



Newsletter

Term 2, Week 8, 2025

18 June 2025

Manukau Christian School

Dear Parents and Friends of MCS,

Thank you for the many sacrifices you make to have your children attend Manukau Christian School. We understand that in today's climate, this is not always an easy decision, and we deeply value the trust you have placed in us to educate your children. If you have any questions or concerns about school matters, please don't hesitate to reach out. We welcome your feedback as we continually seek to improve and serve our families better.

This has been an unusually short term and one jam-packed with exciting activities—Culture Day being a firm favourite of all—important exams and two public holidays!

As a school and staff, we are committed to thoughtful reflection and purposeful growth. While we remain open to improvement, we also ask: *What is worth preserving?* In a rapidly shifting educational landscape, it's vital that we pause to consider not only how we teach, but why we teach the way we do. With that in mind, we want to share something of the heartbeat behind our approach at Manukau Christian School.

Anchored, Not Stuck: Education in an Age of Compromise

Some might say we're stuck in the mud. Our desks are in rows. We believe in discipline. We ask students to memorise things. Our students work in books. We expect manners, neatness, and respect. In a world hooked on constant innovation, that might look outdated. But we're not stuck. We're anchored. We're standing on a rock.

At Manukau Christian School, we aim to make decisions not based on fads—but on *principle*. In a



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From the Principal's Desk

culture driven by pragmatism and novelty, that might look strange. But in the long run, it's far more stable—and far more fruitful.

Open-Plan Learning Environments

Take, for example, the repeated push for modern learning environments. Open-plan classrooms were first introduced in New Zealand back in the 1970s, based on the belief that tearing down walls would foster creativity and collaboration. It didn't work then. Yet in recent decades, the same idea returned—this time rebranded as “modern learning environments.” Once again, millions of dollars were poured into architect-designed spaces, often driven by theories from those with little understanding of how learning actually happens. The result? The same as before: noisy, distracting, and difficult to manage environments—hardly conducive to deep thinking or focused teaching.

Now, having discovered—again—that these environments don't deliver what was promised, we're spending millions more to reverse course and rebuild the very walls we knocked down. It's educational flip-flopping on a national scale: costly, confused, and disconnected from the classroom reality. And it's only possible in a public system where funds are lavishly provided for schools through taxes.

But the deeper problem isn't architectural—it's philosophical. These experiments were built on faulty assumptions about human nature and the nature of children: that they flourish best with freedom from structure, that learning should always be self-directed, that authority is oppressive. With a Christian understanding of the world, we knew better. And in fact, we acted differently. Manukau Christian School



never adopted these models. We stayed firm in our commitment to structured, teacher-led classrooms. It's good for our students, and our teachers are not hampered by an environment ill-suited to deep learning—as our Year 7 teacher Jessica Schellingerhout has recently written about in our *Educational Thoughts* blog.

Teaching Reading

Or consider the teaching of reading. For decades, the New Zealand education system championed a “whole language” approach—where children were encouraged to guess words from context and picture cues, rather than sound them

From the Principal's Desk

out. This method was, quite frankly, a disaster. I should know. I was one of its casualties. As a child, I struggled to learn to read under this method, and it was only thanks to my mother teaching me phonics at home that I learned to decode the written word and begin to read properly at age 7.



Fast forward to today, and structured literacy—essentially systematic phonics—is back in vogue. Suddenly, there's a national conversation about how we've been getting reading wrong for decades. But at MCS, this is nothing new. Since 1987, we have used what is now termed 'structured literacy' to teach reading—not because it was trendy, but because it worked. And it still works. Our students learn to read.

Technology in Education

This pattern of overpromising and underdelivering repeats across generations. When VHS and television technology arrived, many predicted they would revolutionise classrooms. They didn't. At best, they were helpful tools—but nothing could replace the dynamic, relational presence of a skilled teacher engaging students face to face.

Why Good
Teaching **Matters**



Now we hear the same promises about AI and digital learning platforms. Yes, the internet has changed the world. But some things remain unchanged: knowledge still matters. Wisdom still matters. Good teaching still matters.

That's why we remain cautious when educational leaders declare, for example, that "every child must learn coding"—as though that's the pinnacle of 21st-century learning. The reality is, **most children won't need to code**. But every child will need to think clearly, speak persuasively, write coherently, and discern truth from error. These timeless skills are rooted in a deep foundation of knowledge and formed through guided practice. And that's why we major on them.

