WAIRAU INTERMEDIATE
NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents / Caregivers,

Kia ora, Talofa, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Fakalofa lahi Atu, Taloha Ni, Ni sa bula, 你好, Namaste, 안녕하세요, Hola, اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ .

As we reach the end of Week 3, we have been impressed by the high level of student engagement and participation in the classroom. While the transition to intermediate can be daunting, our students have returned with remarkable energy and enthusiasm. We also want to commend you for ensuring your child is fully prepared for school with all the necessary stationery.

Our Vision for Success

These achievements are woven into our school vision of "nurturing an inclusive community that inspires excellence and pride". With our four core values, Respect, Integrity, Courage, and Empathy acting as our pillars, we believe we have the perfect recipe for success. At Wairau, excellence is about the "whole child" excelling not just academically, but emotionally, socially, physically, and creatively.

Pride in Our Appearance

With this focus on excellence and pride, it has been encouraging to see students looking so smart in their school uniforms. As a reminder:

- Hair: Students with long hair should have it tied back.
- Jewellery & Make-up: Please ensure students do not wear make-up, false fingernails or eyelashes. We appreciate your support of our policy.
- Permitted Items: Only cultural necklaces, small studs, sleepers, and watches may be worn to school.

As students' journey with us we want them to hold their heads high, experiencing a strong sense of pride, value and belonging.

Parnell Pools

Last Wednesday out students demonstrated our school values in action as we went on a whole school trip to Parnell Pools. Students can be proud of the way in which the respectfully represented our school to the highest standard showing care and consideration of each other and members of the public who were also using the pool.

Teacher Emails/Making Contact

It's often said that it takes a village to raise a child, but in the modern world, that "village" is really a triangle: the student, the school, and the home. When these three points connect effectively, the student is supported by a solid foundation rather than a shaky one.

Here is why fostering a strong parent-school-home relationship is so vital for a child's success.

Academic Performance & Consistency

When parents and teachers are on the same page, children receive a consistent message about the value of education.

- Unified Expectations: If a child knows their parents and teachers are communicating, they are more likely to stay accountable with assignments and attendance.
- Early Intervention: Strong relationships allow for "early warning systems." If a teacher notices a dip in achievement, or a parent notices stress at home, they can address the issue before it snowballs into a larger academic crisis.

Social and Emotional Well-being

School isn't just about maths and literacy; it's where children navigate complex social waters.

- The Safety Net: A child who sees their parents and teachers interacting feels a greater sense of security. They perceive their environment as a cohesive, caring community.
- Reduced Anxiety: Open communication reduces the "us vs. them" mentality that can sometimes develop between home and school, lowering the student's stress levels.

Teacher Support and Insights

- Teachers see a version of the child that parents might not, and vice versa.
- The "Full Picture": A parent can explain a child's quirks, interests, or past traumas that help a teacher tailor their instruction.
- Mutual Respect: When teachers feel supported by parents, their job satisfaction increases, which directly translates into better energy and engagement in the classroom.

With these messages in mind, our homeroom teachers appreciated the opportunity to meet with many of you at the whānau hui for new students at the start of this term. They therefore encourage you to keep these important lines of communication open.

If you wish to email your child's teacher, please go to our school website (www.wairau.school.nz) and select "Our School" then "Our Staff". Find the person you wish to email and click on their name. This will open a new email with their email address ready for you to compose. As teachers and leaders at Wairau, we are here to support you and your child to make their time here successful. If you need a face-to-face meeting, we will also make ourselves available to meet with you.

Donation Scheme for Schools

We are pleased to share that our school has opted into the Ministry of Education School Donation Scheme. This means that instead of asking for a general school donation, we receive additional per-student funding directly from the Government. This scheme is designed to alleviate financial pressure on our whānau and ensure all students can fully participate in their learning. Under this scheme, we will not ask for donations for any curriculum-related activities, such as classroom resources, guest speakers, or local EOTC trips (e.g. Parnell baths, Beach trips, Museum Trips). This means the core of your child's education is now covered without the need for a family donation.

