

11 September 2020

Welcome to our first Spring newsletter and the second to last one for this term. It feels very strange to have only two weeks left in Term 3 and with so many disruptions to the year at times it is difficult to know what term we are in. We had planned to have our Student Led Conferences in the first weeks back in Term 3, however Covid19 stopped all of that. We have now planned these for week 2 of Term 4 and should Covid19 prevent us from having them we will come up with alternative arrangements for students to share their learning with families.

Our new building is almost complete, and we are expecting to move classroom furniture into it in the last week of this term. We had planned for our local kaumatua to carry out a dawn ceremony to open the block but due to Covid19 and some construction delays we had to defer this. As soon as we have received the appropriate compliance certificates, we will organise a dawn ceremony and issue an open invitation to our parent community. We have postponed our official opening until Term 4 when all the work is complete and hopefully Covid19 restrictions have eased. In Term 4 we will hold open days for parents to visit the school and see the new building and gain an understanding of how we are planning to operate within it.

The Ministry of Education have informed us that they are planning to remove classrooms M8, M9, M10 and M11 from our field during the Term 3 break and the school site will remain closed during these two weeks to ensure everyone's safety.

Covid19

We continue to monitor day to day operations under the guidelines from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. In the event of a Covid19 outbreak in a school setting the Ministry of Health instructs a school on what to do and informs the school and wider community of what is happening. At times social media report rumours and untruths of someone or someplace which has had contact with Covid19. This is obviously alarming to parents and a needless cause of anxiety. Please be assured that if the Ministry of Health inform a school of a Covid19 outbreak then the parent community will be quickly informed.



To Rocco Brown for his three entries into a lockdown art competition

Upcoming Events

September

- 14-18 Te Wiki O te Reo Maori
- 24 Bay Suburbs (Y5&6) Hockey (TBC)
- 25 Last Day of Term

Principals' Awards

Excellence

Nicolas Posa – M8
Olivia Xia – J4
Sophie Barry – S11

Connections

Tallulah Bruce – J6

Passion

Grace Caseanu – J14
Ziva Bhimani – M11
Connor Chen-Stewart – S4

Thank you to all our parents who keep their children home when they are unwell or who pick them up during the day when they become unwell. We understand that it is inconvenient, especially for working parents, but please do not blame the messenger if you are called as we have to ask parents to remove their children when they present as unwell. We continue to encourage safe hygiene practices and have continued the extension to our cleaning contract so that all our desk-tops and hard surfaces are sanitised at the end of each day.

New Parent Communications App - Hero

Throughout this term we have been working on finding a communications app that will suit the needs of our community. Considered within this decision, was feedback from parents in recent surveys relating to:

- Request for a single app for all communication including reporting on student progress
- More visibility of the school calendar and term dates
- Reporting on student progress against learning progressions rather than the New Zealand Curriculum
- More timely text contact in the event of unreported student absence

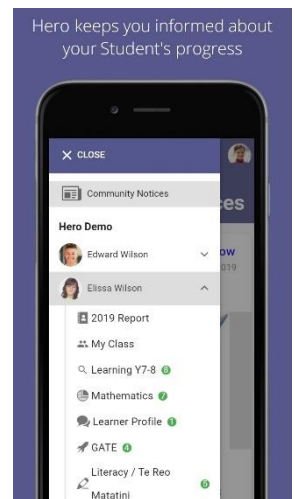


We are pleased to announce that we have decided to go ahead with the Hero app which can be downloaded for both Apple and Android systems from the App Store or Play Store.



From the beginning of Term 4, we will use the Hero app to provide important communications to you including school newsletters, sports notices and important classroom communications. Once the app is set up and customised for us we will send out further instructions about how to download the app and how to register to access your child/children's accounts.

To ensure that our 2020 reporting system is robust, and that important data is not lost, our current Real-Time Parent Reporting Portal will continue to be used until the end of 2020. From the start of Term 1 2021, reporting on student progress will also move to the Hero app. More information about this will be sent out to you in due course. This is a timely reminder for you to download and save or print any reporting information you wish to keep about your child as all reporting data only remains online until December 31, 2020.

