



Ōtāhuhu College Newsletter

Friday 14th November 2025

Important Dates

Thursday 20th November	Year 11 Maths Exam (Period 3)
Monday 24th November	Year 9 Maths Exam (Periods 3 & 4)
Tuesday 25th November	Year 10 Maths Exam (Period 3)



From Our Principal

This week has been a busy week for our students with external examinations in full swing. Most exams have had close to 100% attendance as you would expect. Students have been making the most of the tutorials and classes on offer and most importantly doing that extra study at home to help them best prepare.

This week has also seen some of the behind the scenes of Otago College examined by NZQA (the qualifications authority) and our financial auditors. Both visits went smoothly, with our exam process and the check ins rated very highly.

With the warmer weather, a reminder that students must be in the correct school uniform. As you will be aware attendance has been a big focus this year, and I am pleased to report that finally our attendance for the year has recovered to where it was before the Covid Pandemic. Thank you for all your support in making sure your children get to school every day.

Year 12 and Year 13 students

As of Monday 17th November normal timetabled classes will not be running for Y12 and Y13 students. Y12 and Y13 students should only attend school when they have an External Exam or if they are finishing an internal assessment.

Our Commitments

For our students to be engaged in their own education, they must be encouraged to read, ask questions, actively engage in discussions, write and learn to think critically about challenging material. Every mistake our students make, every question they ask, and every time they successfully struggle with a concept, their brain grows a little bit stronger and smarter.


Attendance

When students miss school, it's vital for parents to provide a written note explaining the absence. This ensures the school can record the absence accurately and identify any ongoing issues that might affect your child's ability to attend regularly.

At Otago College, we encourage parents to notify the school as soon as possible, either by phone, email, or a handwritten note. Together, we can support students to overcome barriers to attendance and ensure they don't fall behind.

‘Oku mahu’inga ke faka-fetu’utaki mai ki he ‘apiakó ‘a e ‘uhinga ‘oku ‘ikai ma’u ako ai ‘a e fānaú. O le tusi o faamatalaga e fesoasoani i le aoga e fesoasoani ai i le fanau.

Study News

	<p>We continue to wish our Year 11 cohort the best of luck in their NCEA exams.</p> <p>Next week, we will be hosting the second round of Further Assessment Opportunities for selected students to gain an additional 5 Literacy credits if they have not yet obtained these. A letter was sent home and given to the students regarding these. Text message reminders will be sent out next week for the relevant families.</p> <p>Week 7 FAOs for Literacy credits Week 8 FAOs for Numeracy credits</p>
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<p>On going reminders regarding behaviour and expectation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phones, headphones and devices are banned from school and should not be seen or used during the hours of 8:30am and 3pm. • Students must attend school with a school bag with the relevant books and equipment. • All students need to be in their timetabled classes. • All students need to be at school for 8:35am <p>Any breach of the above will result in an after-school detention being issued. Please support us in communicating these messages to the students.</p>
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Compulsory Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy Further Assessment Opportunities (FAOs)

Kia ora e te whānau,

In addition to externals, some Y11, Y12 and Y13 students are required to remain in school next week and the week after (Monday 17th – Friday 28th November) to complete assessments for their Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy corequisites. Students have been given all the necessary information at school, and emails and texts will be sent home to families, in due course. Please check your emails and texts and ensure your child attends when required. FAOs are a one-time opportunity and not negotiable. Attendance is essential. A reminder: Students cannot achieve NCEA without completing their Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy corequisites. Our teachers are working hard to provide these extra chances to ensure every student can progress successfully.

To support your child, please ensure they: • Speak to their whānau teacher • Know where they need to be and when • Attend school every day, on time. • Give their best effort



Please do not make any plans that would require your child to be out of school during their FAOs or externals.

