



ŌWHANGO SCHOOL PĀNUI

The tamariki at Ōwhango School are engaged in our unique, rural environment, are individual in their learning, and strong in experience and success.

Phone 07 895 4823 Cell 027 895 4823

www.owhangoschool.co.nz

Office- Karen Erni - office@owhango.school.nz

Principal- Ewan Starkey- principal@owhango.school.nz

School Board Presiding Member- Guy Hoban - guy@doylevaluations.co.nz

39/2025

10th December 2025

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK / WHAKATAUKĪ

"If you don't schedule your priorities, someone else will." Colby Kultgen

DATES TO NOTE

10 th Dec	Year 8 Leavers' Treat
	Transition Day
	Board Hui 7pm
11 th Dec.	School Grounds Overnighter
12 th Dec.	Brock's Farm Trip
16 th Dec.	School Break Up Ceremony 5pm and BBQ 6:30pm
	Reports Issued
	School Photos Distributed
17 th Dec.	Last Day of the School Year
	Water Fight & Crazy Hair Day

PRINCIPAL'S COMMENTS

Penultimate Pānui

Please note that there will be a final Pānui next week, our last day of the year, so that we can share the photos from the upcoming events.

Attendance for the Year

As you should be aware, we have had a specific achievement target this year to improve our attendance figures. Here is the latest data for the whole year up to last Wednesday.

Percentage of days your child is at school	Ministry Terminology	Attendance Goal 2025	Whole year so far
Less than 70%	Chronic Absence	0%	1%
70% - 80%	Moderate Absence	<4%	4%
80% - 90%	Irregular Absence	< 26%	26%
90%+	Regular Attendance	>70%	68%

Sadly, we have not achieved our goal in any of the categories. The key reasons for this are

- People taking days off for shopping and 'treat trips' away with the children
- People keeping their children at home for questionable medical reasons (if a child says they are sick then make them stay in bed all day without games or devices, you will quickly see how sick they really are).
- People allowing their children to have a day off because the child wants to.

For some of our chronically and moderately absent children it is affecting their learning; it is measurable in their progress at school. The teachers cannot constantly catch up those children who are frequently absent.

Parents, **this ball is in your court**, we are doing as much as we can to teach your children, but if they are away then we cannot teach them.

That said, it is pleasing to see that our attendance figures over the past four years have improved:

Attendance at school	2022	2023	2024	2025
Less than 70%	2%	3%	0%	1%
70% - 80%	12%	8%	5%	4%
80% - 90%	32%	33%	27%	26%
90%+	55%	57%	69%	68%

Former Students Successes

It is pleasing to be able to share some of our past students' recent successes at the Taumarunui High School:

- Matisse Hosking was picked to be school leader for next year and won year 12 academic trophy this year and art award for visual and performing arts;
- Cody Bryan is deputy head boy for 2026;
- Emily Owen is head girl in 2026;
- Jack Owen was awarded dux.

CLASSROOM KŌRERO – Kahikatea

We've had an amazing term in Kahikatea and have been very fortunate to have Whaea Regan, Whaea Siobhán, and Mr Starkey teaching with us.

With Whaea Regan, the students enjoyed getting creative as they put the finishing touches on their drawings and learnt new technical skills. They loved their time in the tech room too—especially making (and tasting!) their marshmallow, biscuits and rice-pop chocolate reindeer.

Our Bush Day with Whaea Siobhán was a huge highlight. The students threw themselves into every activity—mud fights, building huts, swimming in the creek, and even checking the water quality. They learned how to make simple tools, explored the ngahere with a real sense of wonder, and were thrilled to discover pūiri moths and fascinating fungi. It was one of those days where learning and adventure blended perfectly.

And of course, a day with Mr Starkey teaching was extra special, and the kids made the most of every moment. His marble run technology challenge brought out their engineering skills and their perseverance, whether working in pairs or on their own. There was plenty of laughter, teamwork, and problem-solving—everything Mr Starkey is known for.

Thankyou Kahikatea, I have loved teaching and learning alongside you this year!

