

Tauranga Special School

Learning together



Newsletter 13 Week 8 Term 3 10/09/2026

Kia ora e te whānau,

Inside this issue, our Speech Language Therapy team share fun ways to connect through play at home, including an easy cornflour gloop recipe. You will also see what our students in Room One and our TKOM satellite have been up to across our classrooms, from playing in the wind and painting, to practicing hair and tooth brushing, building sandcastles, exploring sensory stories, and trying out horse riding. Keep an eye out for next weeks special edition for AIMS games.

If you have anything to add to future newsletters please email:
pipj@taurangaspecialschool.nz

Key Contacts

School Landline:
07 578 4424

Attendance phone (call/txt):
027 558 5917

Important dates

Thursday 17

September

**Special School Kapa
haka festival**

Tuesday 22 September

**Whole school
Multicultural event**

Friday 25 September

Last day of Term 3

Monday 12 October

Term 4 starts

A message from our Principal

Kia ora e te whānau,

It has been a super busy first 8 weeks of Term 3! We have not only managed high levels of staff and student sickness, but held most of our Term 3 IP and Ara meetings as well. Thank you to everyone who has attended these, they are so important for reflecting on your child's progress and achievements. We are aware that some meetings have not yet taken place, but we are hoping to complete these remaining meetings over the next few weeks.



AIMS Games: Many of our intermediate-aged students have been competing in the AIMS Games this week! We had a number of students involved in Cross Country on Sunday, and Indoor Bowls on Tuesday and Wednesday, with Table Tennis still to come tomorrow. Our students are doing exceptionally well and are having a lot of fun. It is fantastic to have our school on show as the only Special School in the country represented! A huge thank you to the staff and whānau who have supported our students throughout this week. We will share a special newsletter next week to showcase the students' achievements.

Planning for Next Year: Although it feels like the year just started, we are beginning to plan for 2027! With our continued school growth, we are interviewing for new teachers in the coming weeks as well as planning transitions for students who will be changing classes or sites for 2027. We will be having conversations with whānau if this impacts your child. It is timely to remind everyone that our students transition between sites; including to and from Base, Primary satellites, and Senior satellites/Transition hubs, as the ever changing nature of our school means we adapt to meet everyone's needs.

Key Dates & Reminders

- **Special School Kapa Haka Festival (Karāpiro):** Thursday, 17th September
 - Many of our senior students have been practicing very hard for this event! As a reminder, due to the distance required to travel, only a select group of students will be attending.
- **Multicultural Day:** Tuesday, 22nd September, 10:30am – 12:30pm (Whole school event at Base)
 - We would love to see as many whānau there as possible! Please let your child's class teacher know if you are able to attend.

Please don't hesitate to contact me or a member of our Leadership Team if you have any questions, concerns, or need support.

Ngā mihi nui,

Dale Megson

Tumuaki/ Principal

CELEBRATION

**TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 22 2026
10:30-12:30
BASE SCHOOL**

Speech and Language therapy

Bringing Play and Engagement Home: Connection, Communication, and Fun

At our recent Staff Only Day, our Speech Language Therapy (SLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) teams got together to talk about something we love: Play and Engagement. We looked at how simple, joyful connection builds the foundation for communication and learning.

Engagement: The Building Blocks for Communication

When we connect with our kids on their level, communication follows naturally. It all starts with sharing fun, curiosity, and trust.

Joining Your Young Person in Play

Whether your child is 5 or 21, here are three easy ways to join in:

***Notice:** Watch what catches their attention. Are they lining up toys, watching things spin, or loving movement?*

***Join in:** Play alongside them with your own set of toys or equipment instead of taking theirs. If you're not sure what to do, just copy what they are doing.*

***Repeat:** Use simple words or sounds over and over to make a fun game (like "Ready... set... GO!"). Use your child's communication system if they have one. Pause to see if they look up, use a gesture, or make a sound to keep the game going.*



Engagement Ideas for Older Students

Play changes as our kids grow, but it never stops being important. Connecting with older kids might look like:

Hanging out together: Sitting side-by-side to listen to music, watch videos, or draw/colour in.

Quick games & laughs: Playing simple games or sharing silly jokes.

Moving together: Shooting hoops, dancing, or going for a walk without needing to talk the whole time.

Showing interest: Getting involved in what they love, however they like to enjoy it.



Easy Sensory Play: Cornflour Gloop Recipe

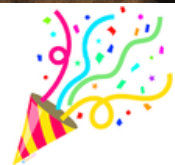
Sensory play is a great way to relax and connect without any pressure. Do you have some expired cornflour in your pantry? Give this gloop a go! Ingredients: 1 cup cornflour, ½ cup water, and optional food coloring.

Instructions: Mix the cornflour and water in a shallow tray until smooth.

How to play: Scoop it up, let it melt through your fingers, and use fun sounds like "Ooey!" or "Squeeze!"



Room 1 Sara



This term we've been really enjoying having fun and playing together in the classroom and in the playground. We like engaging in activities such as the parachute, bungee, bubbles, music and other sensory items together.



Te Kura o Manunui Cathryn

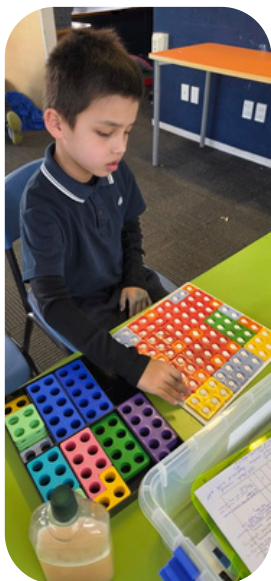


We are enjoying a busy term full of different activities. Inspired by our story about a breezy day blowing laundry off the line, the children washed socks and practiced clipping them onto the clothesline to dry. We took full advantage of the windy weather to explore how different materials move in the wind, with colorful ribbons and floating balloons quickly becoming firm favorites to chase. In art, the children have been creating patterns by blowing paint across paper with straws. We have been working on independence skills by practicing how to brush our hair and teeth. During cooking we have been tasting different fruits and making fruit skewers.



Te Kura o Manunui Jay

We have been having lots of fun learning through a variety of experiences. We have been moving our bodies out in the playground climbing and building sandcastles. In bucket time and in our sensory story the legend of Mauao we have been exploring sensory experiences, getting hands - on and curious with different textures and materials. Some of us have been enjoying horseriding, developing confidence and growing trusting relationships with the horses. We have been learning with numicon in maths and practising our self care skills like brushing our teeth. It has been wonderful to see curiosity and enjoyment as we explore and learn in so many different ways!



Community notices

you are invited to
IHC TAURANGA ASSOCIATION'S

Masquerade BALL



SATURDAY
3 OCTOBER 2026
6pm-10:30pm

STADIUM LOUNGE, MERCURY BAYPARK
84 Truman Lane, Mount Maunganui

For people with intellectual disabilities aged 18 and over.

Formal dress, masks optional.

DJ and dancing.

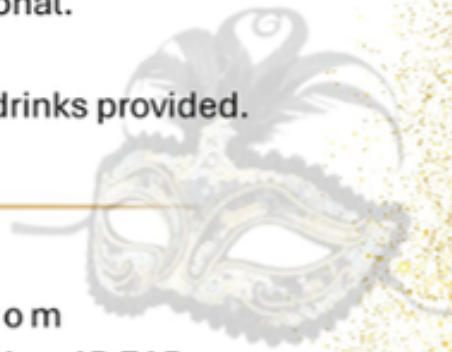
Light supper and two non-alcoholic drinks provided.

Cash bar available.

TICKETS \$40

purchase tickets from

<https://trybooking.com/nz/BEIP>



All enquiries to:

ihc.taurangaassociation@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE, supervision is not provided.

Caregivers will need their own tickets.



TAURANGA LAUNCH

Inclusive strength, movement and confidence
for all abilities aged 6 to 82+.



OFFICIALLY LAUNCHING

WEEKLY

ON SATURDAYS AT 11AM



STARTING

17TH OCT 2026



THE LAB ATHLETIC CLUB

14 ST JOHN STREET,
TAURANGA

PROUDLY PARTNERING WITH



THE LAB
ATHLETIC CLUB



AVB LAB UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO - TAURANGA CAMPUS

We provide free to access evidence based behavioural support in the form of research.

Monthly whanau coffee mornings

We want to hear from you to ensure future projects support where it is needed.

Next coffee morning:

Monday 14 September - 10-11am
(scan the QR code to RSVP)



Currently recruiting for

Parent coaching to support water safety skills for neurodiverse children

Visit our current projects page on the website for more information on how to sign up.

Potential future projects for 2027....

- VR/AR teaching to increase app accessibility
- VR/AR teaching to improve safety skills
- More to be confirmed

www.verbalbehaviour.co.nz



University of Waikato School of Psychological and Social Sciences

Master's research into Water Safety



Parent coaching to support water safety skills for neurodiverse children

Participants

- Is your child aged between 6 and 14 years old?
- Is your child diagnosed as neurodiverse?
- Does your child have limited or no water safety skills (e.g., waiting to access pools under adult supervision, walking near the pool's edge)?

If you answered yes to the above, you may qualify to take part in research.

Research description

- The research aims to investigate whether parent coaching is effective in supporting water-safety skills among neurodiverse children.
- It also aims to investigate if, once taught, the skills transfer to a new pool.

If you are interested in your child participating in this study, or would just like further information about what is involved, please contact Rebecca Barker, Master's Student at the University of Waikato.

Email: rb212@students.waikato.ac.nz
Phone: 021 081 91376



THE WILSON HOME TRUST

GRANTS FOR PHYSICALLY DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Grant funding is available for children and young adults that have a physical disability up to the age of 22 - check out the qualifying criteria at:

www.wilsonhometruster.org.nz

Equipment / Activity
Grants

Respite and Holiday
Grants

Young Adults Grants

Only two more closing
dates before the end of
the year - 1 October and
19 November



For More Information:

www.wilsonhometruster.org.nz

0800 948 787 or email info@wilsonhometruster.org.nz





Social Board Game Session

(For Intermediates, Teens and their caregivers)

Paragons is a group where those that live with neurodiversity or disabilities, can come together, make friends, and get support.

Please join us for our next board game afternoon.

Games, snacks and drinks are provided.

Saturday 19th September

2pm to 4pm

Merivale Community Centre

10 Kesteven Ave, Merivale

Numbers are capped to make it lower sensory.

For more info or to book a spot, please email:

paragonsnz@gmail.com



A big thank you to the teams at Parent to Parent and the Merivale Community Centre for supporting this event.

A can of food for the Community Centre and a gold coin donation towards food and drink is appreciated.

Tauranga Special Olympics



FOOTBALL TEAM

We are gauging interest in
creating a football team.

Do you or someone you know
like football, or would you like
to give it a go?



If you are interested please
send a text or email to Tina on



021 163 9853



chrisandtinamaitland@msn.com

Dates, times and venues to be confirmed
if we have enough athlete's/player interest.

Play · Include · Belong