

Tauranga Special School

Learning together



Newsletter 1 2026, Week 3, 19/02/2026

Welcome to our new look Newsletter!

We are looking at having more interest pieces and community notices in our newsletter.

If you have any suggestions of what to add please email, pipj@taurangaspecialschool.nz

Key Contacts:

School Landline:
07 578 4424

Attendance phone,
(Call/Text): 027 558 5917

Important dates:

Tuesday, 24 February

-Let's Connect /
DIY Dinner Drop In:
4pm-6pm
(See flier below)

Tuesday, 3 March

- Whānau meeting

Friday, 20 March

- School Photos

Monday, 21 March

-Staff only day,
School closed for students

Wednesday, 1 April

-Whole school event,
Whānau fun day

Thursday, 2 April

-Last day of term

A message from our Principal

Tēnā koutou katoa, Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa – Warm greetings to you all.

It has been a fantastic first few weeks at TSS. Seeing our ākonga (students) settle so quickly back into their routines after the long summer break has been wonderful.

Our EOTC programs are already in full swing, with many students enjoying their visits to RDA, Baywave, Greerton Pool, and our own Base pool. Fridays are a highlight; our Base school becomes a hive of activity as students from all sites gather for Kapa Haka. It is great to see our staff and students connecting and building such strong bonds.



Staying Connected

Clear communication is vital for our school community. Here is a quick guide on how we will be sharing news and updates with you this year:

Our Website: We have recently updated our website with fresh photos of all our sites across Tauranga. It remains your primary source for general information and key dates. Check it out here.

Email (EDGE): Our School Management System, EDGE, is our main tool for whole-school notices. You will receive newsletters, important updates, and specific letters via this system. Your child's teacher may also reach out to you directly through email.

Newsletter: Welcome to our "new look" newsletter for 2026! We will send these out every two weeks on a Thursday (specifically Weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9 this term). Each edition will feature updates from our therapists and different classes sharing their recent mahi.

Whānau Hui: Held in Week 5 of every term, these face-to-face meetings are a vital time to connect directly with school leaders. It's a space to hear about current initiatives and, more importantly, have your say in the direction of our school.

Storypark: This is our window into your child's learning journey. Teachers and therapists will post updates every week. We also encourage you to use the app to share photos of what your child is doing outside of school—it's a wonderful way to strengthen the home-school connection. School reports and IP/Ara updates will also be posted here at the end of Terms 2 and 4.

Facebook: In 2026, we are increasing our presence on Facebook. Follow us for photos of school life and relevant community information. Follow us here.

Contact Information

If you need to reach us, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our Leadership Team, the office, our Therapy team, or your child's teacher.

School Landline: 07 578 4424

Attendance (Mobile/Text): 027 558 5917- please message this number as early as possible if your child will be away. Make sure you give the reason for the absence. Don't forget to contact Cross Country Rentals if your child uses the taxi service as well.

We look forward to a brilliant year of learning and growth together.

Ngā mihi nui,

Dale Megson

Tumuaki / Principal

Important notices:



Taxi reminder:

This is a reminder that it is the responsibility of the whānau / caregiver to secure your child into their seat correctly and safely.

It is not the responsibility of the Taxi driver to fasten and unfasten the students.

Please note drivers are responsible for tethering wheelchairs only.

Also, if your child is not requiring a taxi trip for any reason to please contact Cross Country Rentals 0275470351, so they can let the driver know.

Attendance phone:

027 558 5917



When you message the attendance phone please ensure that your message contains your child's **full name** and a **clear reason for absence**. If they're going to be absent for more than one day, please let us know or message each day.

If you haven't messaged the attendance phone before 9.15 am, please expect contact from Michele (our TSS Attendance Officer) as she needs to find out these details.

Speech and Language Therapy

The SLT team works to develop communication and eating, drinking and swallowing skills.



