



Newsletter

Term 3, Week 3, 2025

31 July 2025

Manukau Christian School

Dear Parents, Caregivers, and Friends of Manukau Christian School,

Welcome to Term 3

With the winter solstice behind us and the promise of longer days ahead, there is a renewed sense of momentum at school as we enter the latter part of the year. We greatly value the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your child's report. These conversations are an important part of the learning journey, providing meaningful insight and direction to support and encourage your child in their continued growth. We trust that the feedback shared will assist you in guiding and encouraging their efforts in the months to come.

Don't Aim for Happy—Aim for the Highway

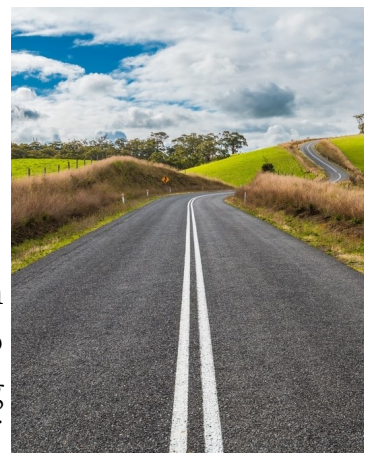
As parents, we want what's best for our children. That desire is good and God-given. But sometimes our emotions get in the way — especially when our children are unhappy. We feel sorry for them. We want to swoop in, fix the problem, and make them smile again. But in doing so, we risk something serious: prioritizing short-term happiness over long-term formation. Ironically, our attempts to make them happy in the moment can rob them of happiness in the future.

A Proverb to Reframe Our Thinking

At the start of Term 3, I shared a verse with our primary students from Proverbs 15:19:

*"The way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns,
but the path of the upright is a level highway."*

This verse is deeply counterintuitive. The lazy person seems to have chosen the easier road — no effort, no pain. Sleeping in feels better than getting up. Ignoring your chores feels better than doing them. Putting off study feels more fun than sitting down with a book.



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From the Principal's Desk

From the outside, laziness doesn't look like a hedge of thorns — it looks like a hammock.



But the father in Proverbs knows the long-term result. What feels easy now eventually becomes painful, frustrating, and full of regret. The sluggard ends up tangled in the consequences of his choices — stuck, scratched, and unable to move forward.



Meanwhile, the upright — the one who chooses the harder right over the easier wrong — walks on a level highway. Life isn't always smooth, but wisdom and righteousness generally clear the way for steady, fruitful progress.

Short-Term Pain, Long-Term Reward

A classic example is money. Saving is hard in the moment. It requires saying no to things you want now. It requires discipline. But that discipline builds options. Over time, the person who saves and works hard accumulates capital — and with that comes opportunity. They might invest, go on holiday, give generously, or support their children. Their path opens up.



The lazy worker who avoids responsibility and spends everything they earn might enjoy more pleasures *now* — but they end up with fewer choices *later*. They might find themselves in debt. They may struggle to support their family or even meet basic needs. What once felt like freedom becomes restriction. That's the hedge of thorns. This principle applies across life. It's hard work now that opens up freedom later.

The Courage to Hold the Line

Here's where the parenting challenge kicks in. I've noticed over the years how Kiwi parents assume something is wrong if their child is unhappy. We're quick to blame ourselves, or the teacher or the system for their unhappiness. But that's not necessarily true. In fact, it's often *not* true.

Sometimes a child's unhappiness is a sign that their way of living is bumping into the structure of the world that God has made. And we can't change that structure. God has designed an orderly universe in which wisdom, righteousness, and diligence are generally blessed — and foolishness, unrighteousness, and laziness are generally cursed.

We cannot create a world where laziness works. We cannot create a world where a

From the Principal's Desk

child who refuses to study still ends up competent. We cannot create a world where defying authority leads to peace and joy. That world doesn't exist — and trying to pretend it does only harms our children.

Instead, we must hold our nerve. We must let God's reality do its work — even when that means our children feel the discomfort of correction, the sting of discipline, or the frustration of being told “no.” That pain is not cruelty — it's discipleship.



Train for the Highway

Every moment we parent, we are training our children to walk one of two paths: the hedge of thorns, or the level highway. Do we want them to get used to the fleeting relief of avoiding responsibility — or do we want to train them to walk with wisdom, courage, and maturity?

