

The Otakiri Way...

Mission

“Learners Forever, Leading the Future”

We promote the ideals of life long learning for all members of the Otakiri learning community.

We acknowledge that all learners need to be responsible for leading themselves first and have opportunities to develop the skills to lead and work with others.

We accept our role in ensuring a future focused curriculum in a 21st century educational facility.

Vision

Otakiri Identity (Otakiri-ness)

We recognise and celebrate that our rural location, context and clientele is reflected in a school ethos of rich, real and relevant learning opportunities, hands on curriculum and polite co-operative students

Traditions & Heritage

We are proud to remember our school heritage by keeping alive our many traditions through annual events, celebrations, local curriculum and school icons

Māori

We value the unique place of Māori Culture and Heritage in New Zealand and reflect this in our programmes and practice.

Core Beliefs & Values

Learning

- We foster self-directed learning and risk taking
- We provide Rich, Real, & Relevant learning opportunities
- We will promote reaching our potential – “Our Best Always”
- We prepare students for further learning beyond Otakiri School
- We encourage reflective self-awareness
- We differentiate programmes to cater for individual needs and interests

Leading

- We support and value all others
- We recognise and accept diversity
- We promote exemplary citizenship
- We acknowledge achievement, responsibility and contribution
- We encourage self-reliance and self-motivation, supporting learners to take the next step
- We aspire to the highest standards of personal conduct and safe behaviour

OTAKIRI SCHOOL



PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET 2026

Phone: 07 304 8101
Mobile: 027 489 5218
office@otakiri.school.nz

Principal: Richard Gillespie
principal@otakiri.school.nz

Updated January 2026

Staff 2025

Principal	Richard Gillespie
Deputy Principal/SENCO	Heather Richmond
Assistant Principal/Kiwi class	Eraina Attwood
Takahe	Maria van Beek
Kokako	Emma Hurlstone
Korimako	Simon Ballantyne
Karearea	Heather Richmond & Vera Pawson
Tui	Philip Meyer
Pouākai	Catherine Thomas
Classroom Release	Jacqui Graham
Sport & Recreation	Lynley McBride-Quate
Library/Learning Assistant	Margaret Hamilton
Office Administrator	Michelle Jordan & Wendy Gillespie
Caretaker	Micheala Binney
Learning Assistant	Jenni Gibbons
Learning Assistant	Margaret Hamilton
Learning Assistant	Sarah Moody
Learning Assistant (Wellbeing)	Lynley McBride-Quate

Board of Trustees

Richard Gillespie (Principal)
Scott Holmes (Chairperson)
Jason Parkinson
Kristy Jaynes
Nadine Meade
Maria van Beek (Staff Rep)

Support Liaison

Country Fair Committee	<i>Vera Pawson (Secretary)</i>
Agricultural Club Committee	<i>Jacqui Graham</i>
Scholastic Book Orders	<i>Michelle Jordan</i>

School App & Facebook

Otakiri School's App is available for download for Android (Google Play store) and Apple devices,



Alerts are sent directly to your device giving you news and information when it is instantly released. Your email address is your login & you click forgot my password & set up a new password. Information uploaded to the school app is also available on the school's Facebook page.

Telephone Use

Students may only use the school phone on school business or in an emergency. Students are not allowed to ring home to arrange after-school play. This needs to be done in advance, at home with parent involvement. Students are not permitted to have or use mobile phones at school without specific permission from the Principal. Parents are welcome to make emergency or unexpected phone calls about changing arrangements to their child via the office. If possible we appreciate students' afternoon arrangements being sorted at home before school.

A screenshot of a school login page with a dark purple background. It features a 'Login:' section with input fields for 'Email' and 'Password', a 'Reset Password' link, and a green 'Log in' button. Below these are buttons for 'Sign in with Google' and 'Office 365', and a small link for 'Privacy Statement Terms & Conditions'.

Web Site

Our school's website www.otakiri.school.nz contains information about many aspects of school life as well as copies of newsletters and children's learning. As part of the ICT Use Agreement, permission is sought for student images and work to be published online.



School Sports Teams

Otakiri School prides itself in participating in a wide variety of sports. Notices of all sporting events are regularly updated and available to children showing an interest. Copies of notices will also be posted on the School App.

