



# Wadestown School

## Kōwhai Team

### Newsletter

#### Term 1 2023



Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to 2023 with the Kōwhai Team.

It has been wonderful to see students and whānau back at school, refreshed and relaxed following the holiday season. According to the conversations with students, there have been many adventures and new experiences gained, in either the glorious sunshine of Wellington or in the rain further afield.

We extend a warm welcome to Maya Appleby and Sam Griffiths, and their families, who have joined Wadestown School and the Kōwhai Team. We trust they are enjoying their new environment and the friendships that are being created at school and in the local community.

This is the first of our team newsletters for the year. Its primary purpose is to keep you informed of the learning your child will be engaged in throughout the first school term. There is a further opportunity to meet the Kōwhai teaching team on Thursday 16 February from 6.45 pm to 7.15 pm, in the school hall, and to learn more about expectations and how the year will look for the Year 7 and 8 students.

The focus for the start of the year has been on familiarising the children with their new classrooms and routines, and building connections with their classmates and teachers. 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 an enthusiastic and positive Year 7 and 8 cohort.

### [The 2023 Kōwhai Teaching Team:](#)

The Kōwhai Team consists of three 'home' classes. Each student is assigned to an overseeing teacher and classroom, however, there are varying opportunities for the students to work together as a large cohort, as Year 7 or 8 groupings and with each of the teachers. Mel Beirne is with the Kōwhai Team on Thursdays and Fridays.

#### **Rm 17 - Cathrine Wilkinson**

*Deputy Principal Year 5 - 8*

*Team Leader*

[cathrine@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:cathrine@wadestown.school.nz)



Kia ora koutou

Since 2015, Wadestown School has been my 'home base' where I have held various roles across the Year 5-8 classes. Developing relationships with students is key for me and underpins the way I approach teaching. I enjoy collaborating with others to provide experiences that foster positive development, engage and extend the skills and abilities of our individual students.

My teaching career has spanned a number of decades. It has been interspersed with the privilege of travelling the world, both as a tourist and a sports person.

I relish having family time with my three sons and being active in the outdoors. I can normally be found mountain biking, road cycling, jogging and more recently walking anywhere I can find a little bit of peace and calmness.

#### **Rm 14 - Emily Houston**

[emily@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:emily@wadestown.school.nz)



Tēnā koutou katoa

I was raised in Whangārei where I studied Education at the University of Auckland Campus in Whangārei.

At the completion of my degree, I moved to Auckland to start my teaching career. I moved to Wellington last year, after teaching for four years in Auckland. I am very excited to be working with the Kōwhai Team again this year.

One of my passions is Te Reo Māori. For the past two years, I studied at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, whilst teaching. In addition, sports is another one of my passions. I am looking forward to helping your child to learn, and working alongside you to ensure they enjoy school and get the most out of every opportunity this year.

**Rm 13 - James Shelton**  
[james@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:james@wadestown.school.nz)



Kia ora koutou,

Born and raised in South Africa, I have lived and travelled most of the Southern tip of the African continent. I have been fortunate enough to have taught in both the primary and intermediate phases of school, as well as having been in charge of Science and computer laboratories. I moved to Wellington in 2018 and have loved living and working here.

I am a big believer in grit and persistence being the driving force of one's success, along with working intelligently with one's own unique abilities. I would describe my teaching style as humorous, empathetic and structured. I hold parent relationships in high regard, so I encourage whānau involvement in the teaching process where possible.

Having studied counselling psychology and computer science, I am very interested in harnessing STEM subject areas for the benefit of making learning engaging and accessible.

**Mel Beirne**  
*Thursdays and Fridays*  
[mel@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:mel@wadestown.school.nz)



Kia ora koutou

I have been teaching for 30 years and have held a variety of roles over this time. I am currently splitting my time working Monday to Wednesday as a learning support teacher alongside high-needs students and then in the Kōwhiri team releasing all three teachers on Thursday and Cathrine Wilkinson on Friday.

I am learning Te reo Māori and am committed to being as bilingual as I can in the classroom. I am passionate about the future of our environment and run working bees at our community orchard as well as volunteering for 'Predator free Brooklyn'.

I love to read in my spare time, run on the trails around Wellington, camp, tramp and garden. Spending time with my family, both my husband and children but also my extended family is very important.

It has been a pleasure meeting your tamariki and I look forward to learning and growing alongside them this year.

