

January 2023

Team Awa Nui Newsletter – Term 1, 2023

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Welcome to Russley School after a long hot summer, and more specifically, welcome to Team Awa Nui for another exciting year. Our team newsletter has important information for Term 1, as we look towards a prosperous 2023.

The team: There are 4 composite classes (Year 5/6) in Team Awa Nui this year.



Rhiannon Barr (Room 3) – I'm originally from Ōtautahi, but raised rurally on the West Coast and North Canterbury. I am excited to be teaching in Team Awa Nui again this year and am looking forward to getting to know my class. I love reading novels and seeing children get engaged in books. I enjoy incorporating te reo Māori and digital technologies into learning. This year I am looking forward to continuing our collaboration across Team Awa Nui and (hopefully!) school camp at Living Springs. At home my partner and I enjoy spending time in the garden, cooking, and walking our dog.

Vanessa Ireland (Room 5) – I have been teaching since 2007 and enjoy being in Team Awa Nui. I have two daughters, Phoebe in Year 5 and Bridget in Year 3. On weekends, we keep busy going on family bike rides and walks with our two dogs. I love to read and listen to audiobooks (whilst on the go) and enjoy seeing students engage in a great book. I enjoy art and will be pleased to get some bright artwork on Room 5 walls this year. I look forward to heading back to Living Springs for our camp.



Pete De Wit (Room 6 / Team Leader) – Originally from the Deep South (Invercargill), I attended Otago University in Dunedin, and previously taught in Auckland. My personal interests are based around arts and sport, especially basketball, rugby, touch rugby, and drawing. At home I have two energetic boys, and a lovely wife. My favourite subjects when I was at school were reading and spelling, and my favourite subjects to teach are writing and sport. I really enjoy the exuberant, creative elements of working in a school, and I'm excited about the activities we have planned, including team singing, 100 word challenge, Capture the Flag, and camp.

Chris Walker (Room 10) – I am a true blue North Cantabrian, born and raised in Rangiora. I taught at Oaklands Primary School for 5 years before embarking on my OE. I spent two years overseas working as an ICT Educational Advisor in the United Arab Emirates, walking 800km Camino across the north of Spain, hanging out in Paris, and teaching orphans in India. On my return, I taught at a South Auckland secondary school before returning to Christchurch and landing a job at Russley! It is a privilege to be teaching the fantastic kids in Room 10 this year. I look forward to sharing my love of literature, maths, sport, and the performing arts, not only with my class but all the amazing kids in Team Awa Nui.



Classroom programme:

We have a busy programme planned for Term 1. Understandably, the main emphasis for the first few weeks of school will be on creating a positive, collaborative environment in each class and across the team. The classroom focus will be on effective numeracy and literacy learning. Other curriculum focuses this term are:

Inquiry : Who We Are - Guardianship and Belonging, Birdlife at Living Springs

Numeracy: Number knowledge, addition/subtraction, problem-solving

Literacy: Instructional writing

P.E.: Camp fitness, 'invasion' games, swimming sports, cross-country training

The Russley dispositions continue to be a major focus for Team Awa Nui and the school, and all our work will filter through the dispositions of being **RESPECTFUL, HEALTHY, SELF AWARE, CREATIVE, SELF MANAGERS, TEAM PLAYERS, and PROBLEM-SOLVERS**. Through these dispositions, we continue to have an increasingly more collaborative, integrated team that will enable us to provide much greater flexibility in groupings, activities and approaches to the curriculum to meet individual learning needs. It's going to be an exciting year with lots of opportunities for the kids to establish positive learning habits, work with a range of teachers and peers and become self-directed learners.

Living Springs Camp:

*As communicated at the end of last year, Team Awa Nui will be going on school camp at Living Springs in week 9 of Term 1 this year. Camp is an excellent opportunity for students to get to know their class, team, and teachers. It is also a great way to build students' confidence and co-operative skills in a variety of outdoor activities. This year we are going to Living Springs. **We depart for camp on Wednesday 29 March and return on Friday 31 March (Week 9 of Term 1)**. All Team Awa Nui classes will attend camp at the same time. More details regarding camp (permission slips, gear lists, medical information, parent helpers, etc) will be sent home early in the term.*



Important dates:

Week 2 – Mon 6/2 : Waitangi Day, Fri 10/2: PTA Fish n' chip whānau night

Week 4 – Wed 22/2 : School photos

Week 6 – Wed 8/3 : School swimming sports

*Week 9 – **WEDNESDAY 29/3 - FRIDAY 31/3: Awa Nui camp at Living Springs***

Week 10 – Thu 6/4 Last day of term, Fri 7/4 Good Friday

Reminders:

- Please ensure your child brings a named, navy, wide-brimmed sun hat to school. Hats are **compulsory** for term one. If a student does not have a hat, they are restricted to sitting under the sunshade at morning tea and lunch. Children are encouraged to bring a named water bottle for use in the classroom.
- School starts at 8.50am. Children need to be in class and organised with everything they need for the day before that time.
- Headphones are a useful addition for Awa Nui students when using digital devices. If students have their own pair they are encouraged to keep them at school to use during the day – it is helpful if headphones are named. Retailers such as The Warehouse have cost-effective options that work well.

Questions / Queries:

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or queries. We look forward to meeting you and having a great year working with your child.

All the best

Team Awa Nui Teachers

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