Billie Hampton Edwards
Kaiarataki mātanga - Team Leader
Kaiwhakatika Reo Kōrero
Speech Language Therapist



Alysa Duda
Kaiwhakatika Reo Kōrero
Speech Language Therapist



Rebecca Scott
Kaiwhakatika Reo Kōrero
Speech Language Therapist



Kathleen Jones
Kaiwhakatika Reo Kōrero
Speech Language Therapist

Here at Tauranga Special School we use a 'Rule of Two' and a 'Total Communication' approach. The 'Rule of Two' means that typically in addition to spoken language we always add in another support whether it be a sign, gesture, coreboard or object to help understanding and model expression. Naturally this approach is adapted for our students who are deaf and/or blind. The 'Total Communication' approach is defined by using all possible means of communication to help our students' to understand their world and to be understood.

This may include:

- Gesture and body movements
- Facial expression
- Tone of voice
- Sounds
- Sign language
- Pictures
- Reading/ writing
- Speech
- A communication app on an iPad or device



The Speech and Language Therapy Team are part of each and every class at Tauranga Special School. We work at Base school, the Satellite classes and in our offsite community classes. We provide assessment and advice on all aspects of communication and eating, drinking and swallowing skills. Following assessment and in consultation with whānau and class teams, programmes and recommendations are made.

Communication and sometimes mealtime strategies (Kai Kawa Plans), which can include the adaptation of the environment, are used in each class to support all the students. All new students to our school have an assessment period and individual programmes are set as required. Students are supported around major transition periods or through transition to other schools. Workshops and in-house training about communication and safe eating and drinking are available to classes according to need.

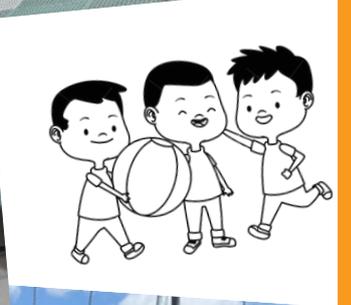
Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to talk to us!

Room 4, Hayley

Welcome back to school! In Room 4 we have enjoyed making new friends and strengthening friendships from last year. We have enjoyed getting back into our classroom routine with a few tweaks here and there.

The students are enjoying the lower playground and exploring new spaces.

Check us out!



Welcome Bay, Cheyenne



Toroa class has had an awesome start to the year. We are settling back into school life and learning our new classroom routines.

As we settle back in we have been enjoying getting creative with some art work, experimenting with different colours, textures and materials. We have been using a hands on approach for sensory learning which is everyone's favourite activity - messy play!

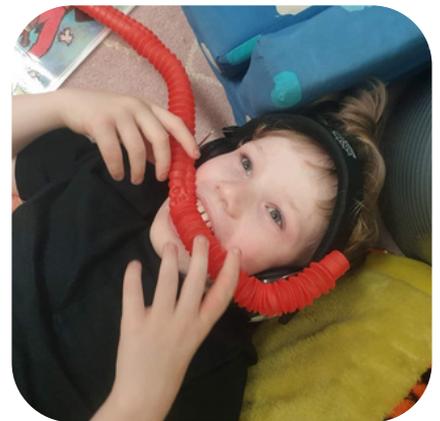
We have also been exploring the sandpit on sunny days which has provided wonderful learning opportunities to take turns, share and show kindness to our peers. Along side all this fun we have been getting stuck into our learning, showing curiosity and excitement for our new curriculum. What a fantastic start to the year Toroa class!



Room 2, Michael



It has been great fun in Room two this year. We have been working on all our daily routines. All the Room 2 students have been settling into school. Two of our class have started horse riding with RDA and are really enjoying it. Each of the students have been finding great moments of calm and joy at school. What a great way to start the year!



Welcome Bay, Kirsty

Kea Class have had a great first couple of weeks back at school. We have enjoyed welcoming our four new students and making connections. We shared photos from our summer holiday and created art works to share our pepeha with our new friends.

This term we are also exploring stories through our English and Topic work. We have been reading 'Monkey and Me,' by Emily Garvett and learning to engage and interact using our communication devices. We are also learning about different letter sounds and story features, through making and playing with puppets, building story settings and lots of fun games and sensory play! What a great start to the year everyone - ka pai!



