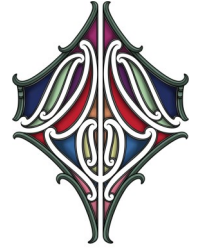




Mokoia School Newsletter

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Congratulations

Well done to Ezra, Xyonliah-Lei, Cirilla, Tiaho and Liddy who were awarded for their hard work this week. Great job Ivy who won a principal prize.



Congratulations and Welcome

Congratulations to Michael Bull and Dean Roycroft, who join us on the Board of Trustees as parent trustees. We are also welcoming one of our newest members of staff, Sharni Cooke, to be our staff representative on the Board.

Congratulations to Amber Clark, who is now heading the PTA as the new chairman. Welcome to Coralee, who has also joined the committee.

Attendance is key to learning at school. Children with good attendance have greater exposure time to learning and therefore are able to give themselves the best chance in life. Which is why the current government has made this a huge priority.

In accordance with this focus, we require that you contact us by **9am** if your child is **absent** or will be **late**. Regular absences of more than one consecutive week or frequent absences may be referred to the attendance office, if we are unable to support your family to improve your attendance.

Enrollment and attendance in school is a legal requirement for all children aged 6-16. <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/managing-and-supporting-students/managing->

Senior Class Teacher

During the holidays we interviewed for a Principal Release teacher, to teach the Senior class alternate weeks. We are in the process of appointing one of the candidates, however we are not yet in the position to release details. Until then, Whaea Evon will teach the Senior Class. For pre-arranged meetings that could not be re-arranged, either Mrs Rutten or Mrs Davy will take the class.

Dates for Your Diary

Term 1

17, 31 May, 15 June, Bhana Cup Practices (Years 5-6)

16 May Community police officer visit.

22 May Biodiversity Day bus leave at 8:45am

3 June King's birthday—school closed

5 June Ripa Rugby Tournament (pp day 7 June)

10 June Dance workshop—leave 9am on bus

26 June Bhana Cup (pp 3 July)

27 June Winter festival in Hawera 5-8pm

28 June Matariki (school closed)

5 July Last day of Term 2

Home work

Our school's homework is daily spellings (3-5 minutes) for those ready for spelling (usually Year 2/3 upwards) and daily reading practice.

We suggest that children who are level 18 and below (or red and yellow), read their book through. Level 19 onwards read for 10-15 minutes. They might not complete their book (for longer books the teacher will usually tell the children her expectation).

For pre-readers, we ask you to share the picture book that we sent home, each evening. For more ideas, please see your class teacher.

Literacy

No doubt you will have heard the government's policy changes in education and their goal for 80% children to reach age appropriate stages in reading, writing and maths. At Mokoia we work really hard to give our children the best chances to be literate and numerate. We are doing really well with maths, but our literacy skills are lagging behind. For this reason, the Board of Trustees have made literacy a priority over the last two years. We have spent extensively on good quality reading books, big books for explicit teaching, and both time and money on professional learning in this area.

DATA ON 5TH GRADE STUDENTS

Time 5th graders spent reading in and out of school

STANDARDISED TEST SCORES	TIME SPENT READING PER DAY	WORDS READ PER YEAR
90%	40 minutes	2 million
50%	13 minutes	.5 million
10%	1.5 minutes	50,000

(Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988)

For a lot of children, reading and writing is difficult. Reading and writing require a huge amount of thinking skills, as well as understanding concepts like abstract symbols (letters and sounds). **We are doing our best, but we need you to help us.** Good literacy skills are not developed in two hours a day at school– we need to be exposed to them again and again. I recently came across these statistics about the importance of daily exposure to reading.

The research also says that children need to **revisit the same text** again and again to **practise the words**. Reading a text more than once gives children the chance to actually learn the vocabulary, learn to recognise phrases that fit together in books (e.g. "once upon a time"), and to understand what they are reading. The first read of a book is usually the technical part of reading– working out what the words are and how they fit together. The second read is helping to develop fluency and figuring out what is going on in the story, and the third read allows children to truly understand what is happening. This includes the Senior children who are not yet fluent readers.

In the **Junior class, children** read their books with an adult and later in the day, to themselves. We need them to **read at home to an adult**, to complete the "three times". In the **Senior class**, some children will have this experience too, whilst others will read once, take the book home to re-read (or a portion if it is long). Many of the books will then be repeated in class again, throughout the week. Senior children will also have **comprehension** tasks to help them to become more **active readers** (e.g. be thinking about what they are reading). Senior children also have a "**reading for interest**" time (or a free read) and many of their activities during the day are requiring them to apply their literacy skills. Senior children need to read every afternoon at home. We suggest **10–15 minutes** of the school material (with many children reading for pleasure too).

Our **younger junior children** who are just beginning to learn about reading take home a **picture book each week**. Whilst we are teaching the first building blocks of reading (e.g. letter sounds, key word recognition, left to right tracking, putting finger on each word), we want children to build up **a love for reading and to develop a wider vocabulary**. This includes being able to talk about what is happening in the story, and relating it to things that they know already. This is a vital pre-reading skill, and is highly prized by our teaching team. It's also part of the current research coming out of both NZ and the UK.



Sadly, many of our beloved **picture books** have **not been returned**, and the few that have been returned, have not come back in their **protective folders**. Learning to love books is hugely important to us, but we are unable to endlessly fund books that are not returned. This term we will be sending out a book on a **Monday** to our pre-readers. These need to be **returned the following Monday**. We will then be able to issue another book out. If books and their protective folders are not returned, we will be sending home bills so that we can replace it. Lost reading books will also need to be replaced. We know that from time to time, we may lose a book, which can be embarrassing– being upfront about it with staff really helps us to know what books we need to replace, so that another child can have the benefit of learning from that book.

Thank you for your continued support.

Microbes

Over the last few weeks, the seniors have been learning about microbes. To begin with we learnt what microbes were and the three different types of micro-organisms that there are; bacteria, virus and moulds.

Our current focus has been on bacteria. We have been looking at how it is useful in yoghurt and cheese making (ask your children about “lacto bacillus”). The children know about “pathogens” and

that many bacteria are useful and necessary for us and our planet.

This week we made models of bacteria.

They were asked to include a cell wall, cytoplasm, DNA/RNA and ribosomes and food. They had to look up models and diagrams to get this learning. Several of the children made models that had gel or gelatine in them, for the cytoplasm. Many of them then closed up their bacteria, to show that they understood

what was inside and that it is encapsulated by the cell membrane and cell wall. Many of the children included flagella— a tail like structure that helps the bacteria move.