Whaea Theresa



Elliott tests his marble run



Ainsley makes hers stronger



Millie and Rosa worked together



Working in the multi-purpose room on our marble runs with Mr Starkey



Jack inspecting the water



Billie spent a lot of time and effort to shape his axe



Patrick in the river and mud

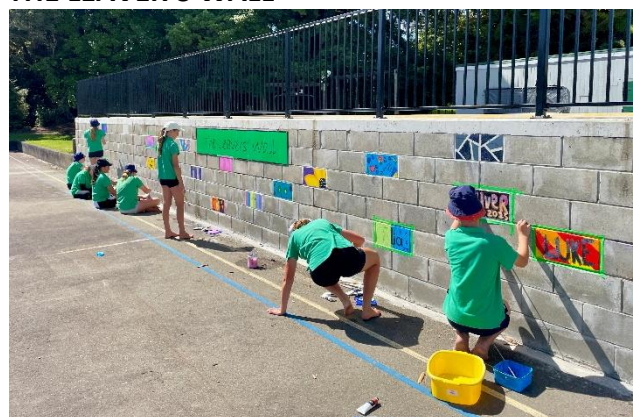


Grace and Rose find a puriri moth / pepe tuna



Going wild in the bush with Whaea Siobhan

THE LEAVER'S WALL



Our year 8 leavers working on their blocks on the Leaver's Wall

OVERNIGHT CAMP AT SCHOOL

Tomorrow- Thursday 11th of December 2025
Please read and share the camp agreement with your tamariki. A reminder that all students must go home at 3pm, eat dinner and pack their gear. Please do not return to school until 5.30pm. You may bring healthy snacks for the overnighter. Breakfast will be provided on Friday morning and we will leave school for Brock's Farm at 9am.

TRANSITION DAY

Today the students worked in their next-year class groups and room and with their next- year teacher, to prepare them for the change. We even had Kate Cookson and Annelies Resink pop in to meet the new year 7 & 8 students. Ask your child how the day went.

END of YEAR BREAK UP and YEAR EIGHT FAREWELL

On Tuesday at 5pm we will be holding our End of Year Break Up and Year Eight Farewell in the Ōwhango Hall, followed by a community barbeque. The programme is about one hour long, will run roughly like this:

Opening Waiata

School Board Presiding Member's Speech

Individual Student Certificates

Kahikatea Room Item

Year 8 Farewell Presentations

Kōwhai Room Item

Classroom Trophies

Rimu Room Item

House Shield

Duffy Mainfreight Excellence in Attitude Award

Final Whole School Item

BBQ

COMMUNITY BBQ

Following the Breakup, you are invited to join us at the school for a potluck barbeque- please bring something to share, any meat must be defrosted. We also have four ovens in the multi-purpose room for heating other food this year. Bring your own non-alcoholic drinks and your own cutlery and plates/bowls. Friends and family are all welcome to attend. Kids can bring their togs to have a swim in our pool, but parents will need to supervise them- teachers are off duty! We have Double Up Donuts providing dessert for

free for everyone that comes! This will be kindly paid for by our wonderful PTA. Below are the food options to choose from when ordering that evening. With only one portion per person.

- Any ice cream in cone
- A small sundae
- 12 pk donuts



Double Up Donuts courtesy of the PTA

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORTS

End-of-year reports will be issued on Tuesday. Our teachers have worked hard to provide a comprehensive overview of your child's academic and social progress at school. We aim for these reports to align closely with your understanding of your child's development. Throughout the year, we strive to communicate promptly if any concerns arise, implementing programmes to address these as needed.

Please pay particular attention to the box labelled: **"Is working at the National Curriculum level appropriate to year and age."** This indicates whether your child is working at the expected level for their age. For some students, meeting this benchmark can be challenging or even unrealistic. In such cases, teachers focus on ensuring these students progress at a similar rate to their peers, rather than falling further behind. We encourage you to discuss your child's schooling with us at any time.

While we're pleased to see improvements in attendance rates, please check your child's attendance record in the report. Any student with attendance below the 90% "regular attendance" benchmark for the year will have an accompanying comment addressing this.

LIBRARY BOOK RETURN

Can all library books please be returned now.

SPORTS SHIRTS RETURN

Can all sports shirts please be returned now.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

These will be issued to those who ordered one, on Tuesday, with the school reports.

SCHOOL BOARD HUI

The board will have their final hui for the year today, Wednesday the 10th of December at 7pm. You are all welcome to attend.

