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# Pohutukawa News



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Term 1 2026

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**Ka whāngaia, ka whakatipu, ka puawai**



**That which is nurtured blossoms and grows**

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Ka nui nga mihi ki a koutou, a warm welcome to the new school year and what a wonderful sunny start to the term. It has been lovely to see the children reconnecting with their friends and making new ones.

The children and teachers have settled very quickly and easily back into our school routines. It has been terrific to see the children so well organised with their books and pencils ready to start the new school year.

We welcome ākonga (students) who are new to our area and welcome back familiar faces too. We are very much enjoying getting to know each other and starting our learning journey together.



# Classroom Teachers

**Room 12** Whaea Sarah Years 5 & 6

**Room 13** Hugh Watson Years 5 & 6

**Room 14** Sinéad Senek Years 5 & 6

**Room 15** Shanann O'Sullivan-Glynn Years 5 & 6

**Support teachers:** Andrea Spink

**Area Leader:** Sinéad Senek

In Pohutukawa, the teachers work collaboratively to plan and deliver the learning programmes for their students.

We also offer flexibility in the classroom environments we provide.

Rooms 13 and 14 offer a mix of open and a single cell learning environment.

Rooms 12 and 15 are single cell classrooms.



# Curriculum

Our learning throughout the year will revolve around the universal theme of Change.

Through this conceptual approach, we aim to develop the students' capabilities and critical thinking skills. It will form the basis of cross-curricular learning for the year.

To help generate their thinking around this concept, we have begun the term with a variety of activities that engage them in discussions about change, such as shared texts, art tasks, and visual images. From these discussions, the children brainstorm big ideas that will help them further understand the universal theme of change and work with it throughout the year.



# Linking Learning

Our learning programme follows the New Zealand Curriculum. We aim to make links within and across learning areas so the children can see how their skills in different curriculum areas are transferable, for example, using their writing and mathematics skills while working on a science topic.

Localised learning is a key component of our inquiry work this term. It helps the children learn about their community and connect with it too.

This term, we will begin with a New Zealand history topic about Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington. The children will investigate how interactions change societies and environments by thinking critically about the past. This will allow the children to identify the values and perspectives that different groups of people in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington hold. We will also explore how people's decisions influence the environment and communities.

It is also an opportunity for the children to learn the pūrākau of Tara, which explains the naming of the our harbour and the occupation of the land by Tara and his people (mana whenua).

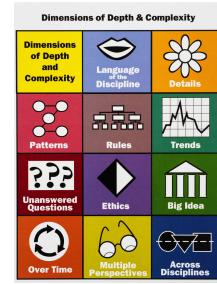
# Linking Learning

Depth and complexity tools are used in each class by teachers and students. The tools take students of any age deeper into a study of any content area. Each of the prompts acts as a different lens, prompting students to look at a topic in a new way. The tools are displayed in class and used each day during our learning. If you want to understand more about these tools, you can click on the link below that directs you to information on our school website.

## Depth and complexity on our school website

Alongside this we work with the students on developing resilience as learners by unpacking the habits of a scholar. These habits have been developed by Dr Sandra Kaplan as a set of characteristics or behaviours most common in scholars. Teaching students to become aware of and practice scholarly behaviours will help them in school as in life. Students learn to ponder, consider different perspectives, set goals, thirst for knowledge, persevere while taking intellectual risks, and strive for excellence, among others. These are traits that students are taught to exhibit through modelling, guided practice, and ongoing reinforcement.

Below is a link to an animation we share with our students to help introduce them to the habits of a scholar. [Habits of a scholar](#)



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|--|---|
| <b>Origin</b><br> How did this begin? What were the roots? What was the cause?                      | <b>Contribution</b><br> What was the result? What came together to cause this? What was the value? |
| <b>Paradox</b><br> What are the opposing ideas? What doesn't make sense? What seems wrong?          | <b>Parallel</b><br> What is similar? What is comparable? What seems the same?                      |
| <b>Convergence</b><br> How did it come together? How did things merge? What are the meeting points? | <b>Impact</b><br> Who are what were affected? What were the problems? What impact did this have?   |

# Religious Education

The children participate in daily classroom karakia and are encouraged to prepare and help lead it. Alongside this we will learn some prayers and songs in different languages used in our parish.

Our first focus for the year is Ā Tātou Whakapapa - Our Story. The children will learn that they are part of a school that has a special history and charism grounded in the person of Christ. They will explore how they are part of a community in a particular place that has its own people with special gifts, culture, knowledge, and wisdom. It provides an opportunity for them to inquire into the key features of the life of our parish and explore ways that they can be an active part of it.

