



31 January 2024

Team Māhuri (Years 4/5/6) Newsletter - Term 1, 2024

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Welcome to Te Paritō Kōwhai Russley School after a long hot summer, and more specifically, welcome to Team Māhuri (Year 4-6) for an exciting year. Our team newsletter has important information for Term 1, as we look towards a prosperous 2024.

**The Team** There are 6 classes in Team Māhuri: 4 x composite Year 5/6 classes and 2 x Year 4 classes.

**Vanessa Ireland** (Room 5) – I have been teaching since 2007 and really enjoy teaching in Year 5/6 at Te Paritō Kōwhai Russley School. I have two daughters; Phoebe is in Year 6 and Bridget is in Year 4. On weekends we enjoy family bike rides and walks with our two dogs. I love to read, listen to podcasts, and enjoy regular visits to the library. I like art and look forward to getting some new artwork on Room 5 walls this year. School camp is always a highlight of the year.

**Maria Thwaites** (Room 6) - I have been teaching since 2015 with up to half my experience of teaching being abroad in Asia in international schools. I joined the Russley whānau at the start of term 3 last year to expand my teaching career and have absolutely loved my time at Russley so far and am very excited to begin this year as an established member of the community here. I am an active and outdoorsy person with interests in hiking, yoga, and tennis. When I'm not doing something active, I am binge-watching shows on Netflix or attempting to learn a Taylor Swift song on the guitar. I thoroughly enjoy teaching literacy with a focus on writing, digital technologies, and science. I am super excited to get the year underway and begin developing positive relationships with everyone in our team.

**Pete De Wit** (Room 7 / Team Leader) – I am originally from the Deep South (Invercargill). I attended Otago University and have previously taught in Auckland. My personal interests are based around the 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 classroom environment.

**Sophie Lennon** (Room 8) – I have been teaching for about 15 years and love working here at Te Paritō Kōwhai Russley School. As most of you know, I come from the junior end of the school and do love our littlest learners but am so excited to be joining Te Māhuri this year, especially to delve further into the music and arts programme. I take the Russley senior choir, and music and art are my own favourite subjects. I also love to read, and really enjoy teaching literacy. At home, I live with my daughter Aoife who is in Year 3, and our two fluffy ragdolls Serafina and Pawpaw. I look forward to all that Year 5/6 will bring - I can't wait for my first Russley camp!

**Rachel Simmonds** (Room 10) – Happy New Year, Russley whānau, and welcome! I am looking forward to working with your tamariki this year. I am passionate about incorporating te reo Māori, the arts, social sciences, and ICT into everyday learning. Our classroom culture is built upon the values of whanaungatanga (warm, reciprocal relationships), manaakitanga (care and respect for others) and tangata whenuatanga (place-based education). I have two sons, Liam and Luke. Both boys are much taller than me! We also have a cavoodle named Bear. He is super cute but uses this to his advantage. I love exercising in nature and dinners out with friends and whānau.

**Tammy Reen** (Room 11) – I will be teaching Year 4 in Team Māhuri. My passion for teaching and traveling has provided me the opportunity to teach in and experience the cultures of different countries. I have taught in South Africa (my home country), England, UAE, Switzerland, and New Zealand. Through these experiences, I have both grown as an educator and as a person. Within the classroom, I hope to create a space for creativity and curiosity where students want to know more about the world around them. I enjoy spending time outdoors and exploring beautiful Ōtautahi with my husband and doted-on dachshund named Peanut.

### **Classroom programme**

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

Inquiry: Ko wai au: Who We Are, Science: Electricity and Magnetism

Numeracy: Number Knowledge, Addition/Subtraction, Problem-solving

Literacy: Writing Revolution, Paragraph writing

PE: Camp fitness, Invasion games, swimming sports, cross-country training

The Russley Values will continue to be a major focus for Māhuri and across the whole school, as all our work will filter through the dispositions of: **Hauora (Healthy), Manaakitanga (Respectful), Whānaungatanga (Team player), Auahatanga (Creative, problem-solver)**. Through these dispositions, we will 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.

### **Year 5/6 Woodend Camp**

*As communicated at the end of last year, Team Māhuri Year 5/6 students will go to Woodend Camp in week 8 of Term 1. 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.*

*We depart for camp on **Wednesday 20 March and return on Friday 22 March (Week 8 of Term 1)**. All Team Māhuri Year 5/6 students 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.*



### **Fees and Payments**

The Russley School office is now cashless, therefore parents will need to make payment for events and activities such things as second-hand uniform, stationery, and activities such as camp, by eftpos or online bank transfer.

### **Important dates**

*Week 2 – Mon 5/2 School photos, Tue 6/2 Waitangi Day (school closed)*

*Week 4 – Fri 23/2 PTA Welcome Picnic*

*Week 6 – Tue 5/3 School swimming sports*

*Week 8 – **WEDNESDAY 20/3 - FRIDAY 22/3 - Year 5/6 Camp at Woodend***

*Week 9 – Fri 29/3 - Good Friday (school closed)*

*Week 10 – Mon 1/4, and Tuesday 2/4 - Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday (school closed)*

*Week 11 – Fri 12/4 Last day of term*

### **Reminders**

- Please ensure your child brings a named, wide-brimmed, blue sun hat to school. Hats are **compulsory** for Term One. If students do not have a hat, they must sit 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 at school with everything they need for the day before that time.
- Headphones are a useful addition for students using digital devices. If students have their own headphones they are encouraged to bring/keep a pair at school to use during the day. It is helpful if they are named. Retailers such as The Warehouse have good options that work well.

### **School Photos**

Class and individual photos will be taken on Monday 5 February. Please ensure your child is dressed in regulation uniform on this day and arrives at school on time.



### **Questions / Queries**

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

All the best for 2024.

### **Team Māhuri Teachers**

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*Kei ōu ringaringa te ao*  *The world is yours*