Sun Safety

Students must wear the uniform hat from arrival at school until departure, for all outside play and activities during Terms 1 and 4. Students without hats are withdrawn from the playground to a shady area. Children are encouraged to bring sunblock from home and apply it before going outdoors.

Swimming

In 2019 our swimming programme for all students will be based at Kawerau Pools. Our students are expected to bring togs and take part in all swimming lessons unless they have a note excusing them for a medical reason.

Reporting to Parents

Learning Conferences, including written sheets are held for each student and their families three times each year. These are held in Terms 1, 2 and 4 for all students in Years 4-8. Students in Years 1-3 will have theirs in Terms 1 and 4 and depending on their birth date in Term 2 or 3. Meetings may be arranged at any time to discuss specific matters.

Student Council

Representatives are elected in Term 1 to form the Student Council. The Council organises student events, fundraisers and provides a forum for voicing student input into relevant school decision making. Councillors may also have extra responsibilities assisting with special events.

House Captains

House Captains are also elected in the first term. Otakiri House Heroes are; Walker – Yellow; Blake – Red; Jackson – Green; McCaw – Black. On school sports days' children are encouraged to wear a t-shirt in the colour of their house.

School Visitors

Parents/caregivers and members of the wider community must sign in at the school office on arrival and out on departure during school hours.

Adults are not to enter the school grounds to resolve disputes between children or to discipline any child. If there are concerns, please seek assistance from the Principal. Visitors are welcome to use the staffroom facilities at any time during the school day.

Smoke Free

Otakiri School, buildings and grounds are Smoke Free. We also ask that parents/caregivers and helpers refrain from smoking in cars or in view of students when waiting for student pick up and helping out with trips and camps.



Welcome to Otakiri School

We are a country school proud of our rural roots and rich learning experiences. You will find us a busy, happy school with great facilities and rich, real, relevant learning opportunities. The following is a brief summary of some of our systems, expectations and routines to help you understand our school. Some may be subject to change.

New Enrolments

Enrolments are open to all primary aged children, from 5 years of age. Being a full primary, lessons are taught to Year 0 – Year 8 students.

New Entrant Classification

New entrant classification for students starting at Otakiri School;

- Birthday in T1 – Classified as Yr 1
- Birthday after last day of Term 1 – classified as NE/Year 0. These students will be Year 1 at the beginning of the following year

We recommend new entrants, together with a parent/caregiver, attend 3 pre-school visits. This gives the child a taste of the school environment and classroom routines. Please contact the office to book a transition to school visit.

School Day

8:45 - School Starts
10:30 - 11.00 Morning Break
12:30 – 1:15 Lunch Break
2:35 - Clean-up & Notices
2.45 – First bus leaves
2.55 – End of school

For safety reasons it is expected that students will not arrive at school before 8am and that the school grounds are vacated by 3:30pm unless children are supervised by a responsible adult.

The school accepts no liability for children playing here after hours. Students arriving before 8:15am must wait/play quietly in the area in front of the library. Children leaving school at any stage during the day must be signed out at the office.

Uniforms

The school uniform is worn on trips, Year 7/8 Technology, camps and special school events. As part of our Sun Safety Policy all children must wear a regulation sun hat (royal blue slouch hat) in Terms 1 and 4. Hats and uniform items can be purchased from the school office.

Our school dress code for everyday school wear is:

1. That Otakiri students wear shirts no briefer than a standard crew neck t-shirt that meets the waist band of their pants. NO singlet tops.
2. That no undergarments will be visible. Eg boxers or other underwear.
3. That students may not wear cosmetics, including lip gloss, nail polish and eye liner. Nails are to be kept trimmed. No coloured hairspray.
4. That jewellery is limited to studs or sleepers for ear piercings. Taonga and other items of cultural or personal significance may be worn following Principal approval.

Absences

If your child is away, please advise the school by 9am daily. You can notify the school via the School App, answerphone, or text messages to 027 4895 218. The reason for non-attendance must be given as the school is required to report all absences to the Ministry of Education.

School Lunches

Please ensure children have breakfast and that healthy choices are made for lunches sent to school from home. We may sell some treat foods on special events/fundraising days.