Community notices



TAURANGA SPECIAL SCHOOL



LETS CONNECT! BYO PICNIC



TUESDAY 24 FEB | 4-6PM



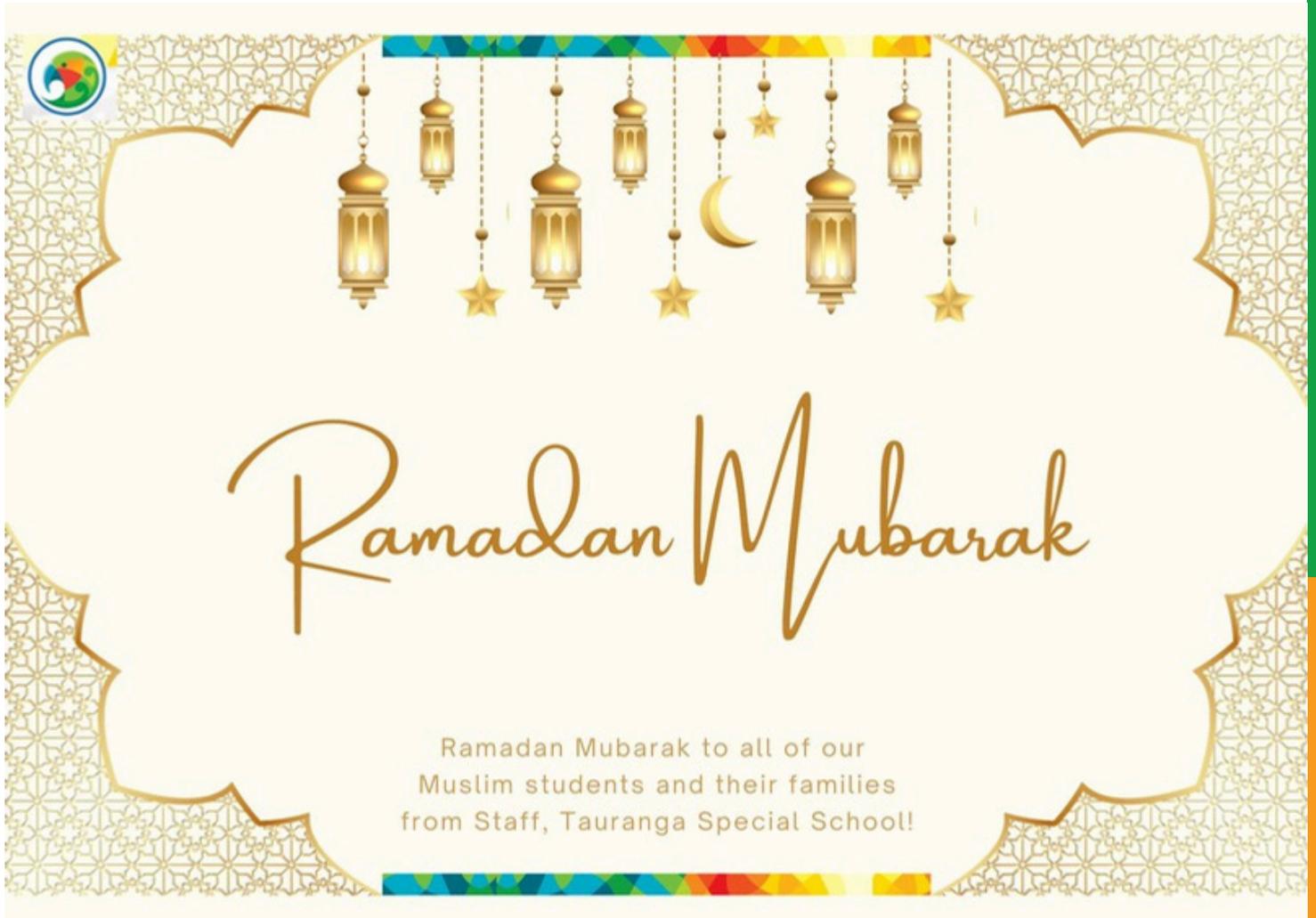
OPEN INVITE TO ALL STAFF AND WHĀNAU MEMBERS
TO COME CONNECT WITH OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM,
BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND EACH OTHER



TSS Base School
39 Eighteenth Ave



Bring the whole whānau and a picnic.
There will be games and activities, information stations,
and free ice blocks!



