

# Tauranga Special School

Learning together



Newsletter 2 2026, Week 5, Term 1 05/03/2026

## Newsletter edition 2, 2026

We hope you enjoyed the new newsletter last fortnight. Just a reminder that 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](mailto:pipj@taurangaspecialschool.nz)

## Key Contacts:

School Landline:  
07 578 4424

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

## Important dates

**Friday, 20 March**  
**School Photos**

**Monday, 23 March**  
**Staff only day,**  
**School closed for students**

**Wednesday, 1 April**  
**Whole school event,**  
**Whānau fun day**

**Thursday, 2 April**  
**Last day of term 1**

**Monday, 20 April**  
**First day of term 2**

**Monday, 27 April**  
**ANZAC day (observed)**

# A message from our Principal

**Kia ora e te whānau,**

Thank you to the families who joined us for our very first "Whānau Let's Connect" evening last Tuesday. While it was a small group for our first time running this event, it was well-received by both staff and the families who attended. It was great to see students and their whānau sharing some kai and accessing our spaces with our staff in such a casual, welcoming way.



## **Waterfront Playground & Accessibility**

Last Friday, many of our students also had a fantastic time at the waterfront playground. In collaboration with Tauranga City Council for Children's Week, the council provided fencing and additional staff to support our students. It was wonderful to see our tamariki interacting so positively with the wider community.

This event links directly to the recent survey emailed to you regarding fencing four more community playgrounds across Tauranga. We are working closely with Teina Boyd (Accessibility Adviser at TCC), who is achieving great results for our community. We hope you took the time to share your feedback to help ensure our local spaces become safer and more inclusive for everyone.

## **Looking Ahead**

Based on the success of our first "Let's Connect" evening, we are already planning another connection evening for Term 2. We are likely to tie this in with our Matariki celebrations later next term - watch this space for dates!

Thank you for supporting us in helping us strengthen our connections with our community.

Ngā mihi nui,

**Dale Megson**

Tumuaki / Principal



## Attendance & Hauora: Finding the Balance

Kia ora whānau,

As we navigate the flu season, we want to share a quick note on balancing student health with the Ministry of Education's new attendance priorities.

### **When to stay home:**

If your child is unwell (fever, vomiting, or a persistent cough), the best place for them is resting at home. This keeps our whole kura healthy and prevents bugs from spreading to other ākonga and staff.

### **Attendance Targets:**

The Ministry and all individual kura now have set attendance targets. We are required to track absence thresholds closely and check in with families when absences add up.

We're here to help: If your child is facing health hurdles or barriers to getting to school, please reach out. Our Mana Kaha team is here to support a smooth, stress-free return to learning whenever life gets in the way.

Please remember to notify the office of any medical absences so we can code them correctly!



# Mana kaha team

*Kia ora e te whānau!*

*Meet the Mana Kaha Team,  
our kura's "Support Squad"*

*Dedicated to ensuring every ākonga has the tools and  
vibes they need to succeed. We've combined a "Justice  
League" of expertise to support our class teams and  
students from every angle.*

*The Mana Kaha Crew*

*(Check out our high-tech AI avatars)*

*The Compass: Penny. Our Kaiārahi Hauora keeps our  
heart beating strong and our direction focused on calm  
and connection.*

*The Teaching Duo: Nicky & Jo. Our leadership legends  
bringing years of classroom-tested wisdom.*

*The Therapy Triple-Threat: Amy, Rebecca, Dave &  
Naomi. Our OT, SLT, and Psychology team providing  
expert insights into how our brains and bodies work.*

*Our Approach*

*No "one size fits all" here! We use Te Whare Tapa Whā  
to nurture the whole person—physical, mental, spiritual,  
and whānau wellbeing.*

*We are especially passionate about neuro-affirming  
practices. Whether it's sensory breaks or communication  
tools, we're here to celebrate exactly how every brain is  
wired. We're all about strengths, support and  
experiences of success!*



*Penny*



*Naomi*



*Amy*

*Rebecca*



*Jo*

*Nicky*



*Dave*



# Pāpāmoa college, Janel's class

## Laying the Foundations for a Great Year Ahead

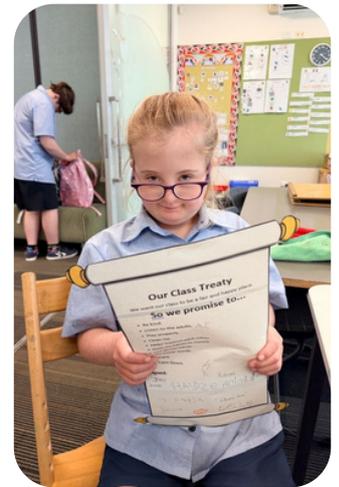
We began the year by creating a Class Treaty, agreeing on the values and expectations that will help make our classroom a happy, respectful, and fair place for everyone. After signing it, we displayed it on our wall as a daily reminder of our shared commitment.