Let's be parents who think long term. Let's be parents who see beyond the tears of the moment to the fruit of the future. Let's teach our children to choose the hard right thing — because it's on that road that life opens up.

Why We're Glad to Be Doing Cambridge

You may have seen a recent *New Zealand Herald* article (Sunday, July 20) raising serious concerns about the future of NCEA. According to the report, government officials are worried about the *depth and consistency* of student learning and the *long-term credibility* of the qualification.

One major concern is that students are encouraged to “stockpile credits” across a range of disconnected subjects rather than pursuing a coherent course of study that prepares them well for the future. In many cases, students are avoiding external exams altogether, gaining their qualifications through internal assessments — which vary widely in quality and are vulnerable to inconsistency and, increasingly, to artificial intelligence misuse.

The article noted that students are now frequently using unit standards like “provide basic life support” or “produce a personal CV” to gain credits toward

From the Principal's Desk

Level 2 or 3. While these may have some practical value, the system's flexibility has led to a pattern of credit collection over meaningful learning.

At Manukau Christian School, we don't use the NCEA system — and we're thankful for that. Our students work toward Cambridge International qualifications, which are based on rigorous external examinations. These exams are marked independently and objectively, meaning there's no room for bias, manipulation, or AI-generated responses. Students must learn a substantial body of knowledge over the course of a year (or more) and apply that knowledge to a range of unfamiliar questions under exam conditions. This is real learning. And it prepares students for the real world.

We regularly speak with our graduates, and again and again, we hear that those who completed Cambridge are significantly better prepared for the demands of university — especially when it comes to writing essays, thinking critically, and applying knowledge under pressure.



We're glad your children are in a system that values depth, integrity, and academic seriousness. We believe this equips them not just for exams, but for life.

Staffing Update

It is with sadness that we announce the upcoming departure of our much-loved Year 4 teacher and Head of Primary, Mrs Nadine Thomas. Nadine's husband has recently been headhunted for a role in Australia, and so Nadine, along with their children Emma and Ruben, will be relocating at the end of Term 3.

Nadine has been a faithful and diligent member of our staff team over the last almost six years. As a classroom teacher, team leader, and more recently as Head of Primary, she has brought great strength, warmth, and relational ability to her leadership. She has also been responsible for some wonderful initiatives—most notably our Primary School Mother's Day event, which has become a cherished part of the MCS calendar. We will truly miss Nadine, Emma, Ruben, and the whole Thomas family as part of our school family.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to share that Mrs Elaine du Plessis will be returning from maternity leave in Term 4 and will take over the Year 4 class for the remainder of the year. Elaine is well known to our community and brings with her

From the Principal's Desk

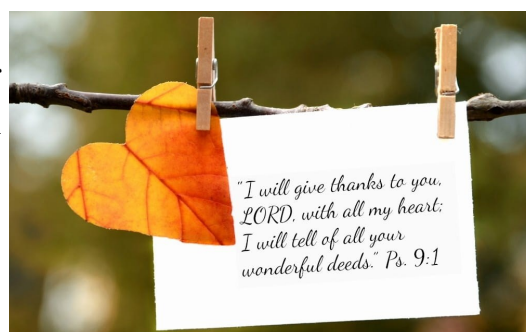
deep knowledge of MCS's culture and expectations, ensuring a smooth and confident transition for our Year 4 students.

In God's kind providence, Nadine's departure has also opened up a permanent role for Mrs Janina Harris, who has been teaching Year 1 during Elaine's maternity leave. From the beginning of 2026, Elaine will return to teach Year 1, and Janina will move into the Year 4 teaching role on a permanent basis.

Please join us in thanking Nadine for her years of faithful service and in praying for her and her family as they prepare for this new chapter in Australia.