LOST PROPERTY- Final reminder

Please check the lost property basket for your clothing. It is overflowing. Anything left behind after the last day of term gets biffed.

END OF YEAR TRIP TO BROCK'S FARM

The forecast is looking excellent for this trip on Friday. The PTA is kindly cranking up the BBQ a free lunch of sausages in bread, if that is not your thing then bring your own lunch. The kids will also need to bring their own morning tea. Please note that this trip is for Ōwhango School students, their parents and younger siblings only; sorry, no high school students.

What the students will need to bring:

Water bottle

Morning tea

Sunhat

Suitable walking shoes

Togs and towel (for the amazing new water slide)

A **change of clothes** including something warm. Kids can wear **mufti**.

The year 4 – 8 students who have filled in their permission slip and are taking part in tubing, will also need a **bike helmet** and **sneakers** that can be tied on tightly to wear in the river, and a **life jacket** if you have one (otherwise we will have some supplied by Owhango Adventures). **Wetsuits** are optional- bring your own. A decision on whether the river levels are safe for tubing is made on the morning when we arrive there.

Adults are welcome to bring your own chairs, sunshade, togs etc. We will be departing not long after 9am and be back at school by 3pm.

PTA CHRISTMAS PARADE

Congratulations to Maree and the team who organised our Xmas Parade float, and to the senior class who made the props and decorations for the float under Whaea Jessie's guidance. This year we won second prize!



The float decorated in the Kiwiana theme



We had a good turnout of children who sang the whole way, as playing music on speakers was banned

OUR KIDS ONLINE Two Minute Parenting Tips

This week: **Four Game-Changing Books For Parents**

If you're raising kids in the digital age, these four books are absolutely essential. From screen addiction to brain development to anxiety and resilience, these titles will give you the science, the strategies, and the clarity every modern parent needs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYwy3wTBfhk>



Control + Click to follow the link

KOWHAI ROOM LETTUCE FOR SALE

Several weeks ago our Kowhai students planted lettuce in the school garden. As you can see, they are looking fabulous and ready for salads. WE WILL BE SELLING THESE THIS THURSDAY AT THE SCHOOL GATE FOR \$2 EACH. PROCEEDS ARE FOR THE CLASS CHRISTMAS PARTY.



The delicious lettuce plants growing in our garden

KOWHAI BOOKBAGS AND READING BOOKS

We are gathering the children's bookbags and school readers in. Can you please check at home and send these to school, so we can have complete reading sets for next year.

A FREE CHRISTMAS TREE

Would you like a make-your-own Christmas tree? Free to a good home; just ask Whaea Siobhan.



Make your own Christmas Tree- festive fun for the whole family

SCHOOL DENTAL BUS

The School Dental Bus is at the hospital for the next six weeks. If you need an appointment for your child/ren call 027 227 6331. For some reason the bus no longer visits our school.

SWIMMING POOL KEYS FOR SALE a reminder

If you would like a swimming pool season key, contact Karen in the office. Cost is \$50 for the key; you get \$20 back when you return the key at the end of the season. Please pay by direct credit to the school account 03 0426 0141783 00, reference 'Pool Key'.

Community Notices

None this week

PAYING BY INTERNET BANKING DETAILS:

Ōwhango School: Uniform/stationery/sport fees pay to 03 0426 0141783 00

PTA: Fundraisers 030 426 0156205 00

TERM DATES 2026

Term One: Monday 9th February to Thursday 2nd April

Term Two: Monday 20th April to Friday 3rd July

Term Three: Monday 20th July to Friday 25th September

Term Four: Monday 12th October to Friday 18th December

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THIS YEAR:

Duffy Books in Schools: W & C O'Donnell, Doyle Valuations, Ōwhango Motors, Awa Rere Hideaway, Tania and Mark Bramley.

Fern Energy Fuel for Schools Scheme

Mitre 10 25 buckets for drumming

Ōwhango Adventures: Free bus use for trips

Sue Morris and Darren Brown Contactors for the firewood logs and delivery

PTA Xmas Raffle Sponsors: Blazing Paddles, Ruapehu Quilters, The Park Hotel, Schnapps Bar & The Station Café