We warmly welcomed new staff, students, and their whānau, spending the first week building connections and getting to know one another.

By learning about our differences, we have developed a greater appreciation for what makes each of us unique.

Students have enjoyed a balanced programme of Literacy and Maths alongside Swimming, Kapa Haka, and RDA. We also take walks around the school grounds, visit the library, enjoy cooking sessions, and participate in Rotations within the Papamoa College Unit, connecting with other classes.

It has been a very positive start to the year, and we look forward to the months ahead – filled with new opportunities, meaningful learning, fun memories, and lasting friendships.



## Room 3, Hayleys class



Room 3 have had a great start to the year. We are adjusting really well to our new environment and learning lots of new routines. We are reaching transitions goals already. We have had lots of fun Swimming, meeting new friends and reading our shared BSLA books 'Monkey and Me' & 'Wheels'. So far this year we have welcomed six new students and four new staff members to our space, so building relationships together has been on top for us.

Kai Pai Room 3 😊



## Pāpāmoa College, Anne-Marie's class

Our class has been very busy getting to know each other this term and building relationships. The students are settling into our routines well. Our students are enjoying exploring Numicon and we have seen some awesome mahi. We have enjoyed swimming at Baywave. On Wednesdays we have class rotations and over the past two weeks students enjoyed social, cooking and art activities.



# Pāpāmoa College, Brendon's class



**Term 1 has started well for all the students in the SPEC class. We have already begun to explore our community, getting to know each other and having fun doing it.**



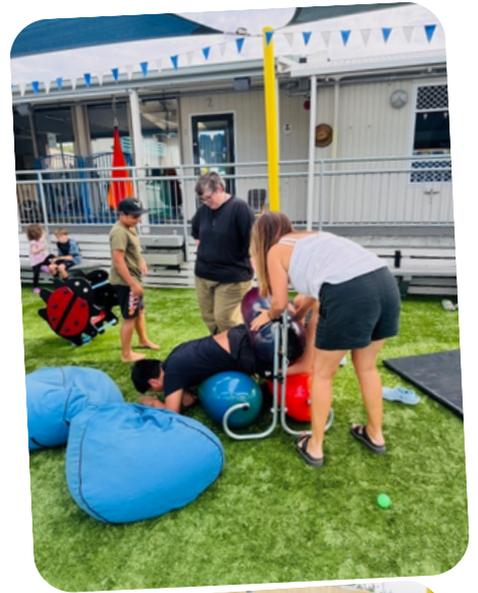
**It is exciting to see the students exploring the Senior Curriculum and what it means for them as they move into the senior school.**



**With the Special Olympics coming up and more trips to new places on the cards, our first term is going to be awesome.**



## Lets connect evening



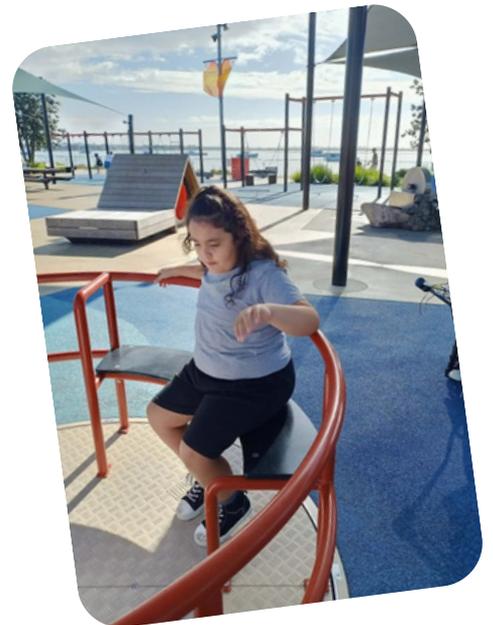
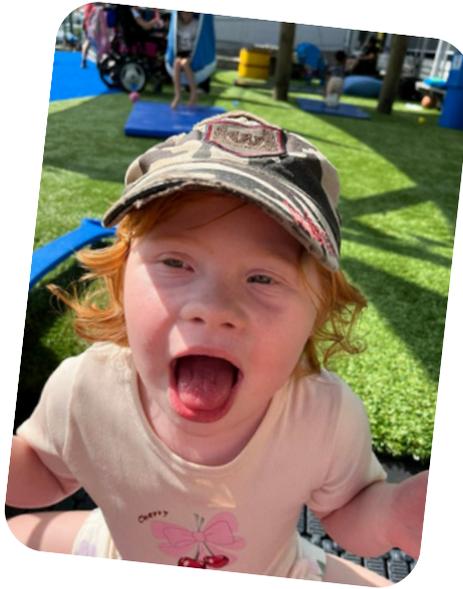
A lovely time was had by all who were able to make it to our "Lets connect" evening last week. We are looking forward to many more gatherings like this. Making time for connecting and relationship building.



