

Tauranga Special School

Learning together



Newsletter 8 Week 8 Term 2 11/06/2026

Kia ora e te whānau

In this newsletter you will check out what has been happening at Te Kura o Manunui satellite and room 1.

We ask that you please carefully read the letter from Cross country rentals about the taxi service.

You will also be delighted to see the awesome photos of some of our senior students have a great time at the Special Olympics football.

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

Important dates

Tuesday 30 June

Matariki

Whole school event

Friday 3 July

End of term 2

Monday 20 July

Term 3 starts

Key Contacts

School Landline:

07 578 4424

Attendance phone (call/txt):

027 558 5917

A message from our Principal

Kia ora e te whānau,

I hope you all enjoyed the recent King's Birthday long weekend. As a reminder, this is a long 11-week term, so we are focusing on keeping our daily routines consistent and staying healthy as the winter weather sets in.

Recent Travel & Networking

I have recently had the privilege of spending time away on two different trips, both of which proved invaluable. The first allowed me to connect with Central and South Island Special School Principals, providing an opportunity to collaborate with peers who face the exact same unique challenges and operational contexts as we do. The second trip was with our local Western Bay of Plenty Principals, focusing on deepening our understanding of visual New Zealand history and bicultural partnership. This journey took us to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, to Manea Footprints of Kupe and Tāne Mahuta to explore kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and to Whangārei Boys' High School for a powerful leadership workshop with Alec Solomon. Ultimately, travelling with our Western Bay colleagues allowed for an opportunity to network and share insights, which is vital as we look to grow our presence, strengthen partnerships, and advocate for our students right here in our local area.

Transport Response (SESTA)

You may have recently seen the tragic news from Auckland regarding an eight-year-old student who escaped from a school transport vehicle unnoticed and unfortunately drowned on his way home from school. While the full circumstances surrounding this heartbreaking event are still being investigated, it serves as a sobering reminder of why transit safety must always be a high priority. In light of this tragedy, we have proactively reviewed our afternoon loading protocols at all sites to ensure every student is fully secured and checked before departure. We kindly ask that you do the same at home. Please double-check that all specialised harnesses, car seats and safety strap configurations are fully locked and secure before your child leaves in the van each day. You will also see a letter to parents from our Transport provider- Cross Country Rentals included in this newsletter. By working together and keeping our checks consistent at both ends of the journey, we can ensure our tamariki stay safe.

Mānawatia a Matariki

We warmly invite our school community to join us as we celebrate the Māori New Year and welcome the rising of Matariki.

Where: Tauranga Special School – BASE School

When: Tuesday, 30th June 2026

Time: 10:30am – 12:30pm

Please join us for two hours of fun, connection, and enjoyment. Our classes are busy preparing and will be making delicious kai to share with everyone. It is a wonderful time for us to come together, reflect on the year that has passed, and look forward to the future as a school whānau.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Dale Megson

Tumuaki / Principal





Tuesday, 9 June 2026

Dear parents, caregivers and schools,

In light of the tragic incident involving the death of a school student while being transported by another SESTA service operator, I have followed the media coverage over the week with deep sadness.

Our thoughts are with the student's family, their friends and school community, and the transport team involved at this incredibly difficult time.

Although this incident did not involve Cross Country Rentals, it has prompted us to immediately review our own practices and reinforce the critical responsibility and duty of care our team carries in transporting your students safely to and from school every day. This is supported by our training, robust systems, clear procedures, and a strong culture of accountability.

Just as importantly, my team and I are committed to continuous improvement and to strengthening our approach whenever an event highlights opportunities to learn, review, and improve.

Since this tragic incident, and as a precaution, we have taken immediate action to reinforce our safety standards, mitigate risks, support our drivers and identify further opportunities for continuous improvement.

This includes:

- delivering in-person SESTA refresher driver training to reinforce the key safety requirements that protect your students and our drivers;
- reminding our drivers about their key responsibilities to ensure our procedures and safeguards are followed that protect your students;
- keeping in constant contact with our partners, the Ministry of Education;
- identify further operational opportunities for continuous improvement.

If you are not aware, our dedicated team has been providing Specialised School Transport Assistance (SESTA) services under contract to the Ministry of Education since 2012. I am proud of the professionalism of our drivers, the condition of our vehicles, and the training and robust procedures we have in place that have helped build and maintain Cross Country Rentals' reputation for almost 20 years.

Just as importantly, we are committed to continually reviewing and strengthening our systems so that we keep improving the safety and quality of the service we provide to you.

