



Ōtāhuhu College Newsletter

Friday 30th January 2026

Important Dates

Friday 6 th February	Waitangi Day (No school)
Monday 16 th February	Haka-Waiata Competition
Wednesday 18 th February	Head Prefect Speeches/Voting
Thursday 19 th February	Sports Day



From Our Principal

On Tuesday we had the pleasure of welcoming new families, students and staff to Otahuhu College. I would like to thank our Year 13 students who did such a good job welcoming them into our College. On Wednesday we had all students return and classes up and running, as one of the first secondary schools in Auckland to be teaching it is a credit to our community and our staff that the school year can start so smoothly.

For our Year 9 students, they will be the first to go through a new qualification system. In order to help prepare for this to pass Year 9 at Otahuhu College, students need at least 50% overall across the year, attend at least 80% of school days, show consistent effort, and pass at least 4 subjects in their end-of-year exams without any very low marks. Students' attendance, effort, mid-year results, and end-of-year exams all matter.

Congratulations to one of 2025 Year 13s, Samuel Fruean, has been selected by NZQA for Top Art 2026, for his Printmaking Board.

Attendance

Under new Ministry of Education guidelines, parents will receive automated notifications once their child has been absent for a certain number of days each term. To prevent escalation to attendance Services, Oranga Tamariki and ultimately prosecution it is important that families respond to these letters and most importantly students attend regularly (90% or better).

Chronic absenteeism has a lifelong impact. Research shows that chronically absent students are far less likely to achieve qualifications and, as adults, earn \$40,000 less annually by age 25. This income gap highlights the importance of addressing absenteeism early.

At Otahuhu College, students who miss 10-15 days in a term are referred to Attendance Services for additional support, while those who miss 15 or more days trigger a referral to Oranga Tamariki. These steps are designed to identify and eliminate the barriers preventing students from attending school. Let's make attendance a priority to safeguard our students' futures.

Ko e fānau 'oku nau li'aki ako ma'u pe'e 'oku mole honau faingamālie ke ma'u ha pa'anga 'oku lahi. E a'afia le lumana'i o tamaiti pe'a le auai i le aoga. E le tutusa tupe e maua a tamaiti e le to'a'aga i le a'oga ma tamaiti e 'auai i a'oga i aso uma pe'a matutua e tusa ma su'esu'ega a le matagaluega.

Our Commitments

Our commitment next week is to be respectful. Being respectful includes being aware of the language we use both at school and to and from school. Swearing is not acceptable, and can often make situations worse than they need to be. A key to success is keeping calm under pressure. Students also demonstrate respect by the way they wear their uniforms, again this is both to and from school. The vast majority of students look well dressed as they come to school and thanks to all the families for your hard work which makes this possible. Just a reminder that our young men should be in school socks, or plain black socks.

Haka-Waiata

At Otago College, Haka-Waiata is part of our timetable during the first 3 weeks of every school year. It is an important expression of who we are and what we value as a learning community. It is a way for us to show unity, pride, and a deep respect for the cultural heritage of Aotearoa. Performing our Haka-Waiata connects us to the principles we uphold every day; being respectful and being supportive. Students and staff engaging in their Houses' Haka-Waiata each afternoon, over the next few weeks, builds resilience, kotahitanga (togetherness), and pride in our identity as a school.

It is important to acknowledge that while Haka-Waiata is grounded in Māori culture, it is NOT a religious activity or experience. It is a cultural practice that helps us strengthen our sense of belonging, celebrate the diversity of our community, and uphold the tikanga and values that guide our mahi together. Participation fosters teamwork, confidence, and shared purpose, and helps students feel connected to something bigger than themselves.

Through each Houses' Haka-Waiata, we honour the stories and traditions of te ao Māori, while also celebrating the unique culture of Otago College. It is a unifying experience—one that builds school spirit, reinforces our values, and reminds us that each of us contributes to the collective pride of our school.



Study News



ŌTĀHUHU COLLEGE

YEAR 11

PASS CRITERIA

- Achieve Level 1 Literacy
(5 Reading & 5 Writing credits via
CAA or alternate credits)
- Achieve Level 1 Numeracy
(10 credits)
- Maintain 80% attendance
- Earn an Engagement grade of 3 or above
- Participate in at least one extra-curricular
activity

Welcome back, Year 11!