Time as a Test of Importance in Education

As Daisy Christodoulou observes in *Seven Myths About Education*:

"If something has proved itself valuable over 5000 years, it's a good bet that it will be useful for the next 100. But if it's only been valuable for the last 20 or 50, we cannot be nearly so certain. Microfiche readers and mini-disc players have more chance of becoming obsolete than the alphabet

From the Principal's Desk

or the numerical system... The fundamental knowledge and skills that underpin learning do not change—and these are what we should teach in school.”

A good example of this is how many of us were taught on school computers in the 80s and 90s. At the time we were assured that learning to use them would future-proof our education. So we were taught to use software like **WordPerfect**, or to program using **BASIC**—all of which were well and truly outdated by the time we reached university. The same pattern is now unfolding with the “learn to code” movement. For some years, coding was sold as a guaranteed pathway to the future. But now, as AI automates many programming tasks, recent computer science graduates are facing high unemployment rates.



It's a cautionary tale. When education chases the latest tools instead of timeless truths, students are left with fragile skills and shallow formation.

A Principled Approach to Education

At Manukau Christian School, our approach isn't driven by novelty, but by **conviction**—that education is not about chasing trends, but forming souls. And we believe that real formation happens not through screens or scripts, but through living teachers modelling truth, wisdom, and virtue.

In all these things—classroom environments, literacy, technology—we see a trend: chasing what's new often leads us away from what's true. At MCS, we want to be known not for trendiness, but for **thoughtfulness**. Not for chasing fads, but for holding fast to sound principles.

It takes courage to resist compromise. It takes courage to be called “behind the times” when you're standing on convictions. But that is the kind of courage we are training our students to have.

As we pass the midpoint of 2025, let's remember: we don't educate for popularity. We educate for faithfulness, for wisdom, for generational impact. And in a culture that drifts, standing firm is a radical act.



Have You Seen Our New Blog?

Have you seen the *Educational Thoughts* blog under the ‘Our School’ section of our

From the Principal's Desk

website? At MCS, we're passionate about Christian education—and we want to be transparent about why we do what we do. This blog is a space where we share our thinking about education, explain the convictions that shape our practice, and give insight into what makes our school, by God's grace, both distinctive and successful.

We've recently published a [couple of articles](#) you might find interesting:

Freedom with Standards: Why MCS Doesn't

Have a Uniform – A Christian perspective on our dress code. Rather than imposing identical clothing, we encourage students to develop wisdom and maturity in their clothing choices—because we believe education should shape the whole person, including how they present themselves.



Modern Learning Environments vs. Single-Cell Classrooms: A Teacher's Perspective

– Written from a teacher's perspective, this article explains why we favour structured, focused learning spaces over open-plan classrooms. Interestingly, this topic has also been in the national news lately. Shirley Boys' High School in Christchurch recently announced a move back to traditional classrooms after finding open-plan environments too distracting—both for students and staff.



We hope the blog helps you better understand the rationale behind our practices—and gives a clearer picture of what Christ-centred education looks like in action.

Scott Kennedy
Principal

Dates to Remember

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16 JUNE	17 Y1 and 2 Gymsport (1:30pm)	18	19	20 MATARIKI (School Closed)
23	24	25	26	27 Assembly Y1-7 (8:50am) Assembly Y8-13 (9:20am) Term ends 12:30pm
30 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	1 JULY	2	3	4
7 SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	8	9	10	11
14 Term 3 Begins 8:45am Primary Assembly	15	16	17 Reports issued	18 Assembly Y8-13 (9:20am)
21	22	23	24 JULY School ends 12:30pm Parent Teacher Meetings 1:00pm	25 Y5 Swimming (1:30pm) Y6 Swimming (2:00pm)
28	29	30	31 Pathways Evening High School 7:00pm	1 AUGUST Y5 Swimming (1:30pm) Y6 Swimming (2:00pm)
4	5	6	7	8 Assembly Y1-7 (8:40am) Y5 Swimming (1:30pm) Y6 Swimming (2:00pm)

Update from the Trustboard—Looking Ahead Together

Dear Parents,

As a Trustboard we continue to prayerfully seek God's guidance in stewarding the growth and development of Manukau Christian School. We are grateful for the strength of our school community and the blessing it is to see our students thriving in a Christ-centred environment. We would like to share with you two key plans that reflect our long-term vision and immediate priorities:

Short-Term Development:

To meet the increasing needs of our student body, we are planning to replace one of our smaller primary classrooms with a larger, more functional learning space. This will enhance the learning environment and better support our teaching team as they nurture our children academically and spiritually.