Should you have any questions about the quality of our service, we welcome you to contact our National SESTA Manager Marise Bergmann by emailing mariseb@crosscountryrentals.co.nz or ringing +64 27 256 9888

Regards

James Snelgrove
Director
Cross Country Rentals

Special Olympics Football



On Wednesday 10th we had a very successful Special Olympics Football event held for the first year indoors at the Haumaru sports hall on Cameron Rd. It was a warm, dry, safe accessible space. Students and staff had a lot of fun and it catered to all abilities.



Three of our students also participated in saying the Special Olympics oath at the start of the event, in front of the whole gathering. They spoke with great confidence and bravery.

Ka pai everyone!



Special Olympics Football





YOU ARE INVITED!

Manawatia a Matariki
2026

Tuesday 30th June | 10:30AM-12:30PM

Tauranga Special School-Base

39 Eighteenth Ave

Activities, Waiata and more

Kai from 12 pm

Speech Language Therapy Team

Speech Language Therapy Team Update

Kia ora koutou,

We have some exciting changes and updates to share regarding our Speech Language Therapy (SLT) team as we move through this busy term and look ahead to the next.

Farewell to Billie

At the start of May, we said farewell to Billie Hampton Edwards, our long-standing Therapy Team Leader and SLT. Billie moved on to a well-deserved break after 12 years at our kura.

Leadership and Team Continuity

Following Billie's departure, we are pleased to announce that Kathleen Jones has been appointed as the new Therapy Team Leader. Kathleen will maintain a speech language therapy caseload alongside her new leadership responsibilities. We also want to acknowledge Rebecca Scott, who continues in her full-time SLT role, providing steady support across our kura.

Looking Ahead to Term 3

We are looking forward to welcoming back some familiar faces and strengthening our team for the second half of the year:

Kit Spurgeon: Kit will be returning from parental leave at the start of Term 3 working three days a week.

Alysa Duda: We are thrilled that Alysa will be continuing with us in a permanent position, working four days a week, after covering Kit's parental leave for the past year.

Bridget Fox: We are also very happy to welcome Bridget Fox back to the team in a permanent capacity. Bridget previously held a fixed term position in 2024. She will be starting three days a week in Term 3.

The Speech Language Therapy team is well-positioned for an exciting and productive second half of the year. We look forward to continuing to provide dedicated support to our kura.



Kathleen Jones



Rebecca Scott



Kit Spurgeon



Alysa Duda



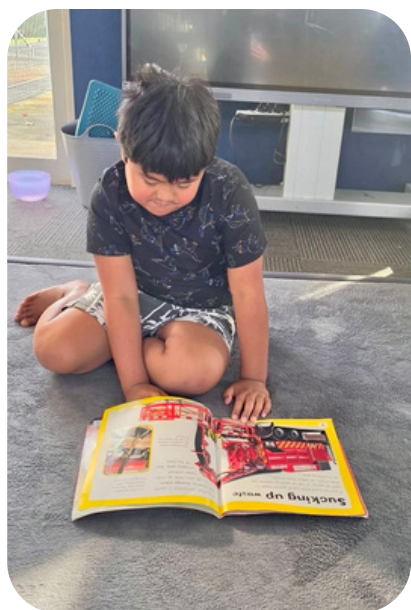
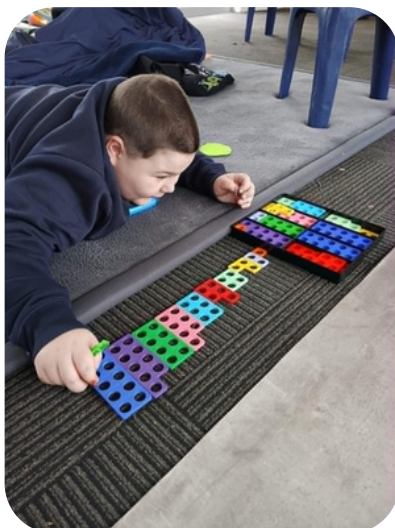
Bridget Fox

Te Kura o Manunui Cathryn

It has been a busy and fun-filled term inside and outside the classroom! We've focused heavily on building friendships and mastering turn-taking, both in structured games and out at play. In literacy, we've been exploring new words through hands-on art and sensory experiences. We also brought rhythm into the classroom by dancing with poi and keeping the beat! To top it all off, our always-popular Attention Autism activities have been great for boosting attention spans and language skills.



Te Kura o Manunui Jay



This term at Te Kura o Manunui we've been busy learning, playing and regulating! Swimming has remained a firm favourite and breakfast club, self cares and our playgroup have been added as new favourites in our week.