What This Covers (and What it Doesn't)

To help parents understand the fine print, you might find this table useful to include:

What is Covered (No Donation Needed)	What Still Requires Payment/Donation
Classroom materials: Paper, art supplies, and textbooks.	**Stationery:** Personal packs that your child uses and takes home.
Curriculum trips: Local day trips and visits from experts/performers.	**Overnight Camps:** These incur a cost that must be paid for your child to attend.
Technology: Access to software, and the network. (we are a BYOD school)	**Extra-curricular:** School sports teams, zone days, Music in Education lessons
Subject fees: Specialist subjects like Food Tech or Woodwork (unless they take a project home; hence our technology take home component fee.)	**Goods & Services:** School lunches, yearbooks, and school uniforms.

How This Assists Parents

- Reduced Costs: For most families, this removes a significant annual bill (the "school donation fee"), making the start of the year much more affordable.
- Equal Access: It ensures every student can attend day trips and participate in classroom activities regardless of their family's financial situation.
- Transparency: It clarifies exactly what is part of the "free education" entitlement and what are optional "extras" that parents support.

Community Consultation 2025: Shaping Our Future together

Thank you to the 44 parents and staff members (13% of our stakeholder group) who participated in the "Community Consultation Strategic Planning 2025" survey. Your feedback provides a vital foundation for our school's next strategic chapter, ensuring our future goals are rooted in the values we share. Here are some highlights from this survey.

What We Cherish: Our Core Strengths

The survey reaffirmed that our school's greatest asset is its nurturing and inclusive culture.

A Tight-Knit Community: Respondents consistently described the school as a "safe place" with a "wonderful" community feel.

Dedicated Staff: There is high praise for our "approachable" and "responsible" teachers, as well as the school's strong leadership and governance.

Diverse Opportunities: Our well-rounded model, inclusive of sports, performing arts, and specialised classes like hard materials and cooking is highly valued.

Strong Communication: Families feel connected through quick and easy communication channels.

Areas of Consensus: Our Shared Priorities

There is a clear mandate from our community to focus on two key areas for student growth and community life:

1. Developing Essential Life Skills: You want our students to graduate Year 8 with strong personal agency, resilience, critical thinking, and empathy.
2. Vibrant Community Engagement: While communication is good, there is a strong desire for more "in-person" connection, such as market days, school fairs, and regular whānau social events.

Navigating Different Perspectives

The consultation also highlighted "tension points" where our community holds diverse views. These discussions are essential for shaping our school's identity:

1. Academic Focus vs. Holistic Growth: We are navigating the balance between providing a nurturing, well-rounded experience and ensuring rigorous academic preparation for high school. It is important to us that we don't lose our whole child approach to academic excellence.
2. Cultural Learning: There are a range of views regarding the prioritisation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and cultural education. Some advocate for strengthening these partnerships, while others prefer a reduced focus in favour of other academic outcomes. As a school we have intentionally strengthened our connection to Te Ao Māori to build belonging, through developing Mātauranga Māori programmes, teaching Te Reo Māori, and embedding tikanga into everyday learning. Guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi as its foundation, we are committed to creating an equitable and inclusive education system, strengthening collective identity and values, and supporting the success of all learners to achieve and be successful.

Next Steps

The voice of our community is valued and respected. Therefore, we are committed to using these insights to build a strategic plan that honours our community while boldly defining our future. We are dedicated to focusing on student life skills, while continuing transparent conversations regarding our academic outcomes and culturally responsive practice. We have high expectations and are focused on equitable outcomes for all. It is our priority to ensure students are well prepared for the next phase of their educational journey.

Our updated Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation plan 2026 are available on our school website.

Partnership with MITEY

This year we are continuing to strengthen our Health curriculum through MITEY (Mental Health Education), a New Zealand designed programme developed by the Sir John Kirwan Foundation. MITEY supports the teaching of mental health in a way that is age-appropriate, evidence-informed, and grounded in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Through MITEY, students learn about understanding emotions, building resilience, strengthening friendships, managing challenges, and knowing how and when to seek support. The programme is woven throughout our Health curriculum, aligning closely with our commitment to hauora (one of our strategic goals) and ensuring students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to care for their own wellbeing and that of others.

