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WEEK 4 KAWERONGO - NEWSLETTER

30 October 2025

Kia ora koutou,

Last week Monday 20 to Friday 24 October was not a normal one. While Monday to Wednesday was school as usual, Thursday saw the vast majority of New Zealand public schools closed for a record breaking nation wide strike day. It is not appropriate in this newsletter to outline the reasons for the strike, as there are so many issues, but the right to strike is part of our country's employment options. We would not have gone on strike if the issues we are confronted with, not only in the education sector, were adequately addressed by the current government.

On Friday the school was also closed for a staff only day. This day is one of two official days the government approved for all schools to address staff training in the new literacy and numeracy curriculums. Two days is not enough to embed the changes, they are only the start of the process. Many more hours outside staff only days will be needed going forward. While we know closing the school is disruptive to many in our community, quality training days are needed to come to grips with the new curriculum changes, and we thank you all for that support.

Nobody wants strike days, but in the current political climate they are being taken. A second thank you for your support here.

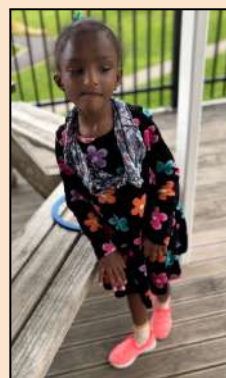
Ngā mihi
Barrie Wickens
Tumuaki Principal

Important dates:

- 1st November - Pasifika
- 16th December - Showcase
- 17th December - End of term (12pm finish)

Welcome Bay - Kea Class

Last week was the Hindu festival Diwali, the Festival of Light. We enjoyed learning about this celebration through art, dance and music. We wore cultural dress or bright colours, made an Indian instrument called a veena, used coloured rice to make rangoli patterns, made a diva lamp from clay and cooked some yummy mango lassi!



Welcome Bay - Toroa Class

Our class has been attending a weekly Water Safety programme at Baywave to learn important swimming skills such as floating on our back, blowing bubbles and practising our kicking. We've also been building confidence in the deep water and learning how to safely wear a life jacket. These sessions have been lots of fun and everyone is growing more comfortable and confident in the water each week.



Speech-language Therapy

Growing Language and Literacy Together

As Speech Language Therapists at Tauranga Special School we believe language and literacy grow best through connection, curiosity, and joy. Every ākonga (learner) develops communication and literacy skills in their own time and in their own way. Communication and literacy go hand in hand.

Language and literacy aren't just about speaking or reading words, they're about making meaning. Every time your tamaiti shares attention, explores pictures, listens to sounds, or uses their AAC device to join in a story, they're learning how communication works and learning valuable literacy skills.

For ākonga who use AAC, developing literacy is especially powerful. Literacy opens the door to communicating anything they want, not just the words already on their device. Reading and writing skills give AAC users the ability to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in their own unique voice.

How families can nurture language and literacy at home:

Share books together, your way.

Let your tamaiti take the lead. They might turn pages quickly, focus on one favourite picture, or press buttons on their device. Follow their interests, and talk about what you notice they are interested in, "The dog is jumping!" or "That's your favourite page!"



Model language in many forms.

Speak, sign, gesture, point to pictures, or use your tamaiti's AAC device. When you model key words like look / titiro, go / haere, funny / hātakēhi, or tired / ngenge, you're helping them connect symbols, sounds, and meaning. These are the building blocks of both language and reading.

Make print part of everyday life.

Notice words and symbols in your world, on food packets, road signs, or toy boxes. Name the letters together and talk about the sounds, and words they make.

Focus on connection, not correction.

There's no need to quiz or "test" the understanding of your tamaiti. Instead, respond to their communication, whether it's a sound, look, sign, or button press. This tells them their voice matters and builds confidence to share more. Kōrero is Connection. Every conversation, every shared book, and every small moment of connection builds a strong foundation for both language and literacy.



*Ko tōku reo tōku ohooho, ko tōku reo tōku māpihi maurea.
My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul.*