Long-Term Vision:

As part of our broader strategic plan, we have begun laying the foundations to eventually plant a second Christian school. We believe there is a growing need in our wider community for strong, biblically-based education, and we are committed to exploring how we might serve this need in the years to come.

We look forward to walking this journey with you and will continue to keep you informed as plans develop. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in the ministry of Christian education.

Manukau Christian School Trustboard

General Notices

Year 9 Enrolment 2026

Thank you Year 8 parents for attending the Information Evening for Year 9 enrolment in 2026. A special thanks to our high achieving alumni - Matthew Shallard, Vinayak Sharma and Thomas Fryer—for sharing about their high school learning experiences.



Please submit your child's enrolment form by **Friday, 27 June**. Current students do not need to resubmit their birth certificate/passport and no application fee is required. Applications will be reviewed in Term 3, followed by updates to parents.

Mid Year Reports and Parent Meetings

Mid-year reports will be handed out on Thursday 17 July. This will be followed up by Parent Meetings for all students in Years 1 to 13 on Thursday 24 July. These interviews provide a re-focussing opportunity for students, and provides parents and teachers time to discuss how to assist their child for the second half of the year. **Please note that school finishes 12.30pm on 24 July 2025.**

Year 6 Cambridge Checkpoint Exams

Students in Year 6 will sit the internationally recognised exam in the second week of Term 4. Cambridge Checkpoint Exam Fees are \$45 per student.

Exam dates are:

14th October: English Paper 1

15th October: Mathematics Paper 1, English Paper 2

16th October: Mathematics Paper 2



High School Term 4 Exams

Students in our high school will sit their external Cambridge exams in Term 4. These are completed over a number of weeks. Exam dates cannot be changed as they are pre-determined by Cambridge International Examinations. Invoices for these exams will be emailed next term. Students are expected to sit exams for all subjects that they are studying.

General Notices

Notification of Absences by App

We're excited to let you know that from Term 3, we will be moving away from Skool Loop and introducing **Helix** as our new communication app.

Why the change?

Helix is the Student Management System we already use, so by switching to the Helix app, everything will now be fully **integrated**—streamlining how we stay connected with you.

With Helix, you will be able to:

- 📱 Receive announcements instantly
- 📝 Notify us of absences with ease
- 🏆 View your child's achievements
- 📊 Track attendance records
- 🔒 Enjoy secure access using your valid email login



This shift will enhance communication between school and home and give you more insight into your child's school journey—all in one convenient place. Instructions for setup will be emailed next week as we get closer to launch in Term 3.

Thank you for partnering with us as we continue to improve the way we connect and support our families.

School Fee Payments

The Trustboard strives to keep tuition fees as competitive as possible. With that in mind, it is imperative that parents ensure that fees are settled in a timely manner. If you do not pay in the first week of term (thereby getting a 5% discount) and are not already on a payment plan, then fees are due monthly as follows:

Term 1: three equal, monthly payments are required in January, February and March.

Term 2: three equal, monthly payments are required in April, May and June.

Term 3: three equal, monthly payments are required in July, August and September.

Term 4: three equal, monthly payments are required in October, November and December.

Please talk to Mrs Oosterbeek if you have any questions about fees.

A reminder that we require a term's notice (or 10 school weeks) if you wish to withdraw your child.

School Happenings

Bake Sale/Sausage Sizzles

Our senior students have been fundraising towards the cost of their Year 13 graduation evening. Thank you for supporting their bake sales and sausage sizzles! Any donations will be gratefully received.

Police Visit

It was a pleasure to host Constable Simon and Constable Esther to speak with our Year 1-5 students about respect, responsibility and community values. We greatly appreciated Constable Simon's real-life examples and approachable manner, which made the presentation impactful for our students.



Mother's Day-Y1—7

What a delight to see the special assembly items presented by the Year 1-7 students on Mother's Day. Thanks to the amazing mothers who came to enjoy some quality time with their child. We hope you liked your cookie and 'tea-riffic' pot of tea.



Sound Waves—Y1

Year 1s explored how sound vibrations can move grains of rice. This is a field of science called cymatics. Sound waves can move rice into images called Chladni patterns.



School Happenings

Culture Day

Each year our students and teachers look forward to Culture Day, and this year was no exception. Students and teachers came dressed in ethnic costumes to reflect the colourful diversity of people and nations, who are made in God's image. All students were asked to contribute a plate of ethnic food as part of a shared morning tea. The celebrations culminated in two special assemblies with stellar performance items. Thank you to everyone for making this day such a wonderful occasion.