Kind regards,

Scott Kennedy, Principal



Dates to Remember

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
28	29	30	31 Senior Pathways Evening Yr 11 Parents 7:00pm	1 Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm
4 AUG	5	6	7	8 Primary Assembly 8:40am Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm
11	12	13 Trustboard Meeting	14 Run4Bibles Yrs 5-8 (Off-site)	15 Run4Bibles Yrs 1-4 1:00pm Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm High School Assembly 1:20pm
18	19 PISA Assessment Yr 11	20	21 Run4Bibles Yrs 5-8 Rain Day	22 Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm
25	26	27	28 ACS Cross Country	29 Primary Assembly 8:40am Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm
1 SEP Year 11-13 Prelims	2	3	4	5 Father's Day Event
8	9	10	11	12 Year 11-13 Prelims end Swimming Yrs 5&6 1:00pm and 1:30pm
15	16	17	18	19 Last Day of Term Primary Assembly 8.50am High School 9:20am School closes at 12:30pm

General Notices

Run4Bibles



Your child has received their sponsorship form for our annual Run4Bibles cross country event. Students have been preparing by running laps to improve their fitness. Each lap is ~200m, with the number increasing according to their level. Years 1-4 will run at 1:00pm, Friday 15 August; Years 5-8 will run at 1:00pm, Thursday 14 August. The rain date is Thursday 21 August.

Please encourage your family and friends to support Bible League, putting bibles into the hands of those who have no access to them. Contributions can be made here: <https://bl.org.nz/fundraising-team.php?id=10284>

Please ensure you add your **child's name and year level** to the comment section. The class that raises the most money will enjoy a pizza lunch.

New Helix App for Parents

We are no longer using **Skool Loop**, and have moved to the **Helix App**. This streamlines our service to the current student management system (Helix) and improves data security.

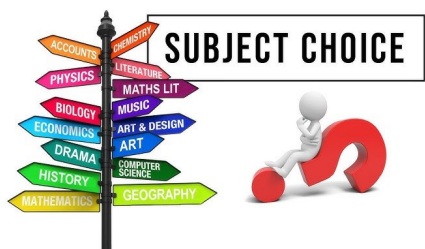
Please use the **Helix app** to report absences, download past reports and view the school calendar. Please also ensure your email details are up to date otherwise you will miss important information.



Senior Pathways Information Evening

Parents of senior students, in particular Year 11 parents, please mark this date:

Thursday, 31st July 2025 at 7.00pm in Room 202



The meeting will be held to explain AS and A Cambridge Assessment programmes, the pathways to university entrance and how you can help your child plan for their tertiary education.

General Notices

Year 6 Cambridge Checkpoint Exams

Attention — confirmed dates for Cambridge Primary Checkpoint Exam:

Monday 13th October: Primary English Paper 1
 Tuesday 14th October: Primary Maths Paper 1,
 English Paper 2
 Wednesday 15th October: Primary Maths Paper 2



Health and Safety

Parents, please help us keep **your** child safe. It is unhelpful when children run across the carpark, when drivers speed as they enter, and when cars stop mid-drive rather than finding a carpark first. Please aim to be **slow, steady and parked**.

- Please be vigilant and show respect for other parents coming and going. The Rogers Road carpark is available in the afternoons for parents of students in **Years 1 to 3** only. Traffic flows **one-way only**. **No stopping** unless you are in a carpark please.
- Please report any hazards to the office.

Thank You

- Thank you so much for supporting our senior students' efforts to fundraise for their graduation via the sausage sizzle drive. Further dates will be advised.
- The school receives a commission from purchases made through Photolife. This year, we received \$507.00.
- Fundraising calendars will be available for purchase early next term. We really appreciate your generosity and support.



Second Hand Clothes



Now is your chance to get some bargain school clothing. We have the following items available to purchase from the office:

House Shirt: Green (XL, L, XS); Yellow (XL, L, M, XS); Red (XS)

Polo Shirt: Sizes 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16 (S), 18 (M), 20 (L).

House Point Totals–Term 2 End

	Wilberforce	Calvin	Te Wiremu	Tarore
Total to date	167	149	219	210

School Happenings

Year 1—Art

Kintsugi is a Japanese art that repairs broken pottery with gold, forming a new piece that is more exquisite than it was before the break. Year 1 students made their own exquisite creations using card, paint and markers, and some students used crêpe paper for their blossoms to make them three dimensional.



The practice of kintsugi can be seen as a metaphor for personal growth and transformation, reminding us that even after experiencing hardship, we can be stronger and more beautiful.