If any of our staff or whānau are observing Ramadan, we are very happy to support you so please feel welcome to get in touch with us!



Te Tēnehi o Aotearoa

HAVE A GO TENNIS & GAMES



SATURDAY 28TH FEB
10am-3pm, includes Lunch

**Open to Wheelchair
Participants - All ages
and abilities & their
Whanau.**

**PROFESSIONAL
COACHING
PROVIDED**



**Papamoa Tennis Club, Gordon Spratt Reserve,
Parton Road, Tauranga
Register via tegan@tennis.kiwi**



Parent to Parent

connect • inform • support

Multicultural Family Day

Event details

Date & Time

Sat 28th February

10:00am - 12:00pm

Venue

Te Puke Plunket, Whānau Room, 13 Queen Street, Te Puke 3119

Event contact

Jane Ford

jane@parent2parent.org.nz 027 808 3945

Come along to connect with new families and cultures of Te Puke and find support through shared experience.

Parent to Parent is inviting all families and their children for a morning tea get together to talk about the joys and challenges of raising a disabled child in New Zealand. Bring a plate to share, extended family are very welcome!

Join Neena Chauhan, resident of Te Puke, Community Liaison and multi-language teacher, who has spent 22 years working as an interpreter and translator in the Indian community. Neena will share her personal experiences and how she has worked to bridge gaps across communities. For all families of children with physical / learning disabilities or high health needs. This event is free. Please bring a plate to share.

Children are very welcome!


**CHILDREN'S
DAY 2026**

**Tamariki take
over the city!**

23 Feb – 1 March



This year Children's Day is growing even bigger than ever before, with a week of city-wide events popping up across Tauranga from 23 February to 1 March, all leading to the much-loved Children's Day in our city centre event on Sunday 1 March.

What's happening?

 **City-wide Children's Day events across Tauranga - Click here to see what's on**

Children's Day in our city centre event:

 **Sunday, 1 March 2026 (10am – 3pm)**

 **Tauranga city centre (various locations)**

 **FREE**

 **Open to all ages and abilities**

Full event details on What's on Tauranga

This year there are MORE play zones, MORE activities, and MORE ways for tamariki of all ages and abilities to get amongst the fun!

 **ARTS & CRAFTS ZONE - The Cargo Shed**

 **PERFORMANCE ZONE - Tauranga waterfront, Park North**

 **EVENT ZONE - The Strand & Masonic Park**

 **ACTIVITY ZONE - Tauranga waterfront, Park South**

 **NEON DISCO ZONE - Baycourt Community & Arts Centre**

 **CONSTRUCTION ZONE - Te Manawataki o Te Papa site, off Willow Street**

 **NEW! MAD SCIENTIST ZONE - He Puna Manawa, Tauranga Library**

 **LOW SENSORY ZONE - He Puna Manawa, Tauranga Library**

 **NEW! LEGO Zone - Tauranga City Council, 90 Devonport Road**

 **NEW! DRESS UP PARADE - Meet at Masonic Park at 1.30pm**

Plus additional activities at:

 **TINKD MAKERSPACE - Basestation, 148 Durham Street (9am-1pm)**

 **TOI Tauranga Art Gallery - 108 Willow Street**

Surfers Healing

**Mount Maunganui, Aotearoa
21st March, 2026**



**Our mission is to enrich the
lives of people living with
autism by exposing them to the
unique experience of surfing.
Please RSVP Via email**



surfershealingnz@gmail.com

surfershealingnz.co.nz

Surfers Healing is a free surf camp for children on the autism spectrum, offering tamariki and their whānau an unforgettable day in the ocean. It's a day of pure joy – giving autistic children the chance to experience the thrill of catching waves in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. With the help of our experienced volunteer surfers and caring crew, we create a space that celebrates every child for who they are and brings families together through the magic of the ocean.

Participation is completely free.

To register, please email surfershealingnz@gmail.com with the following details:

Participant's full name

Which event you wish to register for (Mount Maunganui)