



Newtown School

Love learning, love life!

Nau Mai, Haere Mai

Welcome to Newtown School. This newsletter is designed to tell you a little bit about the new entrant classroom and to answer any questions you may have about your child starting school. The very friendly teachers in the class (and school) are always happy to answer any questions you have, so please feel free to talk to them.



Starting School!

Congratulations! You now have a busy and active 5 (or 6) year old. School is a new and exciting environment and starting school can be a big adjustment, even if your child has been at childcare or preschool. New routines and new people will mean you may have a very tired (and hungry) child after school. Offer lots of encouragement and support while your child is settling into school.

Many parents ask what they can do to help their child before they start school. It is helpful if they can write their name, count to 10, dress themselves and use the bathroom independently. These are all good things you can practice with your child at home before starting school. However, please don't be concerned if your child has difficulties with any of these things prior to starting school as we will help your child to develop the skills they need to successfully adjust.

School Visits

Starting school is a new and often daunting experience for children, so before starting at Newtown we recommend your child comes into the school for a number of classroom visits. This is a chance for both you and your child to have a look around the school, see how the classroom works and ask any questions you may have. It gives the teachers a chance to meet you and your child, and gives your child a chance to see the classroom and become familiar with the environment. Parents need to stay with their children to answer questions. It is a good opportunity to meet the parents of other new children.



Every Wednesday between 8.45 and 11am our new entrants class, Te Whanau Tui, welcomes new children who are close to starting school. However, if visiting at this time doesn't suit please contact the office on 389 6667 to arrange another time to visit.

New Entrants Class - Te Whanau Tui

New Entrants start Newtown School in Te Whanau Tui. This lovely environment is a large modern learning space, which has been established and set-up to support your child's learning.

Teachers work together to ensure the transition to school is a positive experience for both you and your child.

The classroom walls have pictures and stories about the children in the class and current topics and learning. There is also plenty of art work on display.

Children hang up their school bags and jacket at their named peg, by the classroom door. Children quickly settle into daily routines of putting away book bags and hanging up their bags and jackets.

Children have ready access to a drink fountain in the classroom and bathrooms are located next to the classroom.

Years 0 and Years 1

When your five year old starts school, you may hear them referred to as a Year 1 or Year 0. This is determined by when your child starts school. If your child starts school in April or later, and is aged between five and six, they will be classed as Year 0. If they start school before April they will be classed as Year 1.

Settling your child

Children can have a variety of different approaches to starting school and these approaches can change during the settling period. Children may:

- Take it all in their stride, be happy at drop-offs, and settle quickly into the school day.
- Be cautious and spend a period of time observing before getting fully involved.
- Be upset at drop-off times and need a period of comforting before becoming involved



All of these responses are perfectly natural and normal.

If your child is upset when you leave the best way to tackle this is to be consistent with the drop-off routine. For instance:

- Help your child hang up their school bag and put their book bag and reading book away in their book box, (encourage your child to show you where everything goes).
- Let your child pick an activity and spend a specified amount of time with your child (5-10 minutes) at this activity.
- Say goodbye once and then leave. We recommend that you try not to drag out your departure or change your mind as we find that children will generally settle quickly once their caregiver is out of sight. (You may need a teacher to help with this).

At Newtown School we strive to make settling in as smooth and positive as possible. Parents can assist this by also being positive with their children.

Please feel free to talk to Janette, Karen, Sarah, Rachel, Brittany or James, should you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's settling in.

Supporting your child at Home

On your child's first day, they will bring home a book to read. This reading book is for your child to read to you (or to read together). Offer lots and lots of encouragement, praise and support - learning to read takes time!



Reading books are sent home every night together with a yellow 'Read It' book. This 'Read It' book is for you to record and comment about your child's reading. It also includes ideas and suggestions to support children learning to read. We encourage you to make reading fun and about spending time together. If you or your child are finding this process stressful, please discuss this with a teacher to enable us to provide more help. You will be offered a place in a parent programme run by Rachel, called Reading Together, which helps you see how the child finds the reading process, and will give you lots of tips.

Children are also taught Jolly Phonics (letter sounds) at school. Learning the sounds of each letter helps children when they are learning to read and write (and later learning to spell). In the Jolly Phonics notebook that comes home in the book bag, there will be a weekly letter. Each letter has a little song and actions that your child will have learnt at school. You can encourage your child to sing this to you and/or (if they can't remember or don't want to) talk about the letter and the sound this letter makes. Please help your child to write one or two words that start with the new sound.



Mutukaroa

Mutukaroa is one of Newtown School's home and school learning partnerships. Once your child starts school, the teachers will conduct some reading, writing and maths assessments to find out what your child already knows. Rachel, our Mutukaroa Coordinator, will then arrange a one hour meeting with you to share the results and to help you set learning goals that you can help your child with at home. She will also give you fun resources to help with this. Rachel will meet with you again when your child turns 5 1/2 and 6 to keep you up to date with your child's progress.



Stationery

You will be given a stationery list on one of your school visits. You can purchase the necessary items at the school office (great prices!) or at any stationery shop. The books are for your child's personal use, whereas pencils, whiteboard markers and glue sticks are shared. Your child will use many of these items on their first day so it is very helpful if you can bring them to school when your child starts.