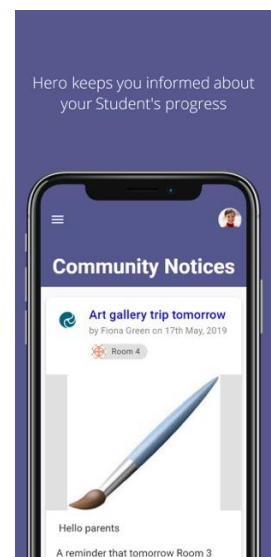


Because it didn't adequately meet our needs, we will not, at this stage, be migrating our Online Shop to the Hero system. For termly invoices and optional payments to school your separate Kindo Online Shop login and password will still be valid.

More Information About Hero

Hero has been designed with the parent experience in mind. Schools provide strong communication for their parent community to keep them up to date on school events, opportunities on offer and celebratory messages. Schools communicate student progress and achievements, next steps in learning, they provide updates on the learning that is happening in the classroom and links to the curriculum to help support those learning conversations at home. School administrators also communicate with parents regarding absences.

The challenge for the busy parent is keeping up and knowing where and how to access all current and past information quickly. Whilst technology has enabled more effective communication, parents can become overwhelmed with app overload, a full email inbox and digging around for paper at the bottom of the school bag.



Our goal with Hero is to streamline communication and create a complete solution - all information accessible, anytime through one app. All notices and student information is targeted to reach the people that need it. Whether the Principal wishes to connect with the whole school community or the choir teacher needs to get a rehearsal notice out to that specific group or a classroom teacher is sharing a window into the learning happening in their class - it's easy through Hero. Parents can then focus on what is relevant to their family and receive the information in the most effective way.

The real power of Hero is what it offers for parents to enable them to keep in touch with their children's learning. We all know that reporting to parents can be one of the most time-consuming tasks for schools and often by the time the parent receives the report the child's learning has moved on. Hero has simplified this process for schools to enable real-time reporting to take place. Our reporting tools give parents live updates of where their children are working in the curriculum and what their next steps are, at any given time. As these next steps are calibrated to the school's expectations, parents can be shown extra detail that helps them to understand more about the school's curriculum and grow a shared language of learning.

Busy parents can download the Hero app, turn on notifications and important information is easily accessed. Parents without the app will receive notifications via email, giving them a secure login into Hero. One of the really exciting things for families with children across multiple Hero schools is ALL school information can be accessed through the one Hero app. The experience when visiting different schools through the app remains unique to the individual school's context. Hero brings it all together.

Parents and schools can be reassured that sharing and permissions are tightly controlled by school approved administration. Student work is private to those who are given access by the school and robust measures have been put in place to protect your privacy and security.

Cybersafety – Do you know what your child gets up to online?

Schools regularly receive communication from concerned parents expressing their distress over online bullying or friendship issues that are affecting their child. Usually, these incidents occur out of school hours (at home) and on social media platforms.

St Thomas's School's Wifi is managed by N4L (Network for Learning) which ensures access to social media sites is blocked and inappropriate content is filtered. Despite these efforts, with increasing frequency we see students using their own data allowance to access content from personal devices brought to school.

While student wellbeing is a major focus for schools, it is very difficult to unpack these issues because of the nature of social media, the devices being personally owned, and the issues happening while students are at home, usually in the evenings or over the weekend. Additional to this, **it is important for all parents to be aware, that the minimum age to open an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok and Snapchat is 13. YouTube requires account holders to be 18, however a 13-year-old can sign up with a parent's permission.**

Most primary school children will only turn 13 at the end of their Year 8 year. However, schools are seeing serious issues with students in year levels as young as Year 4.

As a parent, if you choose to allow your child to engage via social media before they are 13 years old, it is vital that you have complete visibility over what they get up to online. It is also important that you take responsibility for teaching your children how to manage themselves online and what to do should issues arise. Agreeing on rules and guidelines for internet and app usage is a good idea.