## Curriculum Overview

### Literacy

An ongoing focus for the year is developing our student's ability to write across a range of genres such as formal 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. At the heart of all writing, will be individual goal setting and reflection, so students know their areas of focus to grow their toolkit of writing skills.

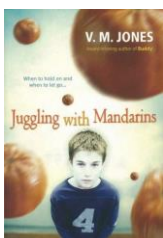


The formal **writing programme** begins with the students reflecting on who they are, their unique attributes and their lifelong experiences. This information will be used to generate their own small group 'documentaries' in a form that best suits their individual learning styles.

Weekly lists of **spelling** words will be analysed and learnt in class. Timetabled lessons throughout the week will teach strategies, rules and concepts to increase vocabulary understanding, recognition of spelling patterns and how to use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Weekly challenge words will focus on introducing students to new vocabulary.

### 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.



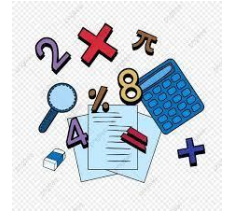
Key quotes and messages from the book that will be examined and discussed include-

- '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.'

The skills our readers will need to be familiar with as they read and review literature include: previewing and predicting, visualising, asking questions, summarising, inferring and responding.

## Mathematics

The mathematics programme is underway in our home classes, where the students have been reviewing and extending their knowledge of 'Probability and Chance'. Further into the term we will see the beginning of our Mathematics rotations. Each Kōwhiri teacher will be teaching a strand of the 'Number' component of the curriculum and students will rotate between the three classes, in three-week blocks.



Throughout the year varied grouping structures and 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.
- Mathematics 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.
- Additional homework time will be beneficial for those students who are not yet familiar with their basic facts.

## Science

The Science programme begins by exploring the skills, attitudes, models and processes required for scientific thinking. This will involve the students carrying out experiments related to 'The Material World' section of the curriculum.



These investigations and conversations will provide models for the students as they begin to think about how they will conduct their individual Science Fair projects that are scheduled for completion at the end of Term 2. Modelling and guidance will be provided this term to support the students with their investigations, along with the skills needed to manage a long-term project.

## Aotearoa New Zealand Histories

- Waitangi Day commemorations have been at the forefront of discussions to build knowledge and understanding about the wider context of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- At the end of the term and into Term 2 we will be moving towards implementing a *School Kit* resource: *Something happened here - Aotearoa NZ Histories*. This is a valuable resource that contains treasures and treasure hunts to reveal the history of a place. Each story will introduce a range of perspectives, and a breadth of sources. It exposes students to photos, documents, maps, national archives, museums, oral and social histories and digital storehouses and all with the understanding that history is messy.
- We are encouraging the students to be critical citizens – learning about the past to understand the present and prepare for the future.



## Social Sciences - Leadership

The key focus for term one is our Year 7 and 8 Leadership programme. Students have had the opportunity to reflect and provide suggestions for developing a Leadership programme that reflects their passions, visions and needs.

The current structure sees the programme organised into three components:

- STEP UP (Leadership positions, formal communication, organising and leading meetings, running events, buddy teaching)
- SPEAK UP (Debating, formal speech-making, impromptu speaking, visiting speakers)
- ACT UP (Drama activities, theatre sports, recordings and performances)

At the forefront of this programme are the Year 8 School Leadership roles. All students are currently examining leadership skills and styles and will be writing their application letters applying for their individual roles. All the Year 8 students will go through a formal individual interview process and will receive their roles at the beginning of Term 2. We endeavour to provide authentic leadership opportunities for the students to utilise their creative thinking and problem-solving skills.



We are currently in the process of introducing the 'Cool Schools' programme, where our Year 7 students will be trained to take on the roles of playground peer mediators.

## Te reo Māori

Hemi Prime our kapa haka kaiako will again be teaching all Kōwhai Team students Kapa Haka on Thursday mornings. Hemi will reinforce the tikanga and Te Reo Māori teaching that is being taught in the classroom setting.



Matua Alwyn will continue with his fortnightly Te Reo lessons, bringing his wealth of reo and history knowledge to each of the classrooms.

Each week the students will have a focus phrase to learn and apply in authentic contexts. This will involve extending their current vocabulary and applying their knowledge to sentence structures, questions and answers.

## Visual Arts



We begin the year by looking at portrait art. The students will be experimenting with colour, composition and different mediums to produce their own unique self-expression.

