a safety risk to have cords scattered around the classrooms. Parents and students need to read and sign the BYOD agreement before devices can be brought to school. We will continue to monitor students' online activity for their own safety.

## **Mobile Phones**

While we do not encourage students to bring in mobile phones we understand that there are circumstances where parents require their children to have their phone before and after school. Mobile phones are students' responsibility and should remain in their school bag unless specific permission has been given by a teacher. Students caught using their mobile phones during school time, without permission, will have their phone confiscated, handed into the office and their parents will need to come in to have it returned.

### Communication with Teachers

If you have anything you wish to discuss, please make contact with the classroom teacher in the first instance. This is best done through a brief email to initiate further discussion either through a telephone call or interview. To ensure an urgent message gets to your child please do this through the school office, not the class teacher's email, as there is very little opportunity to clear emails during the school day.

### Parent Information Evening

For the Kōwhai Team this will take place on Thursday 25th February from 5.30 - 6.30 pm, starting in the hall and finishing in your child's classroom. This will be an opportunity to learn more about the systems that operate in the Kōwhai Team and individual classrooms.

### Useful Reminders

- Classrooms are open from 8:30 am. Children should not be at school before 8:30 am. Arrival time between 8:30 am and 8:45 am, ensures they have enough time to organise their belongings and be ready for the 8:55 am bell. Students who arrive later than this bell must sign in at the office.
- Sunhats are compulsory in Term 1 for all outdoor activities.
- Please make sure all items of school uniform are clearly named. Without this lost items are unlikely to be returned to the owner. The children are responsible for all their items of clothing and stationery, including the retrieval of lost pieces.
- Students bringing scooters to school need to remember their helmets and licence. New licences can be obtained through the office.

We are all very excited about the year ahead, the Kōwhai Team is an enthusiastic and industrious group of children who have made a very encouraging start to the year. We look forward to working in partnership with you and your child to develop lasting memories, personal achievements and friendships.

Kind regards

Cathrine Wilkinson (Team Leader), Amber Pullin, James Shelton and Tim Whimster

<b>Kōwhai Activity Fees - Term 1</b>	
Mathletics Subscription	\$21.00
Dragon Maths Workbook	\$17.95
Action English Workbook	\$17.95
Technology Materials fee (Charged Separately)	\$55.00
TOTAL	\$111.90