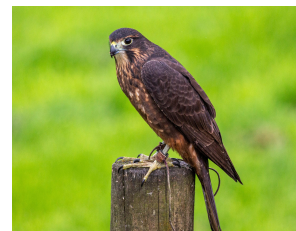


Monday 10th February 2025

Dear Parents / Caregivers,



Welcome to Kārearea class at Otakiri School 2025. I trust your holidays were relaxing and fun. This year my goal is for your children to have a positive year of progress and learning. As the year progresses, feel welcome to come into class and have your child share their work with you.

I am excited to begin my fifth year at Otakiri School. I have been teaching for 18 years in New Zealand and overseas. I am married to Natasha and we have a son, Ashton aged ten. My interests are drumming (record collecting), swimming and travelling. I believe my role as a teacher is to nurture and encourage the lifelong learning of my students. Through hands-on activities, classroom discussion, and even the use of humour, I hope to prompt students to think creatively and explore their natural curiosity.

Our class has been named after our native Kārearea. Kārearea, the winner of the 2019 Bird of the Year, is a brave, versatile and unique species. We will consider these characteristics as learners in Kārearea this year. We will try to uphold these qualities in Kārearea class.

This year, Kārearea students will continue to become LEADers at the school. Through the development of our PB4L, Mana and LEAD programs. They will be developing their ability to Learn with Purpose, Engage with Kindness, Act with Respect and Dare to Dream. When students are seen showing these virtues without prompting they will be awarded a token in the respective colour which goes into the fortnightly and end-of-term prize draws. It also means that they will get a click on their card which, when full, awards them a LEAD certificate which will show that they have the virtues of an Otakiri School LEADer. As the term and the year progresses children will also be encouraged to recognise these values in themselves and others.

Our beginning of the year unit is called Ko Au, Ko Takū Tūrangawaewae - Me and My Place. This unit is all about our personal growth and belonging. We will investigate topics to do with our pepeha, and background.

If you want to get in touch with me you are welcome to send a note with your child and organise a time for discussion; or, alternatively, pop in for a quick chat or email me at [simon@otakiri.school.nz](mailto:simon@otakiri.school.nz).

#### **Some details.....**

Your child is strongly encouraged to bring a named bottle of fresh water every day.

Children in Year 5/6 are expected to take a lot more responsibility for their own belongings. Please help your children by ensuring that all their equipment and belongings are adequately named. You could also facilitate this independence with queries and reminders regarding notices, trips, stationery, homework, etc.

If you can support your child at home to read, that would be really helpful for their ongoing progress. Our library day is **Wednesday**. Please remind children to have their books at school to exchange/renew. Students will take two books out and one will remain in class for silent reading after Morning Tea. Please provide your child with a book bag or similar to protect our readers and library books. Students are encouraged to bring a chromebook to school fully charged daily. We also have school chromebooks for students to use if your family doesn't own one.

Kind Regards

Mr. Simon Ballantyne

