



Te Ara Whanake Term One Newsletter 2026

5 February 2026

Tena koutou katoa nga Matua me nga Kaitiaki,
Greetings to all Parents and Whānau,

A very warm welcome to all the new and returning families to Te Ara Whanake. Te Ara refers to the pathway of learning, and Whanake; growing upwards and moving onwards. This year our teaching team consists of Kyra Mowbray (Whanake Toru), Sophie Bishop (Whanake Rua), and we are excited to welcome Ella Ayto to our team (Whanake Tahi).

We enjoyed meeting with many of you at our whānau/parent-teacher conversations last week, and hearing about your children's interests, learning dispositions, and goals. Over the past few days, the children have been busy reconnecting with their peers and building new friendships in their home learning teams, and it has been lovely to have them back in our learning space. We have an action-packed term planned and are excited to launch into it.

What are we learning this term?

Ko wai au? Who am I?

We will begin the term exploring who we are, where we come from, and how we relate to each other and our surrounding environment. As we build on existing connections and develop positive relationships with our peers, we will be discussing our shared values, and how we can work together to create a strong, supportive learning space. We will also begin the year with a social science focus on NZ History, as we deepen our understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

As the term progresses, we will be delving into our integrated unit - '***How we see the world***'. This unit encompasses **science, social science, literacy, drama, health and visual art**. Through scientific exploration and a range of hands-on experiences, tamariki will learn about shadow, light and colour, building their

understanding of material interactions and making observations. The children will then apply this knowledge in visual art, utilising colour theory, shading and blending to create effect.



Alongside this, we will be considering different ideas and ways of seeing the world through a story drama, entitled 'Littlelight'. Through this drama, children will take on roles, problem solve and collaborate with peers, consider different perspectives, all while developing their literacy and oral language skills.

Literacy

Our first literary topic will be focused on writing about 'first-hand experiences'. We all do storytelling naturally, starting at a young age, but there's a difference between good and great storytelling! The children

Key dates this term

11th February - Ara Information Evening, 5.30-6.30pm
27th February - School Hui -hosted by Whanake
23-26th March - School Photos
27th March - Goal Setting Conversations

Swimming dates:

Weekly on Wednesdays: 11th February - 1st April
Whanake Rua: 12-1.30pm
Whanake Tahi: 12.30-2pm
Whanake Toru: 1-2.30pm

will write, plan, invent, and draw out their interesting ideas to become great storytellers. Our writing will cover a range of genres this term, including poetry, narrative stories, recounts, explanations and descriptions. Many of our writing experiences will draw on contexts relating to our integrated topic, as well as other experiences and interests.



Children will be reading a wide variety of different texts each day, with teachers focusing on the two domains of reading- learning to read, and reading to learn. Children will take part in whole-class shared reading, as well as guided reading in smaller groups. Our shared novel to start the year is '*The magic faraway tree*', a classic children's story written by Enid Blyton. We will be reading this book throughout the week, and coming together on non-assembly Fridays for 'Chapter Chat', where we explore the themes, characters, settings and plot through a range of hands-on activities.

Our spelling programme will continue to follow the Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) scope and sequence. This approach consists of whole-class lessons focused on morphological and orthographic patterns, small-group reading lessons, and an oral narrative study, which allows children to explore rich vocabulary, language, and story structure. Many of you will be familiar with this approach from the junior school, and we are looking forward to continuing this progression of learning.

Reading and writing opportunities are also integrated across all areas of the curriculum. This means children could be researching for information, and writing about their understanding of different texts in a wider range of topics and interest areas.

Mathematics

In mathematics this term, we will begin with a focus on number structure and patterns, before moving on to addition and subtraction strategies. We are continuing to utilise the 'Maths No Problem' mastery approach, alongside a variety of useful resources to support children's conceptual understanding and knowledge skill-set. Maths lessons will follow a consistent structure, which includes plentiful opportunities for collaboration, rich discussion, and problem-solving. We will be able to share more about this at our area information evening.

