



Tōtara Syndicate Newsletter – Term 1, 2023

Kia Ora Whānau,

Welcome to 2023 and what will hopefully be a smooth year without the threat of shutdowns, postponements and cancellations due to Covid. We seem to have escaped most of the bad weather and are already fully engaged in a number of programmes both inside and outside the classroom. The following is a short summary of some of the things we are doing and will be doing, as well as a few admin reminders.

New Personnel

Firstly though, I would like to welcome Shane Dalton to the Tōtara team. Shane brings a great wealth of experience and ideas from teaching at the intermediate level both in New Zealand and Japan. He has also volunteered to fill the gap in senior singing left by Mr Wootton, although he can't promise that he will be revisiting the Beatles back catalogue with his song selection.

Curriculum

Much of the core curriculum subject matter being taught in class throughout this year will be again placed online in some form or another. We have set up Google Classrooms and various logins to Maths, Reading and Writing programmes. Your child will become familiar with how to access this material over the first couple of weeks of this term. This approach will offer students the opportunity to continue learning at home, should they find themselves isolating, but not sick, for any period of time.

In Maths, we are reinforcing number knowledge and strategies, as well as focusing on the strand of Statistics. This ties in nicely with the NZ Census being held in March. Students have been given an online MangaHigh account that will help to reinforce lessons taught in class.

We will be embarking on a reasonably intensive programme of structured literacy lessons from the start of the year - taking into account spelling, grammar and punctuation. Our overall writing focus will be on information reports, with an emphasis placed on the overall writing process, content and structure. This will be mirrored in our text selection for reading. Students will also be introduced to a couple of online programmes - Readworks and Pobble365. These will be used as part of our literacy rotations in class, but can also be accessed at home.

Our overarching theme for Term One will be one of Customs and Traditions. This allows us to introduce ideas around belonging to groups as well as explore ideas of rights, rules and responsibilities.

Sporting opportunities within school will take the form of numerous team sports, as the weather continues to improve. You will have already received a notice about Basketball and Netball opportunities being offered by the YMCA outside of school.

Technicraft got underway in the second week of term. Thank you for making sure your child arrives at school by 8.30am so that we could get our rolls done and all children on the bus by 8.45am.

Language lessons have also just commenced with the syndicate splitting into four groups to learn Japanese, German, Spanish and sign language.

That's basically all we have to report for now. There will be an opportunity to meet with myself and the other Tōtara teachers on Thursday the 23rd of February. We look forward to answering any questions you may have about the above or other aspects of Intermediate school life when we see you.

Thanks and regards on behalf of the Tōtara Syndicate.

Mark Hughes
Tōtara Team Leader