Last week there were media reports about distressing content being streamed via TikTok. Many children across New Zealand were exposed to this and the content was difficult for authorities to track and remove. The fall-out from incidents like this and general social media issues, including cyberbullying, drastically impacts teaching and learning time within most schools.

To work together as a team towards online safety, parents are encouraged to consider how the issues mentioned might affect their families. Netsafe has put together the following tips for parents and whānau to begin the conversation.

SEVEN STEPS TO HELP YOU

The seven steps from Netsafe's [Online Safety Parent Toolkit](#) are designed to enhance your digital parenting knowledge and have been developed with parents in mind.

1. **Understand:** Read about the potential online risks, challenges and sometimes illegal behaviour young people face to understand what may happen
2. **Learn:** Ask your child about what they do, how they use devices and who they talk to learn about their activities. Check in regularly to see what has changed
3. **Explore:** Take the time yourself to explore the sites, apps and technologies your child uses to improve your knowledge and understand their experience
4. **Agree:** Create a family code with your child to agree on what they can do online including sites to visit, appropriate behaviours, privacy settings and limits
5. **Teach:** Recognise each child has unique needs, but some online safety concepts are universal. Start by teaching yours the Five tips to help your child thrive
6. **Model:** Be a good example to your child. Make sure you role model the sort of behaviours you want to see your child use online and offline
7. **Plan:** Make a plan so everybody knows what to do if something goes wrong and where you will be able to get advice and support in challenging times

Term 3, Week 8, Property Report

Hello and welcome back to the fortnightly construction report, written by me, Alexander Heaton. It's been a while since you've read one of these, with surprise level threes, and shock announcements. Even so, now that we are back to school, it is time to catch up on the property's progress.

The carpark is almost done, with it being sealed on Friday 11th, (the same day that I'm writing this report!). Wait for this exciting news, the interior has been finished!!! That's right, the floors, walls, plumbing and electricity, all finished!!! It is ready to be worked in, with just a bit more construction on the outside developing. On the topic of finished projects, the connection between the staffroom, and the new block is done, with just the canopy to be constructed! Finally, the connection with the senior and new block is the next step, with another canopy on its way.

That's it for now, the next time you hear from me it could be one of, or the last time I do my report, so make sure you read it! Cheerio, and have a lovely month!

Alexander Heaton, Year 8

Reporting Student Absences

We would like to remind all parents/caregivers that reporting absences is important for the safety and wellbeing of students.

We aim to deal with all unexplained absences as quickly as possible each morning.

To minimise the number of unexplained absences, if parents/caregivers take a few moments to advise the school of an absence in one the following ways:

- Complete the form on the home page of our website
- By telephone and leave a message 09 5283938 select option 1
- Text message to 0277580542

It is not necessary to email the class teacher.

Absences must be reported each day, unless the office has been advised in advance of the duration of an absence. You must state the reason for absence i.e. sick, doctor's appointment, holiday or bereavement.

Any students arriving late at school must report to the office and sign in, so that their safe arrival can be recorded. (Please note all late arrivals are recorded, should your child be late on a regular basis follow up action will be taken.

Please note that while we may try several alternative phone numbers to contact a parent/caregiver, if calls are not answered, where possible we will leave a voice message. If your phone numbers change at all whether it is a work, home or mobile number, can you please advise the office.

Should you wish to collect your child early from school, please come to the office and sign your child out and at the moment due to Covid19 restrictions we will call the class for your child to be sent to the office to meet you. Please note: we do not let your children go home with someone that is not on the child's record card. Students cannot be signed out during morning break or lunchtime so if they have an appointment please pick them up before morning break (10.30am – 10.50am) and lunch (12.30pm – 1.30pm).

Sun Protection

It is that time of year again where we need to be mindful of the sun and start to apply sunscreen before your children come into school. We advise that they start wearing hats during break times and this will become compulsory for Term 4.

Hats can be purchased from the office or from Argyle Schoolwear and cost \$12.50.