By embedding MITEY into our classroom programmes, we are equipping our learners with practical tools and shared language to navigate life's ups and downs with confidence and compassion.

If you would like to learn more about MITEY go to: www.mitey.org.nz

Student Attendance Update

Regular school attendance is vital. All students are legally required to attend school every day. It is a shared responsibility to make sure students attend and engage in learning from when they first start school. When students attend regularly, we see encouraging progress across the curriculum.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend you for supporting and ensuring excellent attendance rates so far. Across these first three weeks of term, 99% of our students are attending regularly. We hope to see this pattern continue as the year progresses.

If, at any time this year, you find you are struggling at home with getting your child to school, please talk to us. Our school is committed to supporting your child to attend school and building a culture that fosters excellent attendance.

School Activities and Events

Life at Intermediate school is busy. We have two years to focus on preparing your child for high school. During their time with us we encourage all students to make the most of every opportunity both within and beyond the classroom.

Your child may bring sports and extra-curricular activities notices home on a regular basis. Please assist by asking your child about notices they may have. Ask questions about events and activities they have shown an interest in as there is often a "reply by" deadline.

This term we have basketball and netball trials to establish our teams as well as the start of our water polo teams. In addition, there will be multiple zone days (Intermediate School competitions) that your child may be involved in this term.

- Softball
- TAG (TBC)
- Cricket
- Swimming
- Triathlon
- Orienteering
- Fustal

Wairau Wero (Challenge – Colour Run)

This term we have organised a fundraiser to raise funds towards renovating our school tuck shop with a view to getting this up and running again. Detailed information about our fundraiser will follow shortly. As in 2025, we will be using "Raise It" fundraising, an online platform to help raise funds for our school. The timeline is as follows:

- Friday 6 March – Fundraiser Launch Day
- Monday 9 March – Friday 27 March – collect sponsorship using the Raise-it portal
- Friday 27 March – Fun Run
- Monday 30 March – Fundraiser closes

School Camps 2026

This year is a camp year for our students, and our Blocks are already well underway with planning these upcoming experiences. At Wairau, we provide a camp experience every two years to ensure all students can have the opportunity to participate. In addition, last year we introduced a yearly Sports Camp for 36 Year 8 students, who were successfully selected following a series of trials in Term 4.

Attendance at Block camp is an expectation for all students. School camps play a vital role in our curriculum, providing powerful opportunities to build independence, resilience, confidence, teamwork and positive relationships in ways that simply cannot be replicated within the classroom.

The 2026 Block camp dates are:

- Block 3: Monday 4 – Friday 8 May
- Block 2: Monday 18 – Friday 22 May
- Block 1: Monday 7 – Friday 11 December

Detailed information for Blocks 2 and 3 will be sent home shortly, outlining the programme and associated costs. We encourage families to begin making payments early, using smaller instalments to help spread the cost over time. Please note that full payment will be required to secure your child's place at camp.

This experience will add to another memorable year of growth and shared experiences for our students.

Sushi Fridays!

If your child likes sushi, save yourselves the hassle of preparing a lunchbox and order some today! **SushiDay** are now taking orders for Term 1 and *** Parents can SAVE 10% when you order for the whole term ***
Please order by 9pm Thursday for a Friday delivery. The SushiDay flyer is attached to this newsletter.
Order online here www.sushiday.co.nz

Warm regards,

Yolanda East
Principal

Check this out!

Important Dates

Term Dates 2026

Term 1	3 Feb - 2 Apr
Term 2	20 Apr - 3 Jul
Term 3	20 Jul - 25 Sep
Term 4	12 Oct - 16 Dec

Term 1: Teacher Only Days

4 March, 30 March

Sports

25 Feb	Boys Softball Zone Day
26 Feb	Girls Softball Zone Day
5 Mar	Cricket Zone Day
6 Mar	Water Safety
12 Mar	Water Safety
13 Mar	Triathlon Zone Day

Check this out!

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