We are still enjoying exploring and learning through Numicon and our shared stories and have had some awesome Mauri Tau and PMP sessions.

Keep up the awesome mahi tamariki mā!

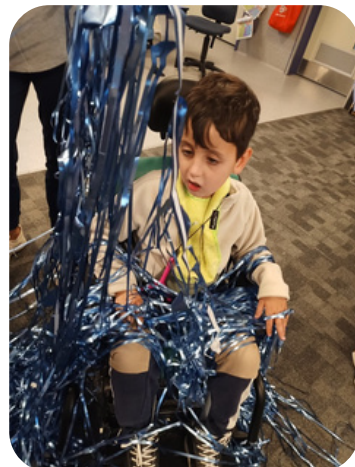


Room 1 Sara



We have been having so much fun playing and exploring with Amy P our OT. The parachute is so cool to be underneath making colourful lights and smooth texture to feel and we loved the wind blowing in our faces when it goes up and down! We have also explored other objects through play such as rice and played with different cause and effect toys that made us laugh. We made lots of bubbles by pushing the switch to make the beaters go. We love to play!!

Ka mau te wehi!!



Community notices

The WBoP Disability Support Trust warmly invites you all to their FREE Networking for Inclusion Seminar - Understanding DSS Flexible Funding .
Speakers

Simone Newsham – Chief Executive of NASCA (Needs Assessment Service Coordination Association) – Understanding Flexible Funding. Also a chance to ask questions from the floor.

Janette Third – Individualised Funding Regional Manager of Enliven Northern – Individualised Funding explained and what this funding may be used for since the flexible funding changes.

Julia Genet – A mother who has successfully used Enhanced Individualised Funding to support her son, Richard, for 22 years.
To reserve your place, please message us. If you require the NZ Sign Language Interpreters (reply to us by 11 June 2026).

Understanding Flexible Funding

*flexible funding
can support more
choice and control.*

We warmly welcome everyone to our Western Bay of Plenty Disability Support Trust Networking for Inclusion Seminar.



*Stronger
choices.
Better
lives.*

FRIDAY 19TH JUNE 2026

10.15AM - 12.30PM

**BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH,
90 BETHLEHEM ROAD, TAURANGA**



Speakers:

Simone Newsham – Chief Executive of NASCA (Needs Assessment Service Coordination Association) – Understanding Flexible Funding. Also a chance to ask questions from the floor.

Janette Third – Individualised Funding Regional Manager of Enliven Northern – Individualised Funding explained and what this funding may be used for since the flexible funding changes.

Julia Genet – A mother who has successfully used Enhanced Individualised Funding to support her son, Richard, for 22 years.

As well as listening to our wonderful speakers, there will be a chance to Network, browse the stands and enjoy refreshments in a safe and accessible environment. Plenty of easy car parking.

Booking: Contact Gill Gardener to reserve your place
Contact: coordinator.wbop.dst@gmail.com or Tel: 021 333 900





TAURANGA SPECIAL OLYMPICS



TEAM BINGO

Evening

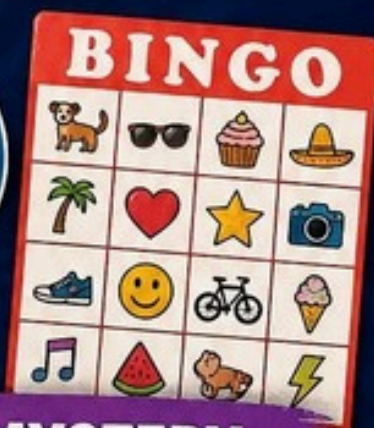
★ CREATE A TEAM



and come and enjoy our evening of **VISUAL TEAM BINGO!**

(1 - 4 PLAYERS PER TEAM)

COST IS
\$10
PER/PERSON



★ PRIZES FOR:

- BEST DRESSED
- WINNING TEAM
- LOOSING TEAM
- FASTEST RUNNER TO RING THE BELL
- SPOT PRIZES



? MYSTERY HALF TIME AUCTION

BRING SOME CASH
TO BID ON THESE
GREAT PRIZES!



SNACKS &
DRINKS
FOR SALE



- WHERE: ATRIUM CONFERENCE CENTRE, OTUMOETAU.
- WHEN: 25TH JULY 2026
- STARTS: 6PM - 8:30PM

BOOK NOW
YOUR TEAM IN

BY TEXTING
TINA: 021 163 9853

⇒ (REMEMBER A TEAM IS 1-4 PEOPLE) ⇒