School Happenings



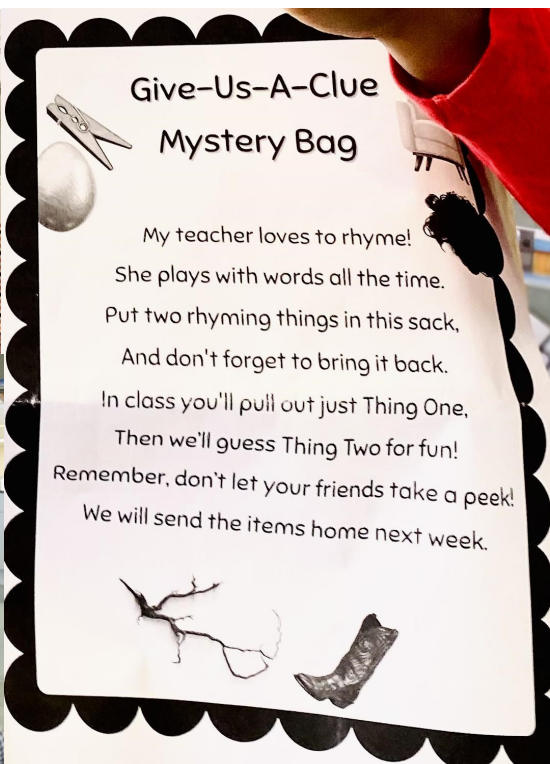
School Happenings

Gymsport—Y1 and 2

Held at the Bruce Pulman Centre in Takanini, Gymsport is a fantastic programme that helps our students develop body awareness, balance, and strength. Students love exploring the balance beam, trampoline, mats, swinging ropes, and climbing frames. A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful parents and teachers for making this valuable learning experience possible.



Mystery Bags—Y1



School Happenings

Buddy Reading—Y3, Y5



The ‘buddy reading’ programme brings Year 3 and Year 5 students together to share the joy of reading. It’s a wonderful way to build friendships across year groups and create a warm, family-like atmosphere in the school. Older students grow in confidence as they help teach younger ones, and everyone benefits from learning together.



Forces and Movement—Y2

Push, pull, momentum, friction, stop, direction—all concepts that our Year 2 students learned in Science class. Students measured how far cars moved when rolled down a smooth board, compared to a board covered with cloth, or other materials. The results were compared with each other and explained.



Air Resistance—Y5

For our Forces and Magnetism science unit, the Year 5 students learned that a streamlined shape reduces the impact of the force of friction (air resistance) that is acting on the plane in flight. We enjoyed seeing this in action by making paper planes and comparing the distances travelled with how streamlined the design was.



School Happenings

Magnetism—Y5



During our magnetism investigation, Year 5 students became real scientists—testing different materials to uncover which ones were magnetic and which ones weren't! It was amazing to discover that while some metals stuck to magnets, others didn't at all. What a fun and fascinating way to explore the hidden powers of magnetism!

Art Class—Y6

Thursday art with Mrs Tegg is always a highlight! Students explored the charm of traditional New Zealand villas, designing their own using classic architectural features. They transformed their sketches into cardboard prints, focusing on depth, texture, and detail. The printmaking process brought their creative visions to life.



Parachute Challenge—Y6 Science

This term in science, the Y6 class has been exploring the fascinating world of forces, with a particular focus on air resistance and drag. We learned that the larger the surface area of a moving object, the more air resistance it encounters – which is exactly how parachutes work.

To put this theory to the test, students designed and built their own parachutes, aiming to create one that would stay in the air the longest. After some exciting trials, we held a parachute competition to see whose design was most effective. Congratulations to Grace Lu, whose parachute took longest to land and was crowned the winner!



School Happenings

Culture Jar Artwork—Y6, Y8



Corban Estate Art—Y6, Y7

Year 7 students enjoyed a fantastic art workshop with two visiting educators from the Corban Estate Arts Centre. With expert guidance, they explored technical drawing skills and creative techniques. Using pastels, students learned how to shade and blend colours, add patterns, and carefully refine the details of their imaginative saltwater creatures. It was a vibrant and inspiring experience.



CORBAN ESTATE ARTS CENTRE

School Happenings

Writing Creatively—Y7

In Term 2, students shifted from descriptive to persuasive writing. Early in the term, they created vivid character sketches using figurative language and hyphenated adjectives, showing great enthusiasm and creativity. Lately, the focus has been on persuasive writing, with students practising emotive language and key techniques through short tasks in preparation for their assessment. Their work already reflects thoughtful vocabulary, originality, and growing confidence.

