



## Ōtāhuhu College Newsletter

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### *Important Dates*

Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	Junior Prizegiving -09.30am Last day of School year
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	School Office closes
19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Book shop opens for stationary From 9am



## *From Our Principal*

Thank you for what has been a very successful year for our students. The College year has come to a close, and it has been a year of hard work, commitment and full of achievement because of that. To our families who we are responsible to, and who we serve. Thank you for the support of your child's education and for the support of Otago College. Your stressing of the importance of getting a good education and the sacrifices you make so that your sons and daughters can study and concentrate on their schooling makes such a difference to their lives.

My thanks go to all of the students who make Otago College such a special place. I applaud you for your goodwill, cooperation, involvement and hard work. It is a genuine joy to be associated with such eager, talented, challenging and positive young people.

My best wishes to the entire Otago College community for Christmas and the holiday season and for future success. Kia Tamatane

## *Attendance*

Regular attendance is expected of all students at Ōtāhuhu College. Regular attendance is defined as 90% or better. All students need to be at school by 8:35am. Students need a minimum of 80% attendance to participate in extra-curricular activities.

For those on student visas 80% or better attendance is required for the school to support the renewal of the visa. Chronically absent students may have to repeat the year. Parents/caregivers have an important role to reply of notifying the College of any absences in advance or in the case of sickness before 8:30am



## Study News

### Avoiding the “Summer Slide”: Simple Ways to Keep Learning Alive Over the Break

Over the long summer break, many students naturally lose a bit of the learning momentum they’ve built during the year. This is sometimes called the “summer slide.” The good news is that research shows even small, everyday learning activities at home can make a big difference, and they don’t have to feel like schoolwork!

For whānau in our community, the most powerful things you can do are free, simple, and can be woven into normal life, whether at home, at the park or beach, at work, or spending time with wider whānau.

Here are some fun and practical ways to help children build their confidence and stay connected to their learning in reading, writing, and numeracy over the holidays.

### Reading

#### Everyday ways whānau can support reading

- Talk to your child about what you read, whether it’s recipes, news, sports updates, or social media. Seeing you as a reader matters.
- Read in the language that feels most natural for your family.
- Visit the local library together and let your child choose anything that interests them: magazines, graphic novels, game guides, travel books.
- Ask simple questions after they read: Who was your favorite character? What surprised you? What might happen next?
- Watch a movie together, then read the book version and compare.
- Listen to audiobooks (you can get them from the library app called LIBBY) while travelling or relaxing; great for sparking discussion.
- Look up topics your child is curious about online and talk about how they know the information is reliable.

#### Things students can do on their own

- Read for just 30 minutes a day, before bed works well.
- Mix it up: news articles, blogs, reviews, recipes, or short stories.
- Borrow what friends are reading or try an audiobook.
- Research a favourite celebrity or interest, then check if the sources are trustworthy.
- Try free reading resources such as: <https://pathwaysawarua.com/pathways/literacy>

### Writing

#### Easy ways whānau can build writing into daily life

- Let your child see you writing (emails, lists, messages) and involve them where possible.
- Do crosswords or word finds together.
- Give them real reasons to write: the holiday shopping list, captions for whānau photos, a shared family



- blog, or a message to relatives.
- Sell unused items online on TradeMe or Marketplace and let your child write the description.
- Ask them to show you writing they're proud of from school.
- Choose a "family word of the day" and see who can use it the most.

## Things students can do on their own

- Keep a journal, diary, or simple to-do list.
- Write song lyrics, poems, or comics or whatever feels fun.
- Write a persuasive letter explaining a request (and follow up with a "contract" if parents agree!).
- Write to a teacher, principal, or MP about an issue they care about.
- Use random word challenges to build creativity.
- Try online puzzles and word games: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/puzzles> | <https://pathwaysawarua.com>

## Numeracy

- Ways whānau can build math into real life
  - Compare prices while grocery shopping and talk about best value for money.
  - Look at labels and discuss sugar, fat, or protein content.
  - Talk about sales and discounts and make quick estimates together.
  - Ask your child to teach you a math method they've learned at school.
  - Look at graphs, tables, or statistics in the news and ask simple questions.
  - Notice patterns in weaving, carving, buildings, or the natural world.
  - Talk about technology use and calculate hours spent online.
  - Be positive about math and show how you use it every day.
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- Things students can do on their own
  - Play online strategy games or number puzzles.
  - Play card or board games that use math.
  - Create symmetrical art or designs.
  - Make a simple budget for holiday earnings.
  - Calculate their own tech usage and compare it to recommended hours.
  - Bake or do DIY crafts to sell and work out costs and how much a 25% profit would be.
  - Try free online numeracy tools:
  - <https://pathwaysawarua.com/pathways/numeracy>

Keeping learning alive over the summer holidays doesn't need to be formal or stressful. Small, fun activities done regularly help students return to school confidently, settled, and ready for a strong start to the new year. Thank you for everything you do to support your children's learning, your involvement truly makes a difference.



Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, thank you for your support this year. Wishing you a happy and safe holiday season, including precious time with whānau. I look forward to seeing all our students return refreshed and ready for an exciting new year of learning in 2026!

Melinda Christensen  
Director of Academic Performance Otago College  
Email: [mchristensen@otahuhucollege.school.nz](mailto:mchristensen@otahuhucollege.school.nz)

## *Junior School (Year 9 – 10)*

### **Golf Trip**

On Wednesday, 20 of our juniors enjoyed a trip to the driving range to play golf. It was great to see the group bonding and supporting each other during the trip. Some of the students were naturals at golf! We ended the trip with a picnic in Cornwall park and managed to avoid the rain! A quote from one year 10, “That was the best day ever”



## Food Technology

As usual, some of the Year 10 Food Technology students put on a great show at the end of year Morning Tea for all the staff at school. The students worked over 3 days and were punctual, committed, and worked as a team from start to finish. They enjoyed interacting with all the staff and at the end of the service, were keenly reading all the feedback they got. Here are some pictures of the event.





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## Sports News

Congratulations to Shaniya Chu Kau who has made the NZ Barbarians Girls 7s team for the second year in a row. She will compete in the upcoming Global Youth 7s competition held here in Auckland on the 19<sup>th</sup> December-21<sup>st</sup> December featuring several teams from around the World.



## School office hours

Our School Office closes on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December at 12pm and re-opens on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January for normal School Office hours : Mon – Fri 8am – 3.30pm

The Book shop will open on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January from 9am for all stationary needs.

**STATIONERY PACKS**

2026 year 9 Pack	\$40
2026 Year 10 packs	\$50
Scientific calculators	\$36.00

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## **Message from Year 10 Dean**

As year 10s you have spent time building knowledge and skills in your classrooms, you have developed life skills that you will carry with you for years to come. You have grown in confidence and for many of you, in height. In each of you there is something to nurture, and I hope that your past year at Otago College has been one full of lessons revealing what you are capable of achieving.

To our parents and guardians, thank you for your support and guidance at home. For trusting us as teachers and a school to look after your child and help them reach their full potential. It truly takes a village to raise a child, and we are proud to walk this journey alongside you.

Year 10s, I want to thank you for what you have taught me. As a teacher and as your dean, I am always learning, you have given me some of the most valuable lessons of all. Although my time as your dean is coming to an end, I will carry with me the countless stories of compassion, resilience and laughter from Otago College. It has been an honour to be a part of your journey.

As you move into Year 11, be curious, strive for excellence and be kind to each other. Every one of you has

something to be proud of. Please take the holiday to spend time with loved ones and spread your wings a little wider. Kia Tamatane.

Ms McKinlay  
Year 10 Dean



## *Message from Board of Trustees*

Tēnā koutou e te whānau o Ōtāhuhu College,

As your Board of Trustees, we acknowledge the ongoing public conversation about the proposed changes to the Education and Training Act 2020, including the suggestion to remove the legal requirement for school boards to “give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”

We want to be unequivocal: Ōtāhuhu College remains unwavering in its commitment to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This commitment is not upheld because legislation requires it, but because it reflects our values, our responsibilities, and the identity of our school community.

Ōtāhuhu College is proud to serve a richly diverse community of Māori, Pacific, Asian and many other cultures. In particular, we recognise the large number of ākonga who come from Pacific backgrounds and the strengths they bring to our kura, their languages, cultural values, leadership, and deep sense of connection and service. Alongside this, we uphold our responsibility to tangata whenua and the cultural foundations that ground Aotearoa.

Our ongoing commitment means that we will continue to:

- Embed Te Ao Māori perspectives into our teaching and learning
- Strengthen Te Reo Māori pathways, alongside Pacific and other language programmes
- Engage meaningfully with Māori whānau, iwi and Pacific communities
- Resource equity-focused initiatives that promote cultural understanding and success for Māori, Pacific, and all ākonga

As legislative discussions continue nationally, our Board reaffirms that our direction will not be shaped solely by policy, but by the needs, strengths and identities of our young people. Ōtāhuhu College will continue to advance Te Tiriti-based and Pacific-focused practice because it supports learner success, strengthens community connection, and reflects who we are.

We look forward to ongoing engagement with our community as partners in this shared responsibility. Your perspectives and participation are valued in shaping the future of our kura.

Ngā mihi nui,

On behalf of the Ōtāhuhu College Board of Trustees