



# ŌTOROHANGA COLLEGE WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Term Four, Week Nine – Monday 1st December – Friday 5th December



From the Principal's desk

**Lyndsay Kurth**  
Principal

Dear parents, caregivers and whānau

As we come to the end of another year at the College, we take this opportunity to pause and reflect on the journey we have shared together in 2025. It has been a year filled with learning, connection, challenge and celebration - and we are incredibly proud of what our students, staff and whānau have achieved.

Throughout the year, our students have shown resilience, growth and determination. From the excitement and new beginnings of Term One, through the focused learning and community connection of Terms Two and Three and now to the culmination of their efforts in Term Four, they have continued to strive for excellence in the classroom, on the sporting field, in cultural spaces and through service to others.

Our senior students have worked with commitment and perseverance as they completed internal assessments, prepared for and sat examinations and reflected on the next steps in their learning pathways. We commend them for their dedication, maturity and the positive examples they set for others. We also celebrate our junior students, who have continued to develop strong habits, deepen their skills and embrace new challenges and opportunities with enthusiasm.

This year has also been rich in experiences beyond the classroom - including sporting events, leadership opportunities, community initiatives, celebrations such as Matariki and memorable occasions like Prizegiving and our College festivities. These moments help shape who our young people are becoming and strengthen their sense of belonging and connection to our College whānau.

One of the greatest strengths of our College is the partnership we share with families. Education works best when we are united by a common purpose - to see every student feel valued, supported and challenged to reach their potential. Your encouragement at home, your involvement in College life and your ongoing communication with our staff make a genuine and powerful difference. We thank you sincerely for the trust you place in us and for the role you play in supporting your child's learning and wellbeing.

As the year draws to a close, we also recognise that it has not always been easy. There have been moments of uncertainty and challenge for many. Through it all, the resilience, kindness and collective strength of our community has continued to shine through. It is this spirit of unity and care that makes our College such a special place.

As we look ahead to the summer break, we hope it is a time of rest, reconnection and renewal for you and your whānau. May it provide opportunities for reflection on the year that has been and excitement for the possibilities ahead.

Together, we have done good things. Together, we have grown. Together, we have made a difference.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and partnership. We wish you a safe, peaceful and joyful holiday season and we look forward to welcoming you back in the new year for another exciting chapter in our shared journey.

Ngā mihi nui and warmest regards

Lyndsay Kurth

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Deputy Principal Hauora  
Vanessa Vili

# HAUORA

Ko koe te kaitiaki o ōu whakaaro  
You are the guardian of your thoughts

## THANK YOU AND BYE FOR NOW...

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou mō tō tautoko me tō kaha i roto i te tau 2025. This year, I was fortunate to receive a TeachNZ Study Award, and in 2026, I will be taking study leave at the University of Waikato to pursue a Doctorate of Education. I look forward to this opportunity to continue learning and appreciate the College's support in doing so.

Our House competitions were taken to another level as new staff brought fresh ideas and introduced new competitions, including the Ultimate Colour Run, TikTok Challenge and the Weekly Attendance Empower Awards. We continued our Swimming, Athletics and Matariki traditions with pride and well done to Kedgley House for taking out the win this year!

Next year, we welcome back Whaea Lacosta Hayward as Year 9 Dean and Whaea Liarna Slade as Relief Dean. Aunty Mickey continues with Year 10, Whaea Samm with Year 11 and Mrs Jen Roughton with Years 12–13. Whaea Areta will also be leaving the College. See her special shout-out below.

Thank you to our students for your effort, resilience and engagement in hauora workshops, counselling and House activities; to our parents and whānau for your support, attendance at hui and willingness to reach out when needed and to our staff for your care, dedication and commitment to doing what is right—even when things are not black and white.

I wish you all a safe, peaceful summer break and a successful, fulfilling 2026.

### JUNIOR HOUSE COMP

Congratulations to **9 Hotson** for winning the Junior Empower Whakamana Mini House Competition for 2025.

You will receive your reward on Monday at interval. Well done Alana for leading the way!



VC Vili



## Farewell Whaea Areta



In today's Highlights, we farewell Whaea Areta as she begins an exciting new chapter in 2026 after an incredible year— a new marriage, a new home and now a new role at Te Awamutu College, who are incredibly lucky to have her. From starting her teaching journey in the middle of COVID Lockdowns to becoming the confident, adaptable and inspiring kaiako and Dean we know today, Areta has shown remarkable resilience, creativity and heart.

We hope she looks back on her time here with pride and fondness for the laughs shared, the moments made and the many achievements celebrated both in and out of class. Thank you for everything you have given to our kura. We are so proud to have been part of your journey and we wish you all the very best for the adventures ahead.





# HAUORA

**Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou**  
 Seek after learning for the sake of your wellbeing

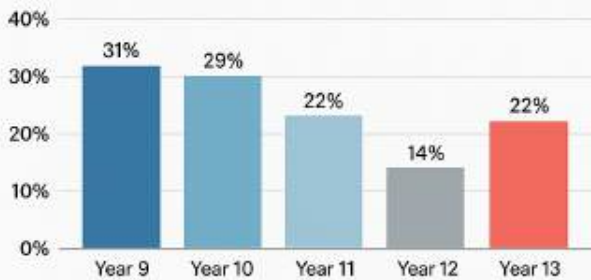
## ATTENDANCE 2025: Team Effort

Overall attendance has improved since last year, thanks to targeted Attendance Officer follow-ups, consistent Dean check-ins and rapid responses from staff who support students in re-engaging in College, Alternative Education, work experience, or other courses.

There is still work to do and in 2026, we aim to expand personalised support, remove barriers through on-site assistance and one-on-one mentoring and offer engaging learning programmes that create more pathways for students.

## Counselling Support 2025

1. Percentage of Students Accessing Counselling by Year Level



Asking for support to navigate College, teenage years and social media is a healthy way to unpack thoughts and plan next steps. This year, nearly 1/3 of our College has accessed support from our College Counsellor, Whaea Joyce, during the two days she is onsite, for a range of reasons.

We want to encourage you to continue doing so next year, whether for help with class issues, your wellbeing, or planning for the future. During the summer break, you can reach out to the following networks if you need support:

**youthline** te ara taiohi  
whakatapua kia ora ai



Free text  
234



Free 24/7  
call  
0800 37 66  
33



Online  
Webchat  
24/7



Instagram  
DM us  
@youthlinenz



Message us  
on  
WhatsApp  
09 886 56 96

We're here for you and we're here to help 24/7.



## TARGET MET

Increase regular attendance (students attending 90% or more) and reduce chronic absenteeism (students attending 70% or less).

### Attendance 2025

		2025		2024	
90%+	+17%	117	35%	65	18%
80-89%		101	29.70%	129	35%
70-79%		66	19.60%	64	18%
>70%	-13.3	66	15.70%	106	29%

## KOMODO SURVEY: Rest this Summer

Take some time to rest and reset over the summer break. Sleep was the main factor affecting student wellbeing this year, with phone use, anxiety, stress and work all contributing to their sleep challenges.

When sleep suffers, everything else becomes harder and those pressures make it even tougher to rest well. Use the break to relax and recharge, ready for 2026. You deserve it.

## KOMODO WELLBEING SURVEY: Themes Averages for 2025



**Good sleep supports focus, learning, emotional wellbeing and better decision-making.**

# YEAR 9 END OF YEAR TRIP

The Year 9s headed to Waterworld, Te Rapa on Thursday for their end of year celebration. The sun was out, the wind was blowing and the kids were pumped. The hydroslide and league in the outside pool were the highlights. Thank to the amazing Empower Whakamana teachers for their hard work throughout the year, this trip was a great day to just hang with their classes.



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# YEAR 10 END OF YEAR TRIP

Today, our Year 10 students were up bright and early for an exciting day trip to Hamilton! They headed straight for The Base in Te Rapa, ready for a day packed with entertainment.

The main event was a trip to the cinema to catch the fantastic animated feature, Zootopia! After enjoying the movie, the students had time to explore the mall's many offerings. They enjoyed shopping and indulged in the diverse culinary delights available.

It was a brilliant opportunity for the students to bond, relax and enjoy a well-deserved day out after the final term rush!



# YEAR 8 WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA

Our Year 8 Whakawhanaungatanga days on Tuesday and Wednesday provided a warm and welcoming opportunity for our incoming students and their whānau to step into life at the College. We opened our doors to our future Year 9 students and their parents for relaxed, welcoming interviews where key information was shared and meaningful connections were made. These conversations helped build relationships, answer questions and ensure families felt informed, supported and confident about the transition to College life next year.

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# ARTS FACULTY

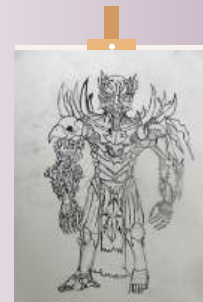
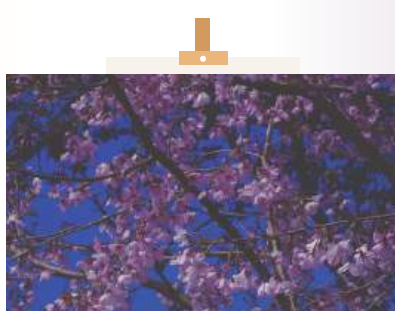
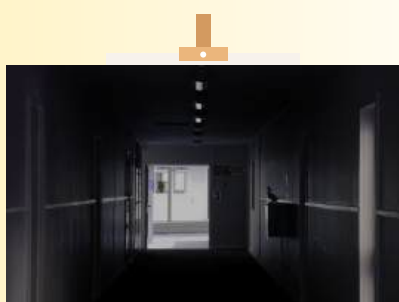
This week junior music students shared performances with their family and friends at our Junior Music Performance Evening. While some students were more experienced at performing, others were bravely taking the stage for the first time. It was inspirational and exciting to see students face their fears, display courage and resilience and overcome first time jitters. Solo performances included piano, classical guitar and vocals. Group performances were the junior vocal group, rock bands and guitar with vocals. A special highlight was seeing Raniera Wharepouri, Mason Woodward and Alex Wilson perform their original song and worth a special mention is the absolute talent shown by Alex Wilson playing his phenomenal electric guitar solo. Junior music students will also perform at next week's Prizegiving. Thank you to vocal teacher Beth Dalton and guitar/bass/drums teacher Tereiha Hapi for helping out on the night.



# ARTS FACULTY

## Junior Art Module

The Junior Art Modules have successfully completed their projects in Photography and Art, allowing students to choose their preferred medium. Students have engaged in editing photographs using Photoshop, as well as creating sketches and paintings on canvases or boards.



## Beattie Home visit

This week, College music students made their fourth visit of the year to Beattie Home, where they entertained the residents. It was wonderful to witness some of our junior students perform for the first time and the joy on the residents' faces as they smiled and tapped their feet to familiar tunes. We eagerly anticipate continuing these visits next year.

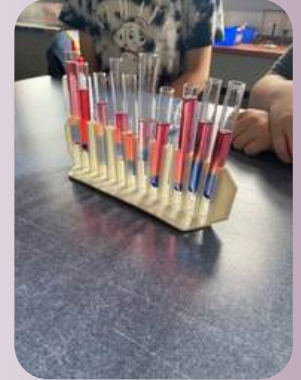


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# MODULES

## Science visitors

This week, we had the pleasure of hosting Year 7 and Year 8 students from Ōtorohanga South School in the Science Department, accompanied by Mr. Follas. The students engaged enthusiastically in various activities, including creating a rainbow in a test tube, utilising the Van de Graaff generator and conducting a water explosion experiment.



## STEAMing Ahead

In the STEAMing Ahead Module we have been learning about Newton's Laws of Motion. We have learned that the motion of an object will not change unless an unbalanced force is applied, that the acceleration of the object depends on the mass of the object and the force applied to it and that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. After learning the theory we then applied it to making balloon powered cars. A variety of different approaches were used across the class to complete the task. Overall it was a fun and successful project.



## Whenua to Whānau

It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas...

The Whenua to Whānau Module turned their attention to the sweet art of piping techniques. Using just white icing, students explored how to create depth, texture and intricate patterns, resulting in some truly spectacular and eye-catching finished work!



## KEY DATES AND FUTURE HIGHLIGHTS

Event	Date	Time
Junior Prizegiving	Tuesday 9th December	9:30am
College Office Open	Thursday 22nd January	8:00am
	Friday 23rd January	8:00am
	Tuesday 27th January	10:00am
	Wednesday 28th January	8:00am
Pōwhiri Year 9 Students Day 1	Thursday 29th January	8:50am
All Students At College	Monday 2nd February	8:50am

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