Bliss and peace are a couple of words that mean Canada. We could enjoy raspberry picking, horseriding, going to amusement parks and waterparks. Joy meets us on every corner as fast food after restaurant meet the eye, new and unlike NZ's limited selection. Many cultures, coffee shops, with donuts, and the perfect home. Enjoy beauty, nature, wild rabbits and ice-cream stores! Fun-filled prairies are met by towering mountains, and don't get me started on the view of the sky. Ice hockey—thrilling! Football — a joy! It's Canada — the place we need to go!!

Guinevere Maney



Above: Gracie Willis, Kristen Mathews, Jasnoor Maan and Anje Schellingerhout shared their pieces at our most recent assembly.

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Mae Savill, who recently graduated from Laidlaw College with her Teaching Diploma, and a special award for research and academic excellence in course work. Mae is a valuable member of our staff, bringing enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and a genuine love for learning to her role. We're so proud of her accomplishment and the positive impact she has on our students. Former student teacher, Avinesh Narayan who completed his practicum at MCS, graduated at the same time. Congratulations to both of you!



School Happenings

Ceilidh—Y10-13

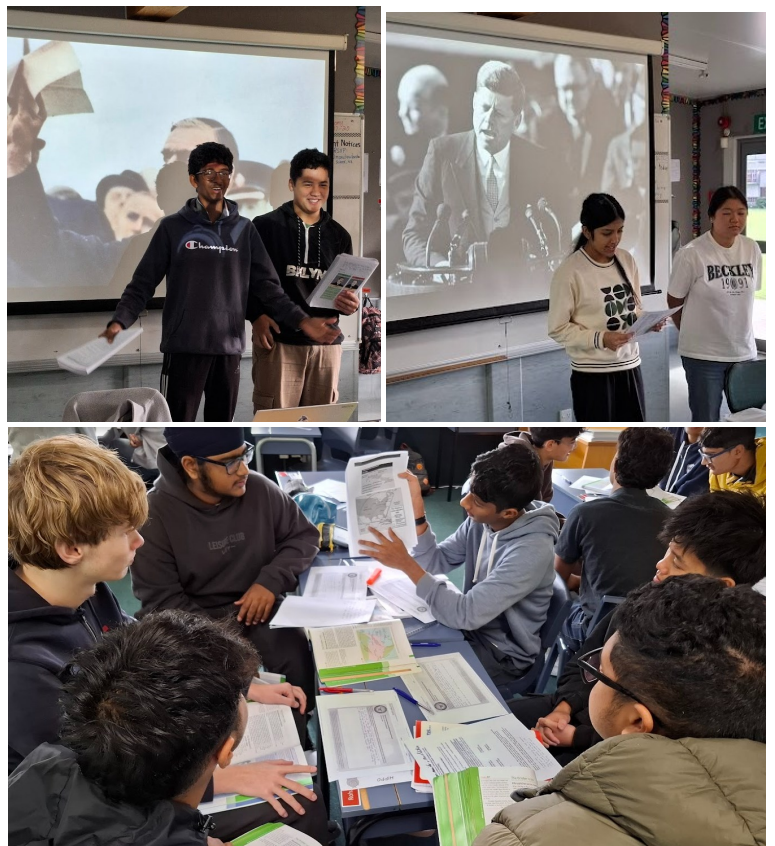
On Saturday June 14, our Year 10-13 students, alumni and staff enjoyed our annual Ceilidh (kay-lee), an enjoyable evening of live music and caller-led dancing. Ceilidh is a Scottish Gaelic word that means “gathering” or “party”. Laughter, music, and plenty of enthusiastic dancing made for a memorable evening of fellowship and fun.



History—Y10, Y11

In Year 10 and Year 11 History, students worked on applying and communicating their knowledge about Appeasement and Containment in simulation activities.

The Year 11s worked on analysing real declassified CIA documents from during the Cuban Missile Crisis, while the Year 10s discussed what course of action they should take against Hitler's rising aggression from 1933-1939. Groups presented to the nation (class) as leaders of Britain and the USA.



School Happenings

High School Modules

As our students move into the senior years, learning looks a little different on Friday afternoons. The High School at Manukau Christian School offers modules designed to spark interest, develop new skills, and provide meaningful challenges. These sessions create opportunities for students to grow in confidence, creativity, and leadership. Take a look below for a snapshot of recent module highlights—a small window into the experiences our high school students are enjoying beyond the primary years.