Year 3 Rangitoto Trip

Earlier this term the year three classes were lucky enough to go to Rangitoto Island. The focus of our trip was to connect with nature and learn about protecting our native birds. The weather was stunning and we had a great day on the island. We saw many native birds such as Tui, Fantail, and Saddlebacks. We learned to use our observation skills and look closely at nature.





Congratulations to Rocco Brown – S2

Rocco submitted three artworks about lockdown for an exhibition curated by Mandi Pope (NZ artist living in UK) of children's art about lockdown. All three of Rocco's pieces were selected to be displayed and he is very proud of himself! The Dragon gallery in the UK is exhibiting a selection of children's art from around the world.



ROCCO BROWN
Age 9, St Thomas School, Auckland, New Zealand
"Hero"
A4 - H 21 cm x W 29.7 cm (framed)
Pen on paper
"Just a cool guy with good energy."



ROCCO BROWN
Age 9, St Thomas School, Auckland, New Zealand
"Lockdown Guy"
A4 - H 21 cm x W 29.7 cm (framed)
Felt pen on paper
"Cool guys wear masks."



ROCCO BROWN
Age 9, St Thomas School, Auckland, New Zealand
"Tomorrow is a new day"
A4 - H 21 cm x W 29.7 cm (framed)
Felt pen on paper
"Sometimes we are sad and sometimes we are happy, but tomorrow always brings a new day to try again."

YEAR 5 Come up Trumps in SUMDOG Maths Competition

For a week in early September, a number of Year 5 students participated in the virtual SUMDOG Maths Competition, competing against 40 primary schools across Auckland. St Thomas's finished in 6th, 10th and 12th place overall with some notable individual achievements:

Leila Paris (M11) and Asher Goh (S2) both scored the highest result on certain days of the competition

Matt Self (M11) and Asher Goh finished 12th and 13th respectively overall on the Leader Board. In total, 503 students were competing so these are very credible results for St Thomas's School.



Well done to all of our mathematicians who took part – we can't wait for the next SUMDOG contest.



Child's Play OT are offering social skills program during the upcoming September school holidays. This program will run Monday to Friday for 2 weeks. We use a few different programs, designed to teach social skills to children with various needs. The program is intended to help children in every aspect of their social development.

AGE RANGE: 6- 12 year old

DATE and TIME: 11am to 11.45am. Commencing 28th September 2020

COST: \$60.00 per child per session

VENUE: Child's Play OT Clinic

ADDRESS: 127/131 Newton Road, Eden Terrace, Auckland, 1010. Room 115

TO BOOK/SHOW INTEREST email: accounts@childsplayot.co.nz

Further Information


- Qualified and experienced staff.
- minimum of 4 to maximum 6 children in a group
- This program is aimed at children who have difficulties with social skills and who do not require 1:1 sessions.

SPACES LIMITED!

Website: <http://www.childsplayot.net/home.html>

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info@crossfitnz.co.nz

Classes run during school term on Monday,
Wednesday and Friday at 4:30pm



GETREAL

A UNIQUE SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Providing fun ways for kids to understand relevant social topics and enjoy making positive changes in the world and in the lives of others.

Sign up for 1 day or the whole week

September 28 - October 2 9am - 4.30pm

Crafting for a Cause

Monday 28 September

Today the children will create hand loom knitted beanies and machine sewn fabric marble maze games to donate to Foster Hope, who will give them to children going into foster care placements around Aotearoa.

Cooking for a Cause

Tuesday 29 September

Today the children will cook healthy meals for people in need - the meals will be collected at the end of the day by the charity.

Art for a Cause

Wednesday 30 September

Today the children will spend the day at St Andrews Retirement Village in Glendowie meeting some of the residents and creating works of art for them based on their life stories.

Growing for a Cause

Thursday 1 October

Today the children will have fun collecting and learning about the traditional uses of plants flax weaving and making beeswax wraps to give to friends and family.

Drama for a Cause

Friday 2 October

While having fun the children will play drama games, experience improvisations and work as a group to create a presentation that is grounded in values of empathy, compassion and kindness with an understanding of diversity.



To enrol, phone **09 521 9623** or go to:
www.selwyncomed.school.nz
or www.getreal.org.nz