



Term 4 2025

Ngā Pānui / The News

IMPORTANT DATES

Term 4

6 October - 5
December

Confirmed industrial (strike) action

23 October
(Thursday)

The school is closed for instruction on that day, so we ask all students to remain at home.

Labour Day

27 October
(Monday)

School is closed Teacher Only Day

26 November
(Wednesday)

NCEA examinations

4-28 November

Term 1 2026

2 February - 2 April
2026

Kia ora koutou and welcome back to Term 4 at the Te Kura Whaiora ki te Tonga/Southern Health School. This newsletter marks the start of term four, in what has been a very busy year of transition for the school.

We hope you enjoy reading it.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH - WEBINARS

Upcoming outreach webinars for whānau, caregivers, and parents. Please follow the link below or contact Angela Botherway ajb@southernhealth.school.nz



Parent Webinar:
Online Safety – Summer Re-set
Wednesday 12th November @ 7pm



Parent Webinar:
What teens really say about being online
Tuesday 18th November @ 7pm



Strike Action

Further action is also proposed and involves a full strike on Thursday 23 October (full day) and on Wednesday 5 November (from 1.15pm - 3.15pm). You will receive further information about this action closer to the time on our website and facebook page. Please contact Linda Miller if you have questions or concerns:

ljm@southernhealth.school.nz

NZQA Co-requisite (CAAs)

September

September saw an outstanding turnout of students sitting their Co-requisite Literacy and Numeracy tests. Representing 56 individual students sitting one or more assessments. We had:

- 42 students in Numeracy
- 35 students in Reading
- 37 students in Writing

Well done to our students who, despite being on a medical journey, continue to engage in their education.



NGĀ KUPU MŌ ŌU TUMUAKI - LINDA MILLER



Kia ora koutou and welcome back to Term Four at the Southern Health School. This newsletter marks the start of Term Four, in what has been a very busy year of transition for the school.

Since beginning in my role I have traveled around all 16 school sites across the South Island, meeting with staff, students and some parents along the way. The work being done across the school to support young people suffering from ill health with their education is truly humbling, and there are so many great stories out there of the progress students are making.

For some, the progress is dramatic, for others it is much slower or subject to ups and downs. The ability of our staff to respond to the individual health and educational needs of each student is what makes our school so special.

I am also aware, however, that many people who would benefit from our services simply do not know about our school. If you feel comfortable talking about the experience you/your child has had with the health school, we would love it if you would spread the word! We have a great team of people who are available to talk to community groups, schools and organisations, if you think that would be helpful. Simply let us know and we will answer the call!

In Term Three we had a visit from the Education Review Office and we are awaiting their draft report. Once this has been finalised we will publish it on our website and send a link out to all parents. We also held a noho marae at Puketeraki Marae at Karitane for staff from the Mata-Au (Otago and Southland) and Aoraki Teams, along with the senior leadership team and members of Te Kāhui Whakaihuwaka - our Māori advisory group.

This was an amazing experience for all concerned and helped us build connections with manawhenua in this region as well as building the cultural competence of our staff to provide the best possible learning environment for our students, regardless of their cultural background.

We also reached a significant milestone in Term Three, with our roll reaching 400 students at one time. This is an indication of the growing health needs of young people and has required a number of staffing appointments to ensure we have sufficient staff on the ground to meet demand across our regions.



NGĀ KUPU MŌ ŌU TUMUAKI - LINDA MILLER

Our Ashburton classroom has been refurbished in recent months. A blessing was held in Term Three, with the official opening to be held in Week Three of this term. This project was initiated by Helen Mantell, our former principal, and it is wonderful to see her vision come to fruition. If you would like to join us for the Ashburton classroom opening on Monday, 20th October at 4.30 pm, please email Learne at lrn@southernhealth.school.nz for further details. We will share photos and information about the opening at a later date.

We are currently awaiting the announcement of our new School Board. Unlike most schools in New Zealand, health schools have their board appointed by the Ministry of Education. Once we have received this information, we will let our community know. In the meantime, a huge thank you to Jo Kennard who has done a fantastic job as staff representative on the Board for the past six years, and congratulations and welcome to Nikki Freeman who will be the staff representative for the new Board term.

Congratulations to all of our students who completed the CAAs (Common Assessment Activities) in reading, writing and/or maths last term. These assessments provide students with the opportunity to achieve the 'co-requisites' required to achieve NCEA and reflect strong foundations in these critical areas of learning. NCEA examinations are coming up and we have a large number of students who will be sitting these exams across our region.

If your child is sitting an NCEA exam and you have any queries or concerns, please contact your child's teacher, they can refer you onto the appropriate person to talk to.

As a school we continue to work on ensuring we are prepared for the curriculum and assessment changes that are looming. We are also very aware of the added disruption to students' learning as a result of the industrial action being taken by both major teaching unions, NZEI and PPTA. Unfortunately, there is more action on the horizon. As soon as we receive formal notification of action, we will notify you. Unions are only required to provide notice three days in advance, so it often comes late. Rest assured that our focus always remains on doing our best to meet the needs of students.

Taitu'uga

We welcome Geoff Siave and Allan Roberston to our team. Both are former school principals and will be leading two projects for us. Geoff is our Pasifika Liaison and will be working with us to increase our outreach into our Pasifika communities throughout the South Island as well as contributing to our work around building cultural competency. Allan is going to be helping us migrate our policies across to the SchoolDocs platform. Both men come with considerable experience and expertise and we know they will contribute much to our school.



NGĀ KUPU MŌ ŌU TUMUAKI - LINDA MILLER

We are also very proud of the achievements of our teaching staff and have celebrated several milestones. Congratulations to Angela Botherway graduating with her Masters of Educational Leadership, Lucy Morten handing in her PhD and Zara Heath becoming provisionally registered as a Specific Learning Disability Assessor under the Learning Disabilities Association of New Zealand.

All the best for the term ahead. As always, it will be a busy one as we support our students on their journeys and prepare for 2026.

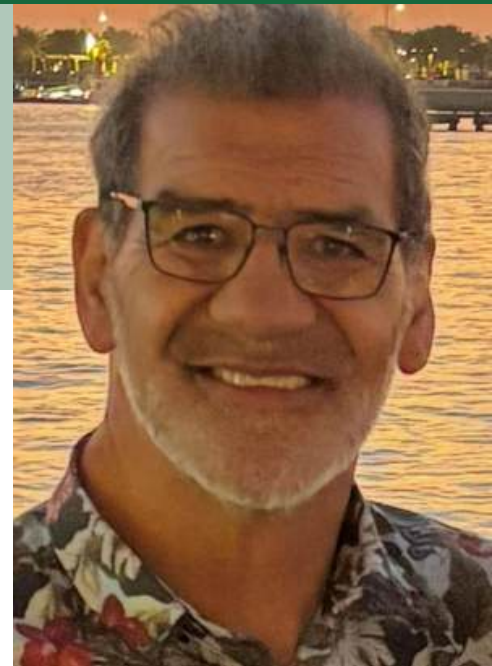
Linda

GEOFF SI'AVE - PASIFIKA LIAISON FOR SHS

Talofa, Kia ora I'm thrilled to be working at Southern Health School in Christchurch, focusing on building cultural competence through a Pasifika lens, and exploring how we can reach and serve our Pacific people.

I am a New Zealand-born Samoan - both my parents were Samoans. They met and married in Christchurch in the early 1950s. I have been in education since 1986, with over thirty of those years as a principal including several schools in Aotearoa, and three years in Samoa. For the past three years I've been a facilitator for Tautai o le Moana, focusing on building cultural competence of school leadership and teaching teams in relation to Pasifika cultures. My wife, Lynda, is also a teacher (yes, we met at Teacher's College). We have three adult children - who all live overseas.

Geoff



Feel free to contact me if you have questions or suggestions for me.

gws@southernhealth.school.nz



GIFTEDNESS CONFERENCE IN CHRISTCHURCH

Gina Swart, Kate Gordan, Suzanne Clark and Matt Bateman were involved in organising and running the Exploring Giftedness Conference in Christchurch.

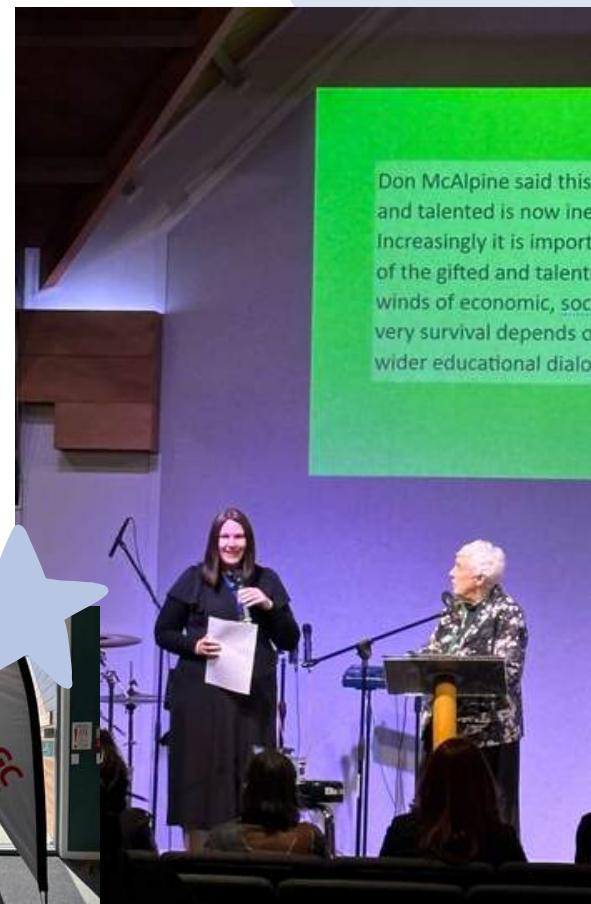


It was an incredible event with several high profile speakers from the gifted community, including Rosemary Cathcart. A local Educational Psychologist, Alice Gemrotova, delivered a very informative session around multi exceptional children and how to support them. Speakers, educators and parents partnered from all over the North and South Islands.

It was a special time where many people commented on how precious it was to be in an inclusive, safe space, where their children were supported and free to be themselves in the kids' programme.

We would encourage whānau from our SHS community to reach out to their teacher or contact:
Suzanne Clark sut@southernhealth.school.nz
or Gina Swart gjs@southernhealth.school.nz
if they would like any support in this area.

The SHS Team





WELCOME TO OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

A warm talofa to our new team members. The Southern Health School team are looking forward to working with you.

Geoff Si'ave - former principal of Shirley Intermediate School. Geoff is joining us to carry out a Pacific Outreach project and to support us in building our cultural competence in relation to Pasifika students and communities.

Allan Robertson - former principal of Yaldhurst School. Allan will be working with us until the end of the year to migrate our school policies across to School Docs

Janine Boote - Teaching Assistant based in Greymouth, West Coast. Janine comes to us with a wealth of experience in working with young people and in the community.

WELCOME!

Hi

CLAYBUDDIES

The classroom at Halswell, in Christchurch, has been making these Claybuddies to share with others.

We started off by finding images that gave us some inspiration. We then used the DuKit (polymer clay) to create our chosen figure. While they were baking in the oven we wrote Haiku poems for our clay.

A Haiku poem has three lines and follows a pattern of syllables: 5-7-5. Lastly we gave our creatures names and wrote our poems on cards. We put them out so people could take them home.

We think they would be great company, to cheer you up!





WORLD OF WEARABLE ART UPDATE



Congratulations to Ruth Eley - our talented kaiako based in Wānaka, who once again contributed a week to the World of Wearable Art. She describes her work below.

This year's show, Rise, is themed around Cityscape. My piece, Bloomin Box, was the first featured piece in the Neon section.

This piece was brought to the stage under black light, with RV Quijano singing alongside and a huge team of dancers celebrating in a full Neon graffiti styled set. Seeing my work on the WOW stage was sublime. This year, they even incorporated an audience participation piece where six audience members were invited up onto stage to dance, so I raced up and got to dance with the fabulous Sebastian Geilings.

My piece, Bloomin Box, represents my hopes for neurodiverse students struggling to find their place in the current education system. It doesn't matter what sort of box we are pushed into, I hope that they can break the box and be their best selves. Advocating for a world where unique minds are celebrated and allowed to reach their full potential is at the heart of this work.

It starts out on stage as a simple box with pretty stencilled flower patterns and grass trimmings. If you look really close, you may also even spot a few fluorescent ladybirds. When it moves to the front of the stage, it opens up into two 130cm wide dahlia inspired flowers.

It took over 4 months to finish the piece. Considering I had started out thinking it would be easy to make, it is a good thing that I started the year part time and have a very patient and loving family who will put up with piles of fabric being scattered around the house.

If our student community is keen to try out Wearable Arts, I would absolutely recommend you check out TOI, a Rockquest show run in collaboration with World of WearableArt (WOW) for both Primary and Secondary school students. This is a great, friendly stage. I (Ruth) would be more than happy to help online.



AWARDS TIME - HOMAI TOU PAKIPAKI!

Charlie (kaiawhina), in the Halswell Classroom, recently received an award for their Zine at the recent Ōtautahi Zinefest, which was part of the Word Christchurch Festival. Congratulations Charlie.

Charlie has also been sharing their interest in Zines with the students in the Ōpawaho site, Christchurch. The Zine has some great messages that could resonate with many of our ākonga.

This was the caption from the award and some photos:

“ The winner of the disability and accessibility zine for 2025 is @yellowstarguy! This zine beautifully describes and illustrates Charlie’s experience with ME/CFS, in such a way that anyone can understand the experience - words getting lost into the void, or swirling around their head in confusion, make for a powerful image.

The art style is also incredibly charming, and immediately stuck out to us when we were judging the award; the egg page was a particular favourite!





PUKETERAKI MARAE - E HARIKOĀ ANA TE NGĀKAU (THE HEART IS HAPPY)

Our first-ever Southern Health School (SHS) Noho Marae visit took place at Puketeraki Marae in Karitane, offering stunning views of the Huriawa Peninsula, Otago.

This event, held on August 27-28, brought together our Senior Leadership team and the Otago and Southland kaiako teams.

Our visit aimed to support staff in engaging with and developing local connections at Puketeraki Marae and in their own roles. We were incredibly fortunate to have Matt Bateman (our Kaiwhakatere Māori) leading us on this haerenga (journey). He was supported by Eve O'Neill, Learne McArthur, and Peter McCoy from the SHS Te Kahui Whakaihūwaka team.

Our activities began with a warm official Pōwhiri welcome onto the Marae by Mana Whenua and Aroha, followed by a hikoi (guided walk) through the Huriawa Pā site and Urupā. During this journey, we gained a deep understanding of the rich history of Puketeraki and the significance it holds for Māori culture, as well as understanding the local landscape.

A highlight of our trip was paddling in a waka across the estuary to a sandbar, which is part of the local environmental plan. There, we planted a native grass, Pīngao, that are cultivated locally to stabilise the dunes. We were also entertained by a curious sea lion that discovered us on the dunes, adding to our adventure. The Poroporoaki was an emotional and genuine occasion. The Kōrero reflected our new knowledge of this special place and how close we are as a team. We thoroughly enjoyed our time together in Puketeraki.





HOSPITALITY AT SHS

Our mid Canterbury classroom/Hinepaaka Team tested out their new kitchen, utensils and baking equipment recently.

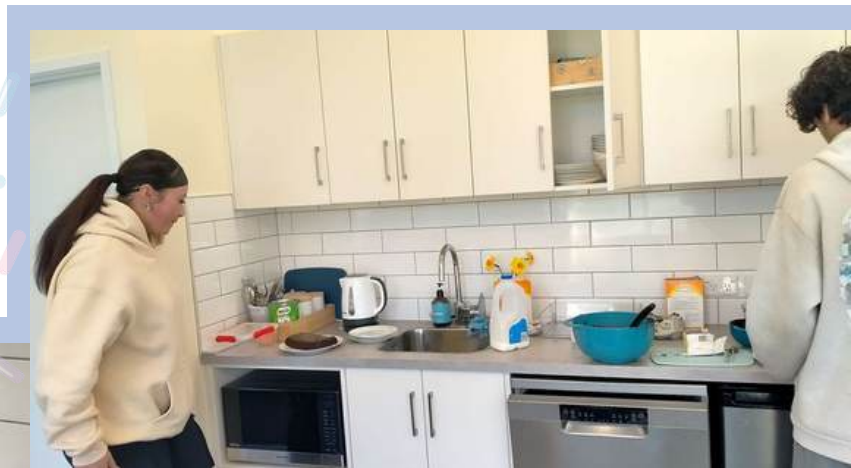
One of our students is studying Hospitality at her school of enrolment and working on a unit standard on preparing, baking and presenting a cake, so it is great we can provide the facilities for her to be able to carry on with her favourite subject while with us.

Another student used baking to practice his everyday numeracy and literacy skills by reading the recipe, following instructions and measuring, weighing, mixing and halving a recipe. He also learnt how to 'crack an egg' for the first time!

Baking was also a useful way to show manaakitanga/generosity, care, respect and hospitality. As the cake was shared around, it was great to see the ākonga working cooperatively with each other.

Lisa Elliott

Teacher/Kaiako





MID-CANTERBURY CLASSROOM BLESSING



A special morning for the Hine Paaka Team (Emily Lovett, Lisa Elliott, Bridget Prendergast, and Glenda Dawson) in Ashburton, Mid Canterbury, as they celebrated an official dawn blessing alongside Linda Miller, our Tumuaki; Learne McArthur, our Tumuaki Tuarua; and Matt Bateman, our Kaiwhakatere Māori.

A special shout-out to the Ashburton team for such a beautiful taonga for the new classroom. Your words and the whakataukī shared were so very fitting and symbolising the movement of ākonga in your space and representing new beginnings and growth. Thank you all for your part in making this morning happen.

The koru represents new beginnings, growth and regeneration. It symbolises the fern frond seen in New Zealand's native bush.

Ka hinga atu he tetekura. Ka hara mai he tetekura. As one fern frond dies, one is born to take its place.

Jo Kennard

Kaihautū (Team Leader) Hine paaka | Mid-Canterbury & Selwyn