Sickness

It is important that if your child is unwell they stay at home and are given adequate time to recuperate before returning to school. Please note health guidelines state that children need to wait at least 24 hours following vomiting or diarrhoea before returning to school and will not be able to swim for 5 days.

Please contact the office and let the school know if your child is off school sick.

Signing in late and Absences:

There may be times when you're running late, or you have an appointment in the morning. If you turn up after the class roll has been taken (after 9am) we just ask you to sign your child in, in the 'late book' in the office.

Similarly if your child is absent from school, for any reason and we have not heard from you, someone from the school will try to contact you to check your child's absence.



If you need to take your child away from school early, please talk to the teacher then sign them out at the office too.

PB4L – Positive Behaviour 4 Learning

The PB4L initiative supported by the Ministry of Education is fully integrated across all classes at Newtown School. PB4L promotes a positive, safe and respectful learning environment for all, and is the schools expectations of behaviour both in and outside the classroom.

PB4L encourages the following expectations:

- Be a learner / He Akonga
- Be positive / Kia Mataara
- Be Safe / Kia Tupato
- Be Respectful / Kia Whakaute



We have found that implementation of PB4L expectations means that the children are more engaged and achieve better results at school.

Prizes and rewards are used in the classroom to promote positive learning (supporting PB4L). In addition to the sticker chart, (see above), your child will get reading awards and award certificates. Each child has a sticker chart and during the day they are rewarded with stickers for listening, taking up a challenge, helping others, sitting nicely, great work (lots of reasons – we give away lots of stickers!). When the sticker chart is full, children get to choose a prize from the treasure chest. In addition, completed sticker charts are shown to Mr Brown or Helen and a token is put into a “meter” at the principal’s office and the whole school then earns “reward days”. This might be a trip or movies, the children get to decide.

Parent / Teacher Meetings

Your teacher is always happy to discuss how your child is settling in and their learning and progress. This may be in the morning before school starts or after school when you’re collecting your child. However, if you wish to discuss any concerns, private matters or just have a number of questions, please feel free to make an appointment.

Formal parent teacher meetings are held after your child’s twenty weeks at school report. This is an opportunity for the teacher to show you some of your child’s work and talk about how your child is doing at school. Notices with dates and times sessions are sent home prior to Parent/teacher sessions.



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Swimming

At Newtown School we have an indoor heated swimming pool. Classes swim 1 to 2 times a week all year. We teach water safety, water confidence, and basic swimming skills.

Children need to bring swimwear, towel and goggles in a plastic bag (or swim bag). It is extremely helpful if children can dress themselves and if their clothing and swimwear is named.



Newsletters

Each term Janette provides at least two newsletters for the whanau and lets you know which days the children will be swimming and what subject(s) they will be learning for that term, as well as any special outings.

Special needs

Newtown School caters for children with special needs. If your child has special needs please feel free to talk to Sally about what services and support we can provide.

Allergies

Please inform the school if your child has any allergies and any possible reactions your child may experience. If required please provide any necessary treatments your child may need (creams, Antihistamines, inhalers, Epipens).

Social Events

At Newtown School we are a very social bunch. There are family fun nights, shared lunches and other social events. Notices come home prior so check out the newsletter for the up and coming events.

We have a parent group called FANS (Friends At Newtown School) which supports the school in social events and helps with fundraising. For more information please contact:
friends@newtown.school.nz



We also have a Facebook page which we keep up to date with regular school activities and events.



Food policy

Newtown School encourages healthy eating for children at school. You need to pack a good sized lunch and morning tea snack containing nutritious food (no chippies, fizzy or Energy drinks, or lollies/sweets).

Water/drink fountains are located around the playground and in Te Whanau Tui, but some parents prefer to provide drink bottles as well.

There is no current nut ban so, as a precaution, children are not allowed to share food.

Children are supervised for 10 minutes between 12.30 - 12.40 while they eat their lunch.

Clothing

There always seems to be a huge amount of clothing in the school’s lost and found. Please ensure all of your child’s clothing is named. Ask a teacher if you want to borrow vivid to do this. If your child loses anything please check the classroom or see Helen in the office to view the lost and found.

School Fees and Donations

Newtown school receives funding from the Ministry of Education, however we ask for the following school fees (or donations) to assist with the running of the school.

Families can choose one of the three levels of donations as below.

\$40.00 per child per Year (\$10.00 per term)

\$80.00 per child per year (\$20.00 per term)

\$120.00 per child per year (\$30.00 per term)

School hours and breaks

8:55AM		SCHOOL STARTS
11:00am	11:20am	Morning Tea Break
12:30pm	1:30pm	Lunch Break
3:00pm		School Finishes

We recommend that you have your child at school at least 10 minutes before the first bell; this gives your child time to hang up their bag, put their book bag and reading books away and have a play and catch up with their friends.



Links

Newtown School Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/NewtownSchool>

ERO Report:

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/School-Reports/Newtown-School-16-07-2014>

Ministry of Education:

www.minedu.govt.nz

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