Physical Education & Health

We start the year by taking opportunities for fun games to help develop team spirit and positive relationships within our teams. On Wednesday of week two (February 11th), we begin our swimming lessons at Karori Pool, which will continue weekly until the Wednesday of Week 9. As we build towards our school cross country early in term 2, we will be working to increase our fitness and running stamina through a daily fitness programme to support our focus and well-being.

Mitey is a school-wide approach, which focuses on mental health and well-being. This will link closely to our 'Ko wai au' learning at the start of the term, and we will then continue to build on this through activities that support us in recognising and expressing our feelings to those around us, and how to be a good friend.



Innov8

Each Monday in Whanake we begin the week with Innov8. This is an opportunity for the children to work together and learn through an exploratory and playful context. Underpinning Innov8 activities are a focus on

STEM-based and/or creative provocations, as well as opportunities for children to reinforce their skills in mathematics, digital technology, and literacy. Each week, we will have a key goal relating to one of the Key Competencies (managing self, relating to others, using text, symbols and language, thinking, and participation), which the children will reflect on together at the end of the session.

Art

In Art this term, we will begin with self-portraits, using a variety of mediums and techniques and observing the different effects we can create with these. Later in the term, we will explore colour (connected to our integrated unit). Through this, we will experiment with a range of techniques, such as blending, building, contrasting and shading, as well as learning about the colour wheel.



Tikanga me Te Reo Māori

Te Reo Māori is incorporated into our daily routines and activities. As part of our integrated topic, early in the term, we will be learning about and sharing our pepeha. Later in the term, we will focus on talking about how we feel in Te Reo Māori.

Children are also encouraged to opt-in to our Junior Kapa Haka group, which takes place weekly on Tuesdays from 1.45-2.15pm. Those not participating in Junior Kapa Haka will spend this time building their Te Reo Māori skills. This term, Whanake will also have weekly waiata practise with Jeremy, our Te Reo tutor.

Home Learning & Maths Whizz



Home learning consists of two main parts: home reading and mathematics. This is designed to support your child's learning at school in these areas. The children will bring home their reading log notebook on a Monday (beginning in **week 3**), and we encourage children to bring this to school each day. To protect the reading logs and any reading books your child brings home, we ask that your child bring a reading folder (book bag) to school each day. Children will not be permitted to bring books home without this.

Maths Whizz is an online platform that is individualised to your child's learning needs. The programme is designed to respond to your child's ability (assessed through an algorithm that measures accuracy and time spent on each question). We have found that children find this platform engaging and motivating, but we also recognise that screen time can vary between households. If you prefer 'unplugged' learning, we recommend hands-on games and activities. Inside your child's reading log, you will find their Maths-Whizz log in, along with some unplugged learning activity suggestions.

Our children lead very busy out-of-school lives. For this reason, out-of-school activities are perfectly acceptable during the week and can count as home learning. Please rest assured that there are no consequences for children who do not complete home learning.

Borrowing Books

We keep a wide selection of chapter and picture books in the Whanake space for children to read anytime. Each Wednesday, children will have a set time to borrow two books they wish to take home. This is an opportunity for children to select their reading material for daily independent reading, and home reading too. At the start of the year, the teachers may support your child (where needed) in choosing their library books.



You can help your child make good book choices by talking to them about what books *you* read and why *you* choose them, as well as taking them to the public library to select from a wider range of books. Remember the five-finger rule: your child reads the book's first page, and every time they get a word wrong, they put up a finger. When they get to the bottom of the page, if they have four or fewer fingers up, they should be able to read the book; if they have five, it may be too difficult. This is just a useful but rough guide.

Seesaw



Students and teachers will soon begin posting snapshots of their learning to Seesaw. Your child's account will have moved over to their new home learning team with them, and you should be able to access this using your existing login. Seesaw allows children to share their learning with a wider audience, and they especially love being able to share with you! This year, teachers will also be utilising Seesaw to keep you updated about the learning taking place in our spaces, with a variety of different curriculum focuses.

