



**Tauranga  
Special  
School**  
Learning together

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## WEEK 2 KAWERONGO - NEWSLETTER

8 May 2025

Kia ora koutou,

Welcome back to term two. Unfortunately the holiday break was hampered by several days of rain, but on a bright note the sun was shining for our school's 60th Jubilee celebrations held on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd of May. The Jubilee was a resounding success.



A big thank you to everyone who helped out and to everyone who came to celebrate with us over the two days.

Ngā mihi

Barrie Wickens

Tumuaki Principal

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWS**

With sadness the Board wishes to advise that our longstanding Principal, Barrie, has handed us his resignation with effect at the end of this school year. The Board have accepted this with deep regret, and I am sure you will all agree, acknowledge an amazing contribution to our school spanning over 23 years.

Barrie's ongoing commitment, vision, care and enthusiasm for our school, staff and students is unwavering and he will be sorely missed at the helm. We will be honouring and celebrating all that Barrie has brought and given to Tauranga Special School in true style towards the end of this year.

In regards to Barrie's replacement, the Board will be keeping you, our school community and whanau, up to date with this process over the coming months. We certainly have big shoes to fill!

Ngā mihi  
Sandra Peter  
Presiding Member  
Tauranga Special School Board of Trustees

### **Important dates:**

14 May	Special Olympics Ten Pin
15 May	Whānau Support Group
2 June	King's Birthday (no school this day)
10 June	Transition Information Afternoon
20 June	Matariki Public Holiday (no school this day)
24 June	Matariki Event at Base School

# TSS Whānau Support Group Event

with Tony McLean –  
Allies Aotearoa



RSVP by 9/5/25 to  
Sharon 027 573 9744 or  
Sandra 021 032 0811 or email  
sharonk@taurangaspecialschool.nz

Thursday  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

6:30 pm at  
TSS Base.  
18<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Tauranga.

We are lucky to have  
Tony McLean come and  
share up to date  
knowledge around  
current disability support  
and how to get the best  
out of your funding.



**Tauranga  
Special  
School**

**Allies Aotearoa provide  
practical assistance,  
advice to individuals  
and whānau.**

<https://alliesaotearoa.co.nz/>

Come join us to hear about:

- The current Disability Support Changes and what these mean (including what is coming)
- How can I best use the resources I have been allocated.

Followed by a Q & A discussion



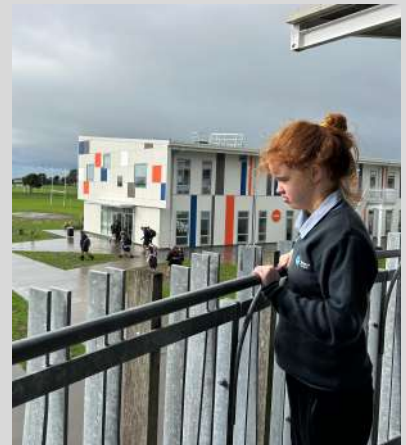
## Pāpāmoa College - Shane's class

And just like that, we're into term two! There is a lot to look forward to this term - special olympics ten pin and football, pink shirt day, matariki and more! With only nine weeks in this term, we will be busy from the word go.

This term we continue our focus on learning about the environment and learning to be kaitiaki of our space. With visual arts being a curriculum focus expect to see everyone getting creative with a range of materials as we explore how recycling and upcycling can be involved in art.

We had a lot of rain and wet weather during the first week, but we didn't let that stop us from getting out for some exercise and physio, sneaking in sessions in between downpours.

Here's some snaps from the first week:



## Pāpāmoa College - Brendon's class



Once again, Term 2 has snuck up on us and we are under way. Our class has been straight back into the action with our community visits, our recycling project and now something new!!! Every Wednesday we have a 'Breakfast Club' in our class. This is a chance for our students to plan for, shop and prepare our breakfasts together. And we are awesome!!! I have no doubt this term will be as successful as Term 1 and just as much fun. Bring it on!!



## Pāpāmoa College - Jenn's class



Welcome to Term 2! Time sure flies when you're having fun. We have jumped right back into the swing of things. It has already been a busy and productive week. The students have been excited to be back, and are ready for all of the exciting activities and mahi that we have planned. Here is a sneak peek of what we have been up to. Thank you for all of your support whānau!



## Room 3



Room 3 has had an amazing start to Term 2!!

We have been looking at our emotions and created faces from recyclable lids to show how we were feeling.

Toothbrushing, sensory play and cooking has also been a success this week. Our students have made some wonderful achievements over term 1, we're so lucky to be able to share and experience the progress each week. Our Room 3 team does an amazing job day in day out at providing the best practice for our students.

Here's to another amazing term 😊



# Behaviour is Communication

Mana Kaha  
Being the Best We Can Be

## Behaviour

All behavior—even challenging or unexpected behavior—is a way of expressing needs, feelings, or responses to the environment.

"WHEN WE ACCEPT THAT ALL BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION AND REMEMBER OUR CHILDREN'S BRAINS ARE STILL DEVELOPING, WE ARE BETTER ABLE TO RESPOND WITH LOVE AND KINDNESS."

HEARTANDSOULSPEECH.COM



BEHAVIOR AS COMMUNICATION

What does it mean?



### Every behaviour meets a need

- Meltdowns, shutdowns, avoidance, or repetitive movements (stimming) are often tools for self-regulation or communication.

### All communication is valid

- Non-speaking individuals may use gestures, sounds, facial expressions, or behavior in place of words. These are just as meaningful as spoken language.

### Support starts with curiosity, not correction

- Asking "What is this child trying to tell me?" instead of "How do I stop this?" leads to more compassionate and effective support.

### Co-regulation before correction

- Children often need help calming their nervous system before they can process or respond to expectations

### Environment matters

- Behaviors can often be a response to sensory overload, unclear expectations, or social demands that don't match a child's communication style or energy level.

What do I see?  
What was happening before/after?  
What could this child be communicating?  
How do they communicate?  
What are their strengths?

#### Supports

- Can I reduce sensory overload?
- Can I offer choices or visuals to increase clarity?
- Can I co-regulate instead of escalating?
- Can they access their communication tools?

#### Reflect

- What need was unmet?
- What support helped or didn't help?
- How can we support this child next time before the behavior escalates?



#### Why This Matters

It preserves dignity and agency.  
It builds trust and safety.  
It leads to more meaningful, long-term skill development, especially in areas like emotional regulation, communication, and autonomy.

**Behavior = Communication + Unmet Need + Environment + Nervous System State**



**The University of Waikato (Tauranga Campus)  
School of Psychological and Social Sciences is researching  
Assent-related Communication Skill for Children with Developmental  
Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs**



**Project Title:** Understanding Assent-Related Communication in Children with Developmental Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs

**Participants:**

- Children with a developmental disability and complex communication needs (limited vocal speech).
- Ages 5-11 years old
- Live in or near Tauranga

**Research Description:**

This project aims to evaluate the use of an assent decision-making model and measurement of assent/dissent communicative behaviours for children with developmental disabilities and complex communication needs (CCN). If the results of the assessment indicate your child could benefit from learning ways to communicate their assent/dissent, then they can participate in learning session to help develop their communication skills.

**\* Please note participation in this research is voluntary**

**If you are interested in your child participating in this study, please contact  
Michael Lin at [hl536@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:hl536@students.waikato.ac.nz) or my supervisor  
Dr. Amarie Carnett, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Waikato  
Email: [amarie.carnett@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:amarie.carnett@waikato.ac.nz)  
Phone: +64 7 838 4932**

**If anyone is interested in participating in the above study please  
have a talk to your Speech-language Therapist.**