Further into the term, we will be exploring a range of techniques and styles used by New Zealand artists, including Reina Cottier, Glen Jones, Caz Novak, Reuben Paterson and Darren George.

## Technology

Technology is held at Karori West Normal School. The students complete six different seven-week blocks of lessons over their two years in the Kōwhai Team. For each rotation, there will be a group of students staying at school to participate in a Coding class with Mr Shelton.

- This year the **Term 1, 2 and 3** lessons will take place on a **Wednesday**. There are no lessons in Term 4.
- We will be travelling by bus and it is important the children arrive at school by **8:30 am** to have the roll taken. Buses leave school at 8.40 am.
- 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.
- An information **brochure** for students and parents has been distributed via email.

## Health and Physical Education

We have the vision to provide a positive environment for students to perform well and gain and retain enthusiasm for physical activity. Students will be exposed to competitive and non-competitive, individual and team activities that foster fair play and develop resilience. We aim to encourage, model and promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

Weather dependent, each Monday, Tuesday and Friday will begin the day with Kōwhai Team **Fitness** sessions that have a focus on 'Team Building'. On Thursday afternoons the students join together for **Physical Education** lessons. Activities this term are focused on the skills of 'Target Throwing' and 'Striking skills'.

## Inquiry

Our school-wide theme for 2023 is, '**This is Us**' and will be woven into all the curriculum areas throughout the year.

We begin by introducing the Te Whare Tapa Whā well-being model. The model describes health and wellbeing as a wharenuī/meeting house with four walls. These walls represent

- taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing,
- taha hinengaro/mental and emotional wellbeing
- taha tinana/physical wellbeing
- taha whānau/family and social wellbeing.

Our connection with the whenua/land forms the foundation. When all these things are in balance, we thrive. When one or more of these is out of balance our well-being is impacted.

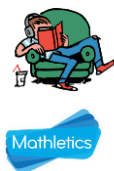
## EOTC - Year 7 and 8 Camp

Separate information regarding the 2023 Kaitoke Camp being held in the final week of term (3 - 6 April) will be emailed to parents next week outlining approximate costs, general information and offers for parent help.



## 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. An outline of the weekly activities will be posted through the students' Google Classroom accounts, along with a brief summary via the parent emails held by the school.
- Each week students will receive Mathletics activities and Action English tasks that support classroom learning. Additionally, a significant portion of time is expected to be spent reading.
- The 'official' homework schedule will commence in the week beginning Monday 13 February (Week 3).



## ICT in the Classroom

All the students in the Kōwhai Team have been given email addresses and passwords. These will enable them to access Gmail and all of the related Google applications. Emails are only to be used for school purposes.



## 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, through our Linewize notifications, for their own safety.

## Mobile Phones



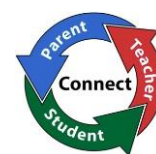
While we do not encourage students to bring in mobile phones we understand that there are circumstances where parents require their children to have their phones before and after school. Mobile phones are students' responsibility and should remain in their school bags unless specific permission has been given by a teacher. Students caught using their mobile phones during school time, without permission, will have their phones passed to the office for parents to collect.

## 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.

## How can you help your child?

Encourage your child to speak personally to any of their teachers if there is a problem or a worry. We are encouraging the maturing Kōwhai students to take the initiative and be part of the problem-solving process. It is easier to deal with issues on the day when all those involved are 'at hand'.



Please make contact early, if you have a concern. Problems usually don't go away by themselves and if they are left to build up, they become more and more difficult to address.

We value the Home-School partnership and your in-depth knowledge of your children in their home environment.

## 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.
- **Named sun hats** are compulsory in Term 1 for all outdoor activities.
- Please make sure all items of school uniform are clearly named- including drink bottles
- We are in the process of moving to a '**Zero Waste School**'. Please consider using reusable food containers as an alternative to single-use packaging. We are endeavouring to reduce the waste packaging we are adding to rubbish bins and our environment.

We are looking forward to working in partnership with you and your child to develop lasting memories, personal achievements and long-term friendships.

Ngā mihi nui

Cathrine Wilkinson (*Team Leader*), James Shelton, Emily Houston and Mel Beirne.  
(Kōwhai Teaching Team)

[cathrine@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:cathrine@wadestown.school.nz) (Room 17)

[james@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:james@wadestown.school.nz) (Room 13)

[emily@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:emily@wadestown.school.nz) (Room 14)

[mel@wadestown.school.nz](mailto:mel@wadestown.school.nz)