## Strand playground fun!

Some of our students were able to join each other to play at the Strand playground last Friday. As part of the Tauranga City Council's Children's day celebrations they fenced in the playground for the morning and were there to assist our team with safety and parking. So much fun!





## Community notices

# 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](mailto:surfershealingnz@gmail.com)

[surfershealingnz.co.nz](http://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](mailto:surfershealingnz@gmail.com) with the following details:

Participant's full name

Which event you wish to register for (Mount Maunganui)

Child Well-being Research Institute  
Phone: +64 3 369 1471  
Email: [askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz)  
October 2025  
HREC Ref: 2025-46

**Kia ora parents/caregivers/whānau,**

As you may know, your child's school is currently taking part in professional learning and development in structured literacy through the Better Start Literacy Approach. The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the sharing of assessment data with the Ministry of Education and an opportunity for children aged 13 and below to be included in research exploring the impact of the approach.

***De-Identified Data – All Students***

The Better Start Literacy Approach team share data with the Ministry of Education and in research reports to show the impact of students' participation in the Better Start Literacy Approach. All information drawn from the BSLA Assessment Website for these purposes is **de-identified** data. It includes the students' assessment results and the following general information: school area, age, gender, ethnicity, and if English is their second language.

If you **do not** want your child's data included, you have two options:

1. tell their child's teacher
2. email the research team at [askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz).

***University of Canterbury Research – Students Aged 13 and Below***

The research team would like to use student assessment data to understand whether this way of teaching helps students learn to read, write, and communicate. **It is your choice if you would like your child to be part of the research.** Your decision will not impact your child's classroom teaching. We want to follow **students in specialist schools who are aged 13 and below**. Data will be collected as part of the children's usual classroom activities as part of the BSLA and we will use this data to follow the child's literacy and language growth. We will also use data about the children's gender, ethnicity, disability type, and communication mode(s). Because we are following children over time, the information we collect will be **identifiable**, which means we will know details such as their name. This will be kept **confidential** to our research team, and no **names will be used in any of our research publications**. We aim to follow the children's progress until the end of Year 8.

For more information, please see the attached information sheet and consent form.

Please return the consent form to your child's class teacher. If you would prefer to provide electronic consent, please visit [here](#) to indicate that you would like your child to take part or access using the QR code below.



We have also created a **short, recorded presentation** to talk you through the research - available [here](#) or accessed using the QR code below.



You can also contact the research team on: [askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz)

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any queries. We appreciate your consideration of this research opportunity,

Ngā mihi,

Sally Clendon  
Associate Professor  
Co-Lead of Specialist Teaching in BSLA Structured Literacy

## DATA SHARING

### DE-IDENTIFIED DATA

We share data with the Ministry of Education and in research reports to demonstrate the impact of structured literacy teaching.

This data is **de-identified**. When it's extracted from our database, it does not include your child's name. We don't see their name and the Ministry of Education does not see it either.

The data includes your child's literacy assessment results, school area, age, gender, and if English is their second language.

**Opt-out:** If you **do not** want your child's data to be shared you can **tell your child's teacher or email** [askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:askbsla@canterbury.ac.nz).

### ADDITIONAL DATA IN SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

We would like to collect some **additional data for students in specialist school settings** for research purposes.

The data includes your child's assessment results, school area, age, gender, and if English is their second language **plus their disability type(s) and communication mode(s)**.

**Opt-in:** Please read the attached information sheet and consent form or visit the link below if you want your child to take part.