If you have any questions, please contact:

· Mrs Christensen mchristensen@otahuhucollege.school.nz

Or your child's dean:

· Y12 Mr Martin amartin@otahuhucollege.school.nz

· Y11 Ms Norgate enorgate@otahuhucollege.school.nz

Thank you for working with us to ensure your child has the best chance of succeeding.

Ngā mihi nui,

Melinda Christensen.

EXTERNALS

It is important that students prepare and perform well in their externals because:

- Year 11 students are aiming to **complete their Level 1 Literacy corequisite by passing their English, Commerce, Geography external(s)** (5 Level 1 Literacy credits each).
- Year 11 History external is a pathway to all-important **UE Writing credits** needed for **University Entrance**
- Year 12 and Year 13 **externals** are a pathway to all-important UE Literacy credits needed for **University Entrance**
- Year 12 and Year 13 students unable to earn 60 Level 2 or Level 3 credits internally, must gain the remainder from externals.
- To earn a **subject endorsement**, students need 14 credits in one subject, including **3 from an external**. For an Excellence endorsement, all 14 credits must be at Excellence; for a Merit endorsement, all 14 must be at Merit or higher.
- Exam performance tells universities and employers that students: have **discipline** and are not afraid of hard work, can **adapt** to challenging situations, and are **independent** and don't need to be "spoon-fed", which are skills needed by every workplace and every profession.
- To see the 2025 NCEA externals timetable, copy and paste the following link into your browser: <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/NCEA/2025-Exam-Timetable.pdf>



Enrolments for 2026

Enrolments are still open for all new students wishing to start in 2026. Please ask for an enrolment form from the school office or you can click the link below to apply online

<https://otahuhucollege.school.kiwi/enrolment>

School office hours :

Monday – Friday

08.30am – 3.30pm



****Please notify the school if your details have changed** so we are able to update your child's file accordingly.

Extracurricular News

Year 10 Leadership Camp

After first being enshrined in the folklore of Year 10 Leadership Camp in 2024, Kupe returned this year as the mascot and inspirational role model whose legend loomed large and benevolently over our camp as our budding young leaders followed in his footsteps. The fabled Māori explorer and navigator who reputedly defended his people from a great octopus or sea monster, Kupe is said to have successfully orchestrated an exploratory sea voyage southward from his home in Hawaiki-rangi toward the land where we now live, ultimately landing in the Hokianga Harbour. Since this harbour lies within the same region as Mangawhai Heads, our location for camp, the tale of Kupe seems all the more apposite as an allegory or template for how our rangatahi can aspire to lead and serve. Likewise, Kupe's virtues — ranging from resourcefulness to courage to patience to visionary inspiration — applied superbly to our Year 10 students as they explicitly discussed, defined, and delivered these very values during our three days at camp.

After a somewhat unfavourable forecast in the days preceding camp, we were fortunately greeted by a resplendent sun as we arrived at the sandy shores of Mangawhai estuary, where we enjoyed our first meal and the students faced their first challenge. This task involved devising an engaging name and designing a flag to represent their team, which promoted group solidarity and unity from the beginning, demonstrating to the students the importance of active efforts to institute cohesion and a collaborative spirit within a team. This task also, of course, introduced the students to each other's personalities, providing each group with valuable and immediate observations as to how they could best work together: whether by avoiding talking over one another, by delegating tasks according to each group member's strengths, or by appointing a clear leader to give direction and ensure that progress checkpoints are met.



These collaboration strategies were then refined further throughout the day as teams competed against one another in a “survivor challenge”, which involved physical outdoor tasks such as grass skis, a blindfold obstacle course, and the transportation of water via leaky pipes. From each of these tasks emerged not only laughter but leadership learning: each group member had to take a turn at having the task explained to them privately by the instructor, then communicating this information to their group and leading their group through the task, including delegating and strategising where appropriate. The task leader would then, where possible, receive feedback on his/her leadership style from the rest of the group, either aloud at the time or through written “compliment cards” produced later in the evening. This technique of rotating individual leaders within groups was inspired by a practice used by officers of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) in a training programme which they deliver to young leaders as part of a course run by Rotary International. Our Ōtāhuhu College leaders are, therefore, walking in significant footsteps!

The next day, it was in the footsteps of Kupe that our Year 10 students were treading, as the suite of morning and afternoon activities gained a distinctly maritime flavour! Exploring the craggy outcrops and the pristine sands of the Mangawhai coastline, our students collaborated in their teams to complete a cliff hike and beach walk, a paddleboarding expedition, and a raftbuilding endeavour. These activities proved instrumental in exposing our students to a plurality of practical outdoor skills — from plant and bird identification to navigation to vessel control to rope lashing — while also challenging each group to find a method of coalescing effectively as a team. For instance, during the hike, teams had to adopt an appropriate pace and support those who were less accustomed to extended walking, while during the paddleboarding stability and synchronised paddling were vital, which created space for one student or a rotation of students to become a calm, clear caller to guide their team to the destination and avoid a watery capsizel! As well as looking after their teams, students also experienced the importance of caring for their own wellbeing through necessities such as sunscreen and hydration; Kupe cannot serve his people properly if he is gasping for water and wilting under the scorching sun! Our students’ alertness to these lessons was pleasing, since, during the orienteering activity on the final day, many more were carrying water and had adopted appropriate sun protection.

Given the stunningly radiant weather which our final day of camp offered, we were certainly grateful for the hydration and hats! Having journeyed to Mahurangi Regional Park, teams competed against one another in an orienteering course in which they had to identify markers and record numerical codes across an area of several square kilometres. Now that the students had spent two days in each other’s company, they were well equipped to divide themselves into smaller teams and mastermind a strategy to cover the maximum distance between all their team members, developing both intellectual and social leadership skills. The students’ persistence in the face of significant heat and fatigue proved very pleasing, with all teams accomplishing a respectable proportion of the course and persevering throughout the allotted time. Appropriately, the prizes for the winning team were reusable water bottles, meaning that they are already partially prepared for their next outdoor adventure!

As well as the daytime activities, the time spent at the campground itself in the evenings helped to advance our students in their leadership journey. For instance, groups developed empathetic leadership by gently guiding a blindfolded person through an obstacle course. Then, they competed against the clock





to touch 30 tiles in fewer than 20 seconds, practising productivity and stress management under time pressure. Leadership communication was then cultivated through an “identical build” challenge whereby groups had to construct a structure based only on instructions articulated by the rest of their team. On the second night, team cooperation reached its peak with a talent show in which every student successfully participated; whether dancing, singing, acting, or contributing behind the scenes — even the idea of participating in a performance took some students beyond their comfort zone, and they fought their apprehensions and tackled the challenge with aplomb! Throughout camp, many students of a quiet disposition also challenged themselves by taking a public-speaking role, either in explaining a task or in expressing thanks to instructors and catering staff. Some of these students took the initiative of planning and scripting a full speech accompanied by gestures, resulting in some truly meaningful expressions of gratitude.

These expressions of gratitude were indeed appropriate, since appreciation was due to a multitude of individuals. The instructors from Bigfoot Adventures — Tom, Tyler, and Somy — fully supported our leadership philosophy and expertly interwove the “Kia Kupe” ethos into their delivery of activities, leading the students enthusiastically and expertly. Our caterer provided nutritious meals for the students. Of course, the greatest gratitude is due to the Ōtāhuhu College staff who sacrificed their own time to accompany our students on camp: Emma Norgate, Siobhan Leigh, Kate Bulteel, Shaun Klopper, and Billie McKinlay. These staff took a personal interest in the students in their groups, nurturing their leadership qualities and ensuring that the spirit of teamwork was healthy and growing. We thank these staff for their dedication and look forward to watching the fruits of the leadership experience materialise as the students move into Year 11!





ŌTĀHUHU COLLEGE



Friday 14th November 2025







