



Wadestown School

*Te Whakatipu me to Honohono Hei Akonga
Growing and Connecting as Learners*



Kōwhai Team (Year 7 & 8) Newsletter Term 1, 2024

Nau mai, haere mai, welcome to 2024 with the Kōwhai Team.

It has been wonderful to witness students and whānau returning to school, reinvigorated and relaxed after the holiday season. From conversations with students, it is evident that many have embarked on exciting adventures and gained new experiences in various corners of our beautiful country.

We extend a warm welcome to our new students and families: Han (Year 8) and Michael (Year 7). We look forward to welcoming Marlo (Year 8) in the upcoming week. We trust they enjoy their new environment and the friendships formed both at Wadestown School and within the local community.

This newsletter marks the beginning of our communications for the year. Its primary purpose is to keep you informed of the learning experiences the Kōwhai students will be involved in throughout the first term. Additionally, there's an opportunity to meet the Kōwhai teaching team on Thursday, February 15, from 6:00 pm to 6:45 pm, in the school hall. Here, you can learn more about expectations and what the year holds for our Year 7 and 8 students.

As we begin the teaching year, our focus has been on familiarising the children with their new classroom routines and fostering connections with their peers and teachers. We have already witnessed numerous instances of enthusiasm, initiative and supportiveness among the students. Reflecting on these initial first weeks, we once again feel privileged to work alongside such an enthusiastic and positive Year 7 and 8 cohort.



Wadestown School 'GROW' Values

Our GROW values are integrated throughout our classroom programmes and are also celebrated and discussed in our whole school Hui-a-Kuras (School Assemblies).

G RATITUDE	R ESILIENCE	O THERS	W ONDER
(Whakawhetai)	(Pakari)	(Whānaungatanga)	(Mītharo)

[The Kōwhai Teaching Team - 2024](#)

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 Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays.



Rm 17 - Cathrine Wilkinson
Deputy Principal Year 5 - 8
Team Leader

cathrine@wadestown.school.nz

Kia ora koutou

Since 2015, Wadestown School has served as my professional hub and second home, where I have had teaching roles across the Year 5-8 classes. Building strong relationships with students and whānau lies at the heart of my teaching philosophy and guides my approach to education. I am an advocate for collaborative efforts that provide enriching experiences to support the positive growth of each student's unique abilities.

Over my lengthy teaching career, in both primary and secondary schools, I have been fortunate to intertwine my passion for education with global experiences; as a traveller, a teacher and a sportswoman.

Away from the classroom, I cherish moments spent with my husband and three sons, revelling in outdoor activities. Whether it is mountain biking, road cycling, jogging, or simply seeking serenity through leisurely walks and embracing the tranquillity of nature.



Rm 15 - Emily Houston
emily@wadestown.school.nz

Tēnā koutou katoa

I was raised in Whangārei where I studied Education at the University of Auckland Campus in Whangarei. After the completion of my degree, I moved to Auckland to start my teaching career. After four years teaching there, I moved to Wellington and Wadestown School. I am very excited to be working with the Kōwhai Team again this year.

One of my passions is Sports. I integrate the values of teamwork and resilience learned through sports into my teaching. In addition, Te reo Māori is another one of my passions. For the past years, I have studied at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, whilst teaching. I am looking forward to helping your child 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

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 areas of school and 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 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

Monday, Thursdays and Fridays

mel@wadestown.school.nz

Tēnā koutou katoa

I have been teaching for 30 years and have held a variety of roles over this time. I currently work at 3 different schools in the Wellington region and 3 days a week supporting/releasing the Kōwhai team; on Monday teaching in Room 13, Friday teaching in Room 17 and Thursday splitting myself between the three classes as the CRT release teacher. Tuesday and Wednesday I work as a learning support teacher working alongside children with high needs children, differentiating their learning programme and supporting their teacher aides and their teachers.

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

At Wadestown School we are continuing our journey with the 'Structured Literacy' approach and this year we are focusing on writing, starting with handwriting. A Structured Literacy approach is based on scientific evidence and provides explicit, systematic and sequential teaching of literacy. It includes teaching phonemes, letter-sound relationships, syllable patterns, morphemes, vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph structure and text structure. All teaching involves cumulative practice and ongoing review.

Handwriting:

Research has shown that the greatest impact on student writing is handwriting: students being able to form letters correctly and automatically. This reduces the cognitive load when a student is writing, and it has been shown that handwriting has a greater impact on learning and memory. * In 2024 all Y1-8 classes will have short handwriting lessons four times a week. Following the principles of Structured Literacy, handwriting lessons will be explicit, systematic, cumulative and diagnostic.