Cooking Module



Art Module



Squash Module

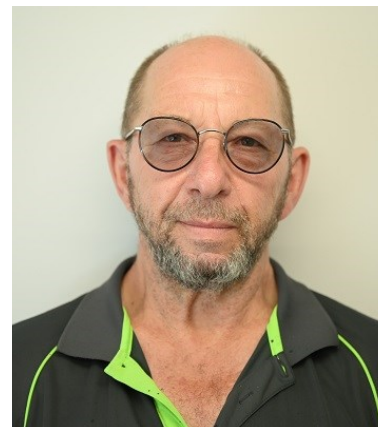


Carrom Module



Farewell to Peter Donaldson

Our experienced and diligent caretaker, Mr Peter Donaldson, is ending his time with us as he moves to Australia to be closer to family. Peter, it has been a pleasure having you with us at the school. We wish you the very best, and commit you to God's ongoing direction and provision in this new chapter.



Community Notices



BANDS

THE JUNGLE BOOK

SONGWRITING

JULY HOLIDAYS

Turn up the volume these school holidays! 🎵 Step into the spotlight as you write and film your own music video, rock out with friends in our band sessions, and dive into the wonder of musical theatre with The Jungle Book.

For our youngest stars, Little Rockers is the perfect place to start—try your hand at Ukulele, Drums, and Keyboard, then join forces to create a band of mini music legends! Spaces are limited—get ready to jam, perform, and make these holidays your most epic yet! 🎸🥁

SONGWRITING AND MUSIC VIDEO: AGES 8-15

BANDS: AGES 8-15

LITTLE ROCKERS: AGES 5-7

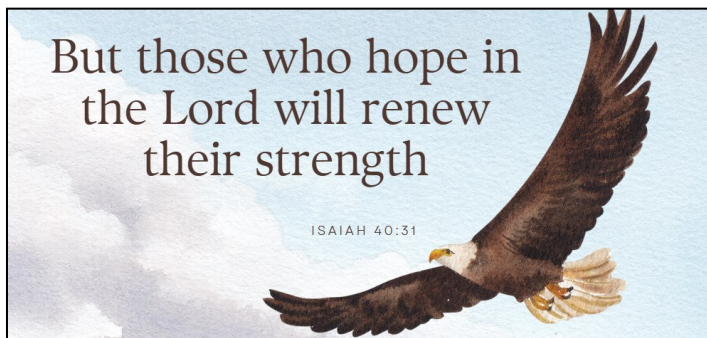
THE JUNGLE BOOK: AGES 6-14

BOOK NOW

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Website
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Miscellaneous

- ♦ Please collect **Yummy Fruit** stickers. Sweetango, Lemonade and Ambrosia stickers, can be redeemed for double points in school sports gear.
- ♦ Please ask your child to check the **Lost Property** bin in the junior foyer area.

PIPS—Parents in Prayer

Parents, if there is one thing you can do to assist us in educating and discipling students, please pray. Prayer moves mountains and changes hearts. Our weekly prayer meeting is held on Fridays at 8:30am in the church, except for the last day of term.

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD
AND PROCLAIM HIS GREATNESS.
LET THE WHOLE WORLD KNOW
WHAT HE HAS DONE.

Psalm 105:1



If you are looking for a preschool that sets up each child for future learning success then look no further!

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Contact Covenant Kids on 09 269 1048
or email covenantkids@mcctrust.nz.

PRAYER POINTS



Give thanks:

- for the strongest interest we have ever had in our Year 9 class for 2026
- for our Lord's protection and sovereignty over the school



Please pray:

- for our teachers as they prepare reports, that they will have wisdom and discernment as they reflect on student achievement and growth
- for wisdom as a school as we consider how best to prepare our students for life in God's world
- for the health of students and teachers as we head into the coldest months

Scripture

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

TERM DATES 2025

Term 1	3 Feb to 11 Apr 2025
Term 2	28 Apr to 27 Jun 2025
Term 3	14 Jul to 19 Sep 2025
Term 4	6 Oct to 12 Dec 2025 (Years 1 to 7) 1 Oct to 9 Dec (Years 8 to 10) 1 Oct to 21 Nov (Year 11)

Optional: Leaver's Trip: 24-27 November 2025.

School finishes as 12:30pm on the last day of each term.

HOUSE POINTS

Wilberforce: 109 Calvin: 83
Te Wiremu: 112 Tarore: 112



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