



Te Kōhure (Year 7/8) Newsletter, Term 1 2025

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Welcome back and to our new whānau, welcome to Te Kōhure (the developing tree). We hope you have had a relaxing holiday with family and friends. We look forward to working with you and your children this year. Term 1 is always busy, with Year 7s transitioning into the team, as well as camp, Korfbal, swimming sports, Flips and Tumbles (gymnastics), cross-country training, plus our usual learning programme. We enjoyed meeting with you and your child during interviews and together, setting goals and discussing how best we can support children's learning in 2025.

We extend a warm welcome to our new teachers in our team - Kelly Williams (TU1) and Rosie Smith (TU2). The other Te Kōhure teachers are Phil Innes (TU3), Kerry Aitken (TU4), along with part-timers Rochelle Paul and Christy Greenall.

Learning Programme: Our learning programme incorporates literacy and numeracy, and we integrate learning across curriculum areas around key concepts or big ideas to ensure students make connections and link their understanding. This term, Te Parito Kōwhai Russley School looks at the following concepts: "Who we are/Kō wai ra" - Migration and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.



Wainui Camp: This is happening in Week 5 so we need to be organised! You will have received a number of EOTC forms and gear list in the past few days which must be completed and returned as soon as possible. Please contact us if you are having difficulty finding some items on the gear list - we can often help. **Before we finalise the menu for camp, we need to know of any allergies or dietary considerations relevant to your child.**

The total cost of the camp is **\$240** per student. The cost includes accommodation, transport, food and activities. This is an approximate cost, and any money left over will be credited to your account. It is expected that payment is received or facilitated before the end of Week 3 (21 February). Payment may be made by internet deposit to the school account:

Name: Te Parito Kowhai Russley School No: 03 0830 0307669 00 or by eftpos at the school office.

If it is easier to spread the cost, parents may wish to set up automatic payments to drip-feed weekly or fortnightly payments to the school account (use your child's name and number as a reference). If you have any questions about setting up payment, please contact Sarah: accounts@russley.school.nz or email Principal Greg Lewis at principal@russley.school.nz

A meeting for camp parent helpers is in TU3 on Wednesday 26 February at 6.30pm.

Korfbal: We are having three sessions learning about the sport Korfbal this term in weeks three and four. Please ensure your child has a change of clothing for this. There is no charge for this.

Strengths Week: In week three of this term, we are having a "Strengths" programme, designed to build student self-awareness and equip them with tools to navigate their intermediate years. This will be made up of a specific Strengths course, an Attitude presentation and discussion around modern-day influences such as social media.

Swimming Sports will be on Friday 14 March.



Flips and Tumbles: This term all our learners will participate in a gymnastics programme at Te Parito Kōwhai Russley School. Flips & Tumbles NZ is a tumbling-based gymnastics club that provides sessions where children of any ability can learn how to fall safely, tumbling, parkour and acro skills in a safe environment with top instructors in backgrounds of both artistic gymnastics and trampoline gymnastics. There is no cost associated with this educational activity. **Clothing:** We recommend the tamariki have tight-fitting clothes, with no earrings, buckles or domes. Hair needs to be tied back.



Home Learning / Excellence Awards: The compulsory component of homework will include spelling, reading, and occasional mathematics and is to be completed weekly. The children will record their spelling words and any other important information in a notebook. The notebook can also be used as a form of communication between home and school. We encourage reading for at least 20 minutes per weeknight.

We continue to use the optional school home learning programme. This programme incorporates an Excellence Award system in Year 7/8. This acknowledges and encourages students to have ownership and contribute to their own learning. The optional programme allows students to take on specific roles and responsibilities in the following areas: Community Involvement, Physical and Sport, Leadership, Academic and Creative/Cultural. They will be rewarded for their efforts by achieving points that will enable them to earn an Excellence badge in the aforementioned areas. The students can complete tasks either at home or at school.