Alongside this, they will also be learning about the importance of the liturgical seasons of Lent and Easter.



# Curriculum programmes

**Mathematics** – We have started the term concentrating on number structure by examining the base 10 number system and how this knowledge can assist them in adding and subtracting whole numbers. We are enjoying reading, writing, and arranging whole numbers up to one million. Throughout the term, the students will explore angles and lines while learning to use various measuring instruments correctly. Later in the term, the children will learn about factors, multiples and square numbers.

**Literacy** – Each class has started the term by exploring a shared text together and linking it to our universal theme of change. The children will then move on to reading informational texts and learning about the structure of writing explanations. This will be linked to our inquiry topic, Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Weekly reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting lessons form a part of our literacy programme.

**Arts Programme** – Over the course of four terms, we cover the different aspects of the arts curriculum: visual arts, music, dance, and drama. This term, we have begun with a visual arts activity in each class. Later in the term, we look forward to experimenting with different printing techniques.

**Kapa Haka** – Mrs Spink leads us in our wonderful programme; we are continuing to learn new songs and integrate te reo into our daily programme.

**Physical Education** – Students in our area participate in a daily physical activity programme. Our physical education focus for the term is on developing movement skills through invasion games. Invasion games are games in which the aim is to invade an opponent's territory and score a goal or point. These are typically fast-paced games that require teamwork to control the ball.

Our learning is based on the SportStart programme that aims to improve young people's physical literacy. This philosophy is centered on developing fundamental movement and sports skills alongside critical thinking and communication skills.

**Digital Technology** – All of the students have been given a school Gmail account so they can use Google Docs at school and at home. The digital technologies programme provides the students with the opportunity to learn different aspects of coding. Throughout the year we aim to develop the students' skills in using digital technologies as a creative tool.

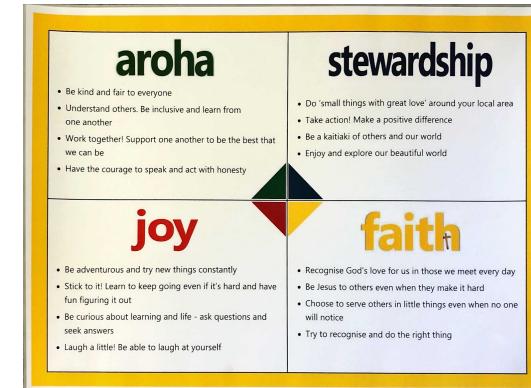
# Supporting learning at home

At home we encourage the children to take time to read and discuss the latest book they are reading with you. Here are some other ways your child can continue to develop their skills at home:

- Shared reading of a new chapter book that captures their attention and imagination.
- Ask them about the books they are reading at school from the library or in their class.
- Your child has access to their Google Docs; this is where they may want to write a story or collaborate on prayers for the classroom.
- Improving maths understanding by playing games. Here is a link to the NZ Curriculum site with ideas on how you can support your child's mathematical learning at home. [Supporting school maths](#)

# School Values

Our school values of faith, joy, aroha and stewardship continue to provide the foundation of our school community. We continue to build on the students' understanding of these by identifying and putting into practice what they look like in action throughout the school day. We aim to model and encourage the students to see the importance of these values to them and the well-being of our school community.



# Guiding our students

Across the school we are fostering behaviours which link to our school values; however, sometimes we need to work more closely with the students to help them reflect on the choices they have made.

In working closely with students, we are able to provide opportunities where they can learn how to think about the choices they have made and the impact those choices may have on themselves and others.

Teachers will at times make direct contact with parents and caregivers where it is necessary to discuss ways in which they can work together on supporting their child.

# Reminders

Students who bring a smart watch, mobile phone or other items for safekeeping to school are required to put them in the minding box as soon as they arrive at school. This box is located in Room 14.

School sports uniform is required at school every day for daily physical fitness and skills programme. We encourage the children to bring their sports uniform at the beginning of the week and take it home at the end of the week. School sun hats are also required to be worn during outdoor activities.

To keep all of our children safe, please ensure you use the pedestrian crossings around our school when dropping them off and picking them up.

The partnership between home and school is critical to the success of our learning community and the quality of learning experiences. If you need to communicate with your child's classroom teacher, please contact them through [admin@stpeterpaul.school.nz](mailto:admin@stpeterpaul.school.nz) or [pohutukawaal@stpeterpaul.school.nz](mailto:pohutukawaal@stpeterpaul.school.nz)

Ngā mihi,

Sinéad Senek, Hugh Watson, Whaea Sarah, Shanann O'Sullivan-Glynn, Andrea Spink  
Pohutukawa Area Teachers