Student Travel Arrangements

Any changes to daily travel plans for students must be notified to the office. Children needing to travel by bus on a casual basis (eg weekend sleepover, party etc) must provide the school with advanced notice. A note can be sent to school or you can email, phone or text.

Students travelling home on the Braemar Bus must wait after school in the playground area.

Children will not be left at bus stops if there is no adult there to meet them. If this occurs children will be returned to school and the parent/caregiver notified.

Written authority is required from parents if children are to be left at a bus stop unsupervised for any reason. This must be updated on request.

The Ministry of Education determines bus routes. Families living outside the bus routes may transport children to the midpoint bus stops.

The bus currently runs as far as:
Sutherland Rd (Matata)
Omeheu Rd (Edgecumbe)
Cnr Grieve Rd/SH30 (Kawerau end)
Braemar Rd (Rotoma) to Mclvor Rd.

Unexpected bus delays will be notified through the School App or via txt.

Cyclists

Students under the age of 10 are discouraged from cycling to school unless accompanied by an adult. Bikes should be locked to the bike rack and are out of bounds during school hours, unless the student's class is

rostered to use the bike track during the lunch break or for a class session. All cyclists must wear helmets. Upon arrival at school students need to walk their bikes into school from the front office area.

Bike track

The bike track will be available to use daily, according to the booking timetable and classes rostered on at lunch breaks. A teacher will be on duty at lunch breaks to supervise.

Stationery

All start of year exercise books can be purchased from the office – these range from \$10 to \$25 depending on your child's class

Additional charges apply for:

- Stationery equipment eg pens, pencils, erasers, scissors, rulers, highlighters etc
- Year 7/8 Technology Fees
- Camp Fees.

All students must have their books and equipment by the start of Week 2.

Flexible payment options are available. Please speak to the office for further details.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Teachers regularly plan trips to support learning. Parent support is welcome and often needed to ensure these learning opportunities are available to our children. Each year all classes attend a school camp based on specific learning outcomes.

Bible in Schools

Students can receive a 30-minute weekly Bible lesson. Parents give consent for their child to attend.

ICT Safety

An ICT Use Agreement must be signed by students and caregivers on enrolment and is reviewed from time to

time to ensure students' online safety. Students bringing their own devices to school have a separate agreement for signing.

Homework

When children are given homework it is to support their learning. Please help your child to consolidate their learning and reinforce self-management skills by supporting Reading, Spelling and Maths at home. The Board of Trustees funds Mathletics for Yr 2 – Yr 8 and Reading Eggs for Yr 0 – Yr 4, it is important that children complete set online tasks. Children can access these programmes from home

Gardens

Each class has a garden in which they grow flowers and/or vegetables. Donations of seeds or seedlings are welcomed. Help with our Horticulture Centre is very welcome.

Fundraising

Any ideas for fundraising are very welcome but must be authorised through the Principal/BOT. The Major School Fundraiser is the Country Fair held in Term 4.

Money

Please send all payments to school with name, purpose and amount clearly written. Eftpos is available in the office. Our Internet Banking account is on the bottom of each newsletter. Children will be instructed by their class teacher if payments are to be taken to the office.

Newsletters, Notices & Term Plans

Newsletters (every Thursday), notices and Term Planners are posted on the School App and emailed to those who have requested to be included in the Newsletter database. A hard copy is available from the office by request.

Communication / Concerns

Teachers are available to be contacted about school matters from 8:15am to 4:00pm. Outside these hours the preferred method of contact is email. Email addresses are on the School App. Appointments can be made to see particular staff by phoning the school office or emailing your child's teacher.

It is really important to keep communication lines open and to share any concerns at an early stage. The school has standardised procedures for hearing and resolving concerns. Parents, students or staff with a concern will be asked to complete a Concern Form. This outlines the nature of the concern and gives an opportunity for the person raising the concern to state how they would like the issue resolved. It is hoped that the whole process from raising a concern to resolving it will be completed in a timely manner.

Lost Property

Lost Property is stored in the green plastic bin outside the staffroom. Items are displayed weekly along the pathway at the front of the school. Any items not claimed are donated to charity at the end of each term. Clearly naming all items ensures property is returned to its owner without delay.