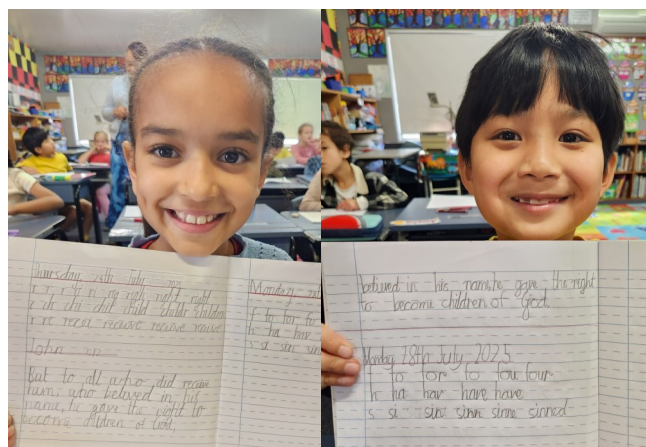
Year 2—Art



Our creative Year 2 students have been exploring **Shape Play Poetry** this term — blending words with visual design! Using hands and feet, students have been learning how the form of a poem can help bring its meaning to life. It's been a wonderful mix of literacy and art, and their finished pieces are as delightful to read as they are to look at!

Year 3—Handwriting

Learning to link letters and develop handwriting skills is a crucial step in Year 3—to improve both writing fluency and confidence as students form words more smoothly and naturally. Studies suggest that handwriting engages more brain regions and builds stronger neural connections than the more passive act of keyboard typing alone.



School Happenings

Year 5—PE



In Year 5 PE, students have been developing their throwing and catching skills through a variety of fun and active games. From underarm throws to overarm catches, they've been learning how to aim accurately, move into position, and work as a team. It's been great to see their confidence grow as they master the basics and apply them in small-group challenges and relay activities. Keep an eye out — we may have some future cricket or netball stars in the making!

Year 5&6—Swimming

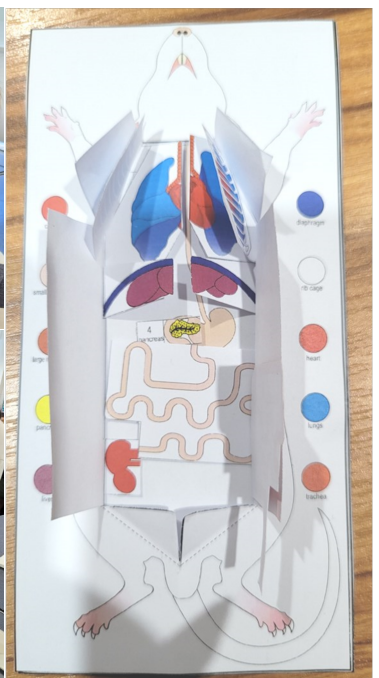
Our Year 5 and 6 students are attending weekly swimming lessons, made possible through the generous support of the John Walker Field of Dreams Foundation. An active lifestyle helps our students develop into healthy and well-rounded individuals.



Year 5—Digestion

What happens to food in our bodies? Under hygienic conditions, our Year 5 students undertook the first stage of digestion—mastication—by chewing white bread. They used iodine drops which turned black in the presence of starch.

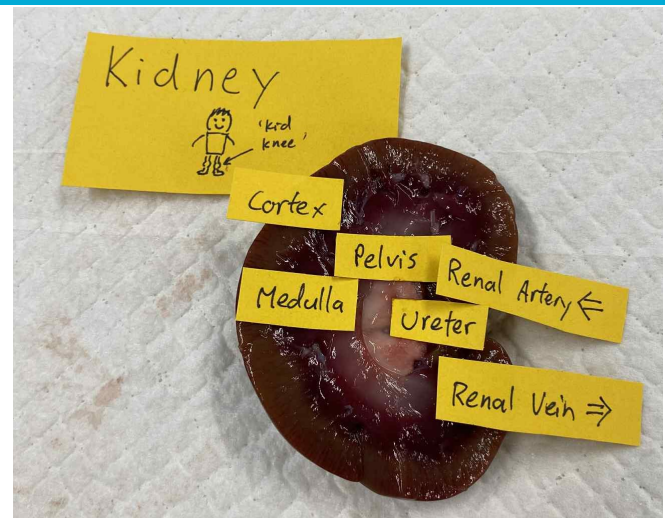
Finally, students undertook a 'paper dissection', showing the anatomically correct internal organs of a rat.



School Happenings

A Level Biology—Practical

Our high school biology students have been diving into anatomy with a hands-on kidney dissection- a fascinating look into the structure and function of one of the body's vital organs. There were a few squeamish faces at first, but plenty of curiosity and enthusiasm as students explored real-life science in action.