In Years 7 and 8 the students will be learning cursive writing, which is linked handwriting. Cursive handwriting increases the speed of writing. The steps to cursive writing are

- using the correct letter formation
- adding ligatures (joining strokes) to letters
- linking letter ligatures



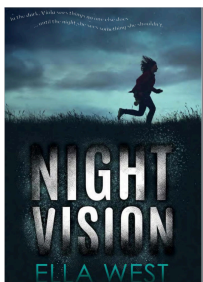
*Handwriting Better Than Typing for Learning and Memory https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l69-wKYn_Y

Spelling:

Students will continue to work in their assigned groups through 'The Code', a programme designed to build their understanding of spelling patterns, sounds, rules and morphology. We are seeing the benefits of starting the day with our daily 15-minute lessons, which have an explicit and systematic approach to spelling.



Reading:



All classes will be reading a shared novel based on the award-winning senior fiction book, “Night Vision” by Ella Jones. The techniques for ‘Sketch-noting’ will be practised, which is the creative and graphic process through which the students can record their thoughts using illustrations, symbols, structures and texts.

Following is a short synopsis of the novel:

“Viola was born with a genetic condition that makes sunlight deadly. In the dark of night, when most teenagers are tucked up in bed, Viola has the run of her parents' farm and the surrounding forest. She is used to seeing hidden things through her night-vision goggles, but one night she sees something that could get her into a whole lot of trouble...”

Key themes and messages to be discussed include:

- Accepting peoples' differences, showing empathy
- What values do we demonstrate when responding to moral dilemmas
- Are we upstanders or bystanders?

Writing:

We begin with our writing topic titled, ‘Sentence Surgery’. Sentences are the basic building blocks of writing. They are not to be dismissed as something too basic for the older students to engage in, as sentences “are literally miniature compositions”.

The sentence strategies that will be taught include:

- using the four types of sentences (statements, questions, exclamations and commands)
- understanding the concept of a sentence by distinguishing between sentences and fragments
- using conjunctions to extend responses (because, but, so)
- use subordinating conjunctions to reflect written language structures (although, unless)
- insert appositives to describe a noun
- combine two or more short sentences into a longer one.
- expand a basic ‘kernel’ sentence with details.

Numeracy

The mathematics programme is underway in our home classes, where the students have been reviewing and extending their knowledge of ‘Number Systems’. Further into the term, we will see the beginning of our Kōwhai Mathematics rotations. Each teacher will be teaching a concept from the ‘Algebra’ component of the mathematics curriculum. Students will be in mixed groups and rotate between the three classes, in three-week blocks.

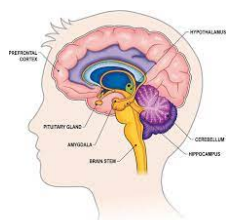


Throughout the year varied grouping structures and activities will provide the students with practical scenarios to apply knowledge and investigative strategies.

- All Year 7 and 8 students will have the opportunity to participate in the Otago Problem Challenge.
- Wadestown School will be entering teams into the Year 7 and 8 Wellington Mathswell competition
- Mathletics activities will be set as homework activities each week.
- Additional homework time will be needed for those students who are not yet familiar with their basic facts.

Schoolwide Inquiry: Science

The Science programme begins by exploring ‘The Brain’. This includes studying the physiological state of the brain and how we learn, along with optional brain dissecting activities



Later in the term we will be carrying out class investigations and conversations that will provide models for the students as they begin to think about how they will conduct their individual Science Fair projects. These are scheduled for completion at the end of Term 2. Modelling and guidance

will be provided to support the students with their topic selections and investigations, along with the skills needed to manage a long-term project.

Aotearoa New Zealand Histories

We are encouraging the students to be critical citizens – learning about the past to understand the present and prepare for the future. As part of our curriculum, we will delve into Waitangi history, unravelling the significance of this pivotal event. Our exploration will extend to Purakau (stories), including captivating stories like Whataitai and Ngake, and the significance of naming islands in our harbour through the lens of Kupe's navigation.



We will be connecting our students to their local area, intertwining geography with history to create a richer understanding of our roots.

Social Sciences and the Key Competencies - Leadership

The primary focus for Term One is our Year 7 and 8 Leadership programme. Students have the opportunity to reflect and provide suggestions for developing a Leadership Programme tailored to their passions, visions and needs. We aim to foster students with genuine leadership opportunities that harness their capacity for creative problem-solving.

Central to this initiative are the Year 8 School Leadership roles. Students explore leadership skills and styles, culminating in application letters for their preferred roles. All Year 8 students will undergo a formal individual interview process, with roles finalised by the beginning of Term 2.



Year 7 students use the Tuakana-Teina model to engage with younger peers, guiding and leading initiatives geared towards nurturing their leadership capabilities. Through participation in the 'Cool Schools' programme, Year 7 students are equipped with the training necessary to assume the responsibilities 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.