Technology: Te Kōhure students will all attend weekly technology classes at Hornby High School from 9.30am - 12pm starting Wednesday 12 February. For health and safety reasons, long hair must be tied back. We travel to and from Hornby High by bus. There is a technology fee which covers the cost of materials which will be charged to your child's term 1 activity account and emailed to you. Please note that the Russley office is now cashless and requires payments to be made online.

Devices and Mobile Phones

Students are encouraged to bring charged Chromebooks to school; however, they need to take responsibility for these devices. They are to be taken home at the end of each day.

At this age, some students bring **cellphones** and **smart watches** to school, however, they need to take personal responsibility for these. Mobile phones must be turned off when students arrive at school and are not to be accessed without teacher permission before the end of the school day. Occasionally they may be used in classrooms for learning. Please assist us with these rules by not contacting your child via mobile phone during school hours; instead, phone the office who will inform your child. Our students are usually very respectful of these guidelines, and we appreciate their support.

Wellbeing, Sleep and Social Media: Many of the children in Te Kōhure will have access to social media. Whilst they access social media outside of school hours, we are sometimes seeing the negative effects of some children not using this positively. This can impact relationships at school, affecting schoolwork and in some cases increasing anxiety and affecting student's wellbeing. **We strongly recommend that our parents and caregivers are vigilant and proactive in the monitoring of their children's social media accounts, if you aren't already.** We also ask parents to be mindful that some students bypass monitoring apps and may have accounts or groups that parents are not aware of. In the past we have had to contact some families who have been surprised and disappointed at what their child has been doing on social media without their knowledge. Children at this age do not have the social or emotional maturity to deal with many of the issues present on social media without parental support.

Some tips:

- Regularly check the history of internet searches on **ALL** devices. If History is empty, ask why.
- Be "friends" with your child on **ALL** their social media sites and regularly visit them. What to do if they say you are not allowed to be a 'friend'? Easy - take away their access to social media. You're the parent.





- Investigate apps that allow monitoring of your child's social media usage. Some parents in the team do this actively already and find these very helpful.
- Be aware that most gaming sites have a social media component.
- **We recommend no devices or TVs in bedrooms, always.** How can parents monitor what is happening behind closed doors? Collect their devices and put them on the kitchen bench when it's time for bed. Buy a cheap alarm clock rather than allowing their device in their room.
- **Using devices in bed can inhibit sleep patterns.** We see the effect of this in class at Russley! Quality sleep is a predictor for good mental health. You may want to check this story from the BBC which looks at the effects on sleep patterns and the growing connections between social media usage and depression: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180110-the-vital-time-you-really-shouldnt-be-on-social-media>
- Set time limits for device usage.
- **"Online Friends"** - how do you ensure your child's 'friends' are their actual friend? A Russley parent recently heard his eight-year-old who was online shout "I've past 100 friends!" The father asked him how many of the friends were people he had actually met: "Only three of them". Dad replied, "So you've got three friends and 97 strangers..."

Hats, Drink Bottles and Uniform

We ask students to bring a named drink bottle to school every day - only water, please. The start of the year is a good time to revisit your child's food requirements: our timetable schedules frequent snack breaks, and our students burn a lot of energy during the day! We would rather they had too much food in their lunch box than not enough; they can take leftovers home. Please ensure your child brings their hat (wide-brimmed blue hat) to school and that their **uniform is named**. Hats are compulsory for Terms 1 and 4. We have high expectations that the Year 7/8 students will follow the uniform code for Russley School and set a good example for the younger students. This includes no nail polish or jewellery. Family or cultural jewellery is fine if we have communication from home. If you are unsure of the uniform requirements, please check the [school website](#).



School Photos

Class and individual photos will be taken on Friday 14 February. Please ensure your child is dressed in regulation uniform on this day.

Teacher-only Day

Please note the teacher-only day on **Monday 24 February** when the school will be closed to students at all levels.

Contact Us

Please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions or require further information. Contact your child's teacher by phoning the office or emailing us on the addresses below. We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Ngā mihi

Te Kōhure teachers

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