

# Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga



*Kia kōtahi ai te piki ake, kia ikeike rawa ki te taumata / We grow together to achieve one's true potential*

## Whānau Pānui – 29 September 2023

### Contents

<b>Board Notices.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Student board member election	1
Strategic and Annual Plan	1
<b>Option selections for 2024.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Term 4 – weeks 1 and 2	2
NCEA and Option Information for parents	2
<b>Have your say! .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Strategic Direction	2
Timetable and courses	2
<b>Sports Awards Prizegiving.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pōwhiri .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gumboot Friday – Mufti day.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Teacher only day.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2024 Key Dates .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Uniform Guidelines Ratified.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Phone use in school – update .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Parent's Forum .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NCEA Examinations and study leave.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Study Leave arrangements.	4
<b>Key dates - Term 4 2023 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Key dates 2024.....</b>	<b>5</b>

### Board Notices

#### Student board member election

I hereby declare **Abby Greenwood** duly elected. Abby takes office on **Thursday 21 September 2023**.

Tracey Reed  
**Returning Officer**

Well done to all four candidates that put themselves forward for election. The results were sent out to all students.

The next board hui is **Monday 30 October**.

A reminder that board Hui are public meetings and held in the Wharenui, typically from 5.30 pm.

[Refer to our school website for more information](#)

#### Strategic and Annual Plan

One of the topics for the October board hui is reviewing the strategic plan for the school. The board would like to hear your voice.

[New guidelines in July 2023](#) changed the schedule for review so that school boards need to have a 2-year plan for 2024 – 2025, and then review that in for 2026 – 2028.

How much do you agree with our current strategic direction (developed in 2021 for 2022 - 2024)? What needs to change?

Please have your say by completing the survey below, and / or attending a focus group meeting in November - date(s) to be decided by the board.



## Option selections for 2024

### Term 4 – weeks 1 and 2

All option selections for 2024 for Year 9 to Year 12 students will happen early Term 4.

Details will be sent by email so that students and parents can look at the course descriptions in SchoolPoint. Students sign in and can 'favourite' the courses they are interested in, ideally with caregiver input.

In **Week 1 (starting Monday 9 October)**, students will receive advice and guidance about option selection in their whānau / rōpū and can continue "favourite" their choices.

This advice adds to the careers education modules for all levels that have been provided in whānau / rōpū class by our career's adviser, Ms Donovan.

The **deadline** to complete option selections is **Wednesday 18 October** (week 2). Kaitiaki and Kaiāwhina will follow up on anyone who hasn't made their choices by then.

The choices are important as they help work out what we offer next year. Back up options are needed as timetable clashes are always likely.

### NCEA and Option Information for parents

We have an opportunity for parents and caregivers to hear more about NCEA and options on **Wednesday 11 October** at **6.00 to 7.00 pm**, held in the **THS Library**.

First there will be a summary of how NCEA works, including the changes that come into effect from 2024.

Following this there will be an opportunity to ask questions and get help with selecting options for next year. We will break into groups for Year 9s making option choices for the first time and those in Years 10-12 making choices for NCEA courses.

## Have your say!

Thanks to those who took the opportunity to give feedback about our uniform guidelines and the use of phones in schools. See the brief updates below.

We have two new topics for feedback.

### Strategic Direction

As mentioned in the earlier notice, we would like to know if the strategic plan developed by the board in later 2021 is broadly supported, or what we need to change.

Strategic plans are about the big ideas and directions, and then the leadership of the school, in consultation with staff, develop the annual implementation plan.

- [LINK TO STRATEGIC DIRECTION SURVEY](#)

### Timetable and courses

We would like to what you think about the way we organise our day and the courses we offer. This survey is about the length of classes, the day, the number of periods a day, and what subjects should compulsory and what should be optional.

- [LINK TO TIMETABLE / COURSES SURVEY](#)

[For parents/caregivers](#)

[For students](#)

## Sports Awards Prizegiving

Sports Awards assembly will be held on Tuesday 17 October at 2.00 pm in the school hall.

Parents / caregivers and whānau are welcome. Invitations were sent by email.

We aim to live stream this event.

Carolyn Green / Tess Watts  
**Teacher in Charge of Sports /  
Sports Coordinator**



## Pōwhiri

We expect to have a pōwhiri for our new tumuaki tuarua / deputy principal, Mr Christopher Ashforth, on **Monday 6 November**.

We have yet to confirm the time, as we need to work with Mr Ashforth's current kura.

## Gumboot Friday – Muffi Day

A muffi day in support of Gumboot Friday will be held on **Friday 3 November**.

Gumboot Friday is an initiative by I AM HOPE that aims to raise money to give young people (rangatahi) "free and fast access to qualified counselling."



To contribute: <https://www.gumbootfriday.org.nz/donate>

The normal guidelines for muffi days apply, although of course we are encouraged to wear gumboots!

"Having depression is like walking through mud every day. So...we ask you to show your support, put your gumboots on, give a gold coin, and take a walk in their shoes for just one day."

## Teacher only day

The next [teacher only day](#) that is provided for teachers to implement the changes to NCEA and the 'refreshed curriculum' is on **Monday 13 November 2023**.

We have chosen that date as the external advisors working with our teachers are available.

## 2024 Key Dates

The start dates and other key dates for 2024 are at the end of this update. All dates are subject to change, and more details will be sent out in due course.

## Uniform Guidelines Ratified

The board considered the feedback from the consultation survey about the uniform guidelines.

Along with our new look uniform, we will have updated guidelines that will take effect from 2024.

Once the guidelines are finalised these will be published on our website.

## Key findings

82% supported the overall intent of the new guidelines.

70% agreed with the expectations.

85% agreed with the overall statement about presentation standards.

There was broad support for a more contemporary, less conservative expectation on aspects like hair length and style, jewellery and accessories, tattoos/tā moko. That is, 'version two' of the proposed guidelines, with some exceptions.

For footwear there was broad support for the continued expectation of plain black shoes with no visible brands or markings, and similar guidelines for sandals.

The guidelines or processes about equity support, uniform passes, consequences for incorrect uniform, and exemptions.



## Phone use in school – update

We surveyed parents, students, and staff about the level of control (or banning) phones at our kura (school).

The initial results were discussed by the board.

Now the status quo remains in place, namely that phones are NOT ALLOWED to be used at all in class time.

The board has committed to further discussing the matter, and how a new policy may be developed for 2024.

Some of the key findings were:

**“No phones in class time. No exceptions. Allowed only at break times.” (Current setting)**

- 81% of parents agreed.
- 66% of students agreed.

**“No phones at school – keep them at home! They become a banned item”.**

- 36% of parents agreed.
- Only 4% of students agreed with this!

**No phones from 8.45 to 3.15 pm, including breaks. No exceptions.**

- 58% of parents agreed.
- 10% of students agreed.
- 88% of staff agreed.

## Parent’s Forum

The next Parents’ Forum is on Monday 20 November at 6.00 pm in the THS staffroom.

IF you have questions or suggestions, you can email [thsparentforum@gmail.com](mailto:thsparentforum@gmail.com)

Tracey Hinton  
Parents’ Forum Facilitator

## NCEA Examinations and study leave

NCEA examinations start on **Monday 6 November**,

The examinations continue until **Friday 2 December**. The Links to the full timetable are here:

[2023 Examination Timetable \(download pdf\)](#)

Exams start at **9.30 am** in the morning session and **2 pm** in the afternoon session, and last for up to three hours. Candidates must make sure they are here well before the start time. Advice from NZQA:

Arrive at least 20 minutes before the exam starts ...Late entries to the exam room are very limited, and there is no entry under any circumstances after 30 minutes.

Candidates will be issued an individual timetable, instructions, and admission slips from NZQA.

[Guidelines for the examinations](#)

### Study Leave arrangements.

Students who are on track for achieve NCEA and have external assessments or who have completed their NCEA qualification, study leave will start from **Thursday 2 November**, i.e., the day after senior prizegiving.

Students allowed study leave will only need to attend school when they have an examination. It is important to consider any transport arrangements needed. For those who need to bus into school, there will be suitable space in the library for on-site quiet study before an examination.

**Students that are not on track to achieve NCEA and who need to complete internal assessments will not be on study leave.** They typically may have few external exams and a custom programme of extra support will be put in place with Mrs Donovan and the learner support team, including Mrs S Brown.



## Key dates - Term 4 2023

Dates are **subject to change** and will be advised.

<b>Term 4:</b>	<b>Monday 9 October to Friday 8 December 2023</b>
<b>Mon 9 Oct</b>	<b>Term 3 starts.</b>
Wed 11 Oct	NCEA and options information for parents and caregivers.
Mon 16 Oct	Te Ao Māori Strategic Ohu (TAMSO)
Tues 17 Oct	Sports Awards 2.00 – 3.10 pm
Wed 18 Oct	Deadline: course selection 2024.
<b>Mon 23 Oct</b>	<b>Labour Day (public holiday)</b>
Fri 27 Oct	Year 13 Leavers Dinner
Mon 30 Oct	Board Hui 5.30 – 7.30 pm <i>Te Puna O Te Pito Mata (Wharenui)</i>
Wed 1 Nov	Senior Prizegiving 7.00 pm.
Mon 6 Nov	NCEA Exams start.
Mon 13 Nov	Te Ao Māori Strategic Ohu (TAMSO)
Mon 27 Nov	Board hui 5.30 – 7.30 pm <i>Te Puna O Te Pito Mata (Wharenui)</i>
Mon 4 Dec	Junior Prizegiving
Tue 5 Dec – and Thu 7 Dec	End-of-year activities for Years 9 Years 10
<b>Thu 7 Dec</b>	<b>Last day of Term 4</b>
Fri 8 Dec	<b>Teacher only day</b>
Sat 9 Dec	School Summer Holidays begin. (Until Mon 29 Jan 2024)

## Key dates 2024

Dates are **subject to change** and will be advised.

Thu 25 Jan & Fri 25 Jan Staff only days  
Preparing for start of year.

**Mon 29 Jan Auckland Anniversary (holiday)**

<b>Term 1:</b>	<b>Tuesday 30 Jan to Friday 12 April</b>
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Tue 30 Jan Course confirmation  
- Year 12 and Year 13 required.  
- Year 11 – only if changes needed.

Wed 31 Jan Pōwhiri – new students and staff.  
Tautoko – **whole school in support**  
Followed by orientation and whakawhanaungatanga.

Thu 1 Feb Start-up programme continues.  
Senior school timetable starts.

Fri 2 Feb Start-up programme continues.

**Fri 29 Mar Good Friday (public holiday)**  
**Mon 1 Apr Easter Monday (public holiday)**  
**Tue 2 Apr Easter Tuesday (school holiday)**

Fri 12 Apr Last day of Term 1  
Sat 13 Apr to Sun 28 Apr School holidays  
(includes ANZAC Day 25 April)

<b>Term 2:</b>	<b>Monday 29 Apr to Friday 5 Jul</b>
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Mon 5 Jul Term 2 starts.

**Mon 3 Jun King's Birthday (public holiday)**  
**Mon 28 Jun Matariki (public holiday)**

Fri 5 Jul Last day of Term 2  
Sat 6 Jul to Sun 21 Jul School holidays

<b>Term 3:</b>	<b>Monday 22 Jul to Friday 27 Sept</b>
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Mon 22 Jul Term 3 starts.  
Fri 2 Sept Last day of Term 3  
Sat 28 Sept to Sun 13 Oct School holidays

<b>Term 4:</b>	<b>Monday 14 Oct to Friday 13 Dec</b>
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Mon 14 Oct Term 4 starts.

**Mon 28 Oct Labour Day (public holiday)**

Fri 13 Dec Last day of Term 4  
Sat 14 Dec – School summer holidays begin.  
(Until Mon 27 Jan 2025)