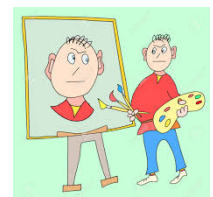
Hemi will reinforce the tikanga and Te Reo Māori teaching that is being taught in the classroom setting. There will also be an opportunity for students to opt into the Kapa Haka Performance Group, to represent Wadestown Kura at the annual festivals.

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

This term is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for Te Reo Māori through Mihi learning. This involves building connections through introductions, encompassing aspects such as names, whānau (siblings), birthplaces, and ancestral ties. We will delve into sentence starters like Ko, No, I, Kei, He, enabling students to express their identity and acknowledge others. Furthermore, our focus extends to the practice of Mihi Whakatau, encompassing both language (kupu) and cultural protocols (tikanga) with emphasis on mana whenua.

Visual Arts

We commence the year by delving into the domain of portrait art. Throughout this unit of work, students will engage in a variety of explorations, focusing on colour, composition and diverse mediums to create their distinct forms of self-expression.



Technology

Technology is held at Karori West Normal School. This year the lessons begin in Term 2. 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 2, 3 and 4 lessons will take place on a Wednesday. There are no lessons in Term 1. Further information will be made available at the end of Term 1.

Health and Physical Education

Weather dependent, each Monday (Muscular Monday), Tuesday (Teamwork Tuesday) and Friday (Four Choice Friday) will begin the day with Kōwhai Team Fitness sessions that have a focus on 'Team Building' and personal fitness. On Thursday afternoons the students join together for Physical Education lessons. Activities this term are focused on building endurance for our Curious Cove hike up Mount Kahikatea followed by 'Target Throwing' and 'Striking skills'.



In Health, our inquiry into the 'Power of the Mind' serves to foster a growth mindset and delves into the mechanisms of learning, as well as the brain's role in our decision-making processes.

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC)

Documentation regarding our Curious Cove Camp in Week 6 (Monday, March to Friday, March 8) has been distributed to students and also sent via email. Kindly ensure all deadlines for returns and submissions are adhered to, to facilitate a smooth and effective administrative processes.

ICT in the Classroom and the Digital Curriculum

- We try to ensure a harmonious blend of digital resources with traditional teaching methods, creating an environment where technology is used to complement the curriculum.
- All the students in the Kōwhai Team have been given Wadestown School 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. For their online safety, we will continue to monitor students' online activity, through our Linewize notifications.



- **BYOD (Bring your own device)**
Students can 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. Most Chromebook devices work well within our Google ecosystem. If you have questions regarding the suitability of your student's device, please feel free to contact James: james@wadestown.school.nz
- **Cell Phones**
While we do not encourage students to bring in cell phones we understand that there are circumstances where parents require their children to have their phones before and after school. Cell phones are students' responsibility and should remain in their school bags unless specific permission has been given by a teacher. Students caught using their cell phones during school time, without permission, will have their phones passed to the office for parents to collect.

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 passions.
- Activities will be set on a Monday and are due on a Friday. An outline of the weekly activities will be posted through the students' Google Classroom accounts.
- 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 Week 3. (This is dependent on the arrival of the Action English Workbooks and the 'roll-over' of the Mathletics accounts for 2024.)



Useful Reminders

Communication with Teachers

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.

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. Please reach out early if you have any concerns. Problems typically do not resolve on their own, and when left unattended, they tend to escalate, making them harder to address over time.

How can you help your child?

Encourage your child to speak directly to any of their teachers if they encounter a problem or have a concern. We are encouraging our maturing Kōwhai students to take the initiative and actively participate in the problem-solving process. Addressing issues promptly is more manageable when everyone involved is accessible on the same day.

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

Points to Note

- 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 named- including drink bottles
- We are endeavouring to reduce the waste packaging we are adding to rubbish bins and our environment. Please consider using **reusable food containers** as an alternative to single-use packaging.

We are looking forward to collaborating with you and your child to cultivate lasting memories, individual accomplishments and lifelong friendships.

Ngā mihi nui

Cathrine Wilkinson (Team Leader), Mel Beirne, James Shelton, Emily Houston

cathrine@wadestown.school.nz

james@wadestown.school.nz

emily@wadestown.school.nz

mel@wadestown.school.nz

Kōwhai Activity Donations 2024	
Amount Charged to Student Statement - \$100.00	
Term 1 (No additional activity donations this term)	N/A



Radial Symmetry Name Art



Visiting Moko the 800-year-old kauri tree at Otari Bush



Water Safety lesson



Kapa Haka with Hemi



All smiles when cleaning the desks



Year 8 Cohort



Year 7 Cohort



Year 7 and 8 2024 - Ready for the challenges, new learnings and adventures that await.