We encourage parents to comment or post to their child's journal. This helps to build the connection between home and school, and provides a glimpse into some of the activities and learning your child is engaged in. If you have trouble connecting to Seesaw, please contact your child's teacher.

Sun Smart

In terms one and four, it is important children wear **sun-smart** clothing, including wide-brimmed hats, and have sunblock in their bags. Please help by checking they have a hat in their bag, or provide one they can leave at school. Please also check that your child has a full water bottle each day.



Ensemble Groups

All children are encouraged to participate in one of our musical ensemble groups. These provide a rich performing arts experience, along with opportunities for collaboration, and the many cognitive benefits of engaging with music.

Tui Choir

Tui Choir takes place each **Thursday morning**, where all year 2 and 3 children come together to sing and develop their voices. Mrs Rachel Smith leads this choir, be sure to keep an eye out for upcoming performances!

Piccolo Choir

The children meet in the big downstairs music room (Mahler room) for the Piccolo choir at **8:30am** on a **Thursday**. This choir is for years 4 - 6, and is optional.

Xylofun and Xylobeats



Xylobeats will take place each Wednesday morning in the Mahler room, starting at **8.30am**. This is for year 4 students who would like to join.

Little Xylofun will take place each Friday from 9am until 9.30am in the Mahler room. This is for our year 3 students if they would like to join.

Housekeeping

- Toys: To alleviate social dilemmas and damage to personal property, we have a no-toys-at-school rule. Should these items accidentally end up at school, our process will be for the teacher to take care of them until the end of the day, when they can return safely home.
- Lost Property: It is crucial to have all clothing named so it may be reunited quickly with its owner. Encourage your children to look for their missing clothing as soon as it is lost. If clothing cannot be reunited with its owner, it may end up in the school's lost property located in the link.
- Beginning of the school day: When the bell rings at 8.30am, children are invited into Whanake to prepare for the school day. Before this time, teachers are in meetings, preparing resources for the day, or engaging in professional development opportunities. Children are expected to wait outside or in the Link on wet or cold days. Please, as much as possible, delay your child's arrival at school until 8.30am.
- Please provide suitable footwear at school; the children participate in fitness and often run around. Hair ties kept in school bags are often helpful if a child has long hair.
- Break Times: At Kelburn, the children have two 10-minute eating times, at 11am and 1pm, as well as a 'brain food' snack break at 10am. Children will be encouraged to eat fruit or vegetables for their brain food break, and we appreciate your support with this.

Parent Help & PTA

We are appreciative of parent helpers who support us to provide a range of learning opportunities for our tamariki. If you are able to help with putting reading books away this term, please email sophieb@kelburnnormal.school.nz, or speak with your child's teacher.

The PTA does a fantastic job supporting our school and tamariki; this is a great way to get involved with our school community. If you would like to find out more, you can contact pta@kelburnnormal.school.nz.

Communication

Each Wednesday, you will receive the 'Kelburn Comms'. This is a one-stop-shop newsletter, where all important notices are shared across the school. We strongly encourage you to take the time to read this each week, so that you don't miss out on any events or updates.

Alongside this, on the last Friday of each month, we celebrate the children's learning in 'The voice of ngā tatakihi'. These newsletters showcase the exciting things that have been happening at kura, and often include pieces of children's work and updates about what we've been up to.

Getting in touch

As always, your first port of call is your child's teacher. Teachers can be contacted by our email address (kyram@kelburnnormal.school.nz, ellaa@kelburnnormal.school.nz, sophieb@kelburnnormal.school.nz).

If you wish to talk about your child's learning at any stage of the term, your child's teacher will be happy to meet with you.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead!

Ngā mihi nui,
Ella, Kyra and Sophie (Team Leader)