This year is about prioritising you and your learning journey—setting yourself on the strongest path toward your future goals in achievement, training, and employment. We expect you to be organised, on time, respectful, and fully committed to giving your best so you can experience success both inside and outside the classroom.

Here is the criteria set for Year 11 to PASS at Ōtāhuhu College and gain certification of achievement in 2026.

New Staff at Otahuhu College

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This year, Otahuhu College is pleased to welcome a number of highly skilled and dedicated new staff members who will be contributing to the excellent classroom teaching and fantastic support systems already in place.

Science Department

Ms Jones joins the Science team, bringing experience from Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School and King Edward VII School. A former Young Darwin Scholar, she will also support the Environment/Eco Club. She holds a Master of Biological Science (First Class Honours) from the University of Sheffield.

Ms Ngai begins her teaching career with us in the Science Department. She brings experience working in Accident and Emergency and has volunteered with Model United Nations. She will also assist with Netball and plays piano. She holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Auckland.

Mr Massey joins the Science Department as part of the AUT Teacher Training Programme. With previous experience at Sky City, he will also be supporting our choirs. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Massey University.

English Department

Mr Woodard joins the English Department, having taught at Carduzo Education Campus and César Chávez Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. He has worked extensively with disadvantaged students supporting their university pathways and has interests in Ultimate Frisbee and board games. He holds a Master of Science in Education Studies from Johns Hopkins University.





Physical Education

Mr Fulton joins the PE Department and will also coach rugby. He previously served as Head of Rugby at Lomond School and has a strong background in rugby and tennis, including time as Head of Performance at Elsternwick Tennis Centre. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Stirling.

Mr Gough will be teaching Physical Education and Health. He has previously taught for Algoma District School Board in Canada. He is passionate about helping students grow through extracurricular activities, particularly athletics and has coached Basketball. Mr Gough has a Bachelor of Physical Education and Health from Laurenton University.

Music

Mr Fillmore joins us as Head of Music. He has taught at Hamilton High School West and Lawrence High School and has extensive experience in choral education and performance. He is also a qualified scuba diver, has experience in E-Sports, and is developing his rugby knowledge. He holds a Master of Music from Westminster Choir College, Rider University.

Learning Support

Ms Chonker joins Learning Support with a focus on Literacy. She has taught in both Australia and Canada, holding leadership roles in inclusive education. She will also contribute to extracurricular arts. She holds a Master of Arts from Royal Roads University.

Attendance

Mr Johnson joins Otahuhu College as our new Attendance Navigator, bringing experience from Mealamu Security and youth work.

Social Sciences

Ms Rushwaya joins the Social Sciences Department. She has taught at Hillcrest College and Gaborone International School and has also taught and supervised teacher trainees at two universities. She will support Debating as her co-curricular area. She is completing a Master of Education at the University of Cape Town.

Staff Updates

We also congratulate existing staff taking on new leadership roles:

Mr Havemann – Assistant Dean

Ms Birch – Hobson House Leader

Ms Manase – Massey House Leader

Ms Bulteel – Grey House Leader

Ms Clarken – Returning from maternity leave as Year 10 Dean

Ms Gifford – Seddon House Leader

Class of '86 Reunion Visit

The Class of '86 enjoyed a wonderful reunion back at their old school. Guests arrived at 9am to a reorganised staffroom and enjoyed time reconnecting before taking a guided tour of the campus. They viewed the many changes and developments made since 1986, with the tour slightly shortened due to rain showers. The group thoroughly enjoyed the visit and shared many fond memories of teachers and classrooms along the way.

Following the tour, attendees gathered in the staffroom for a substantial self-provided lunch. A painting by a former student was presented, along with a koha. The programme continued with a house-based quiz organised by class members, and the group proudly sang their old school song, "The Best School of All."

It was a warm, positive, and memorable occasion.

Stationary



Stationery can be purchased still from our bookshop located at the bottom of A Block next to the library



Changed your phone number, email, or address? **Please contact the school office** so we can update your details. Keeping this information up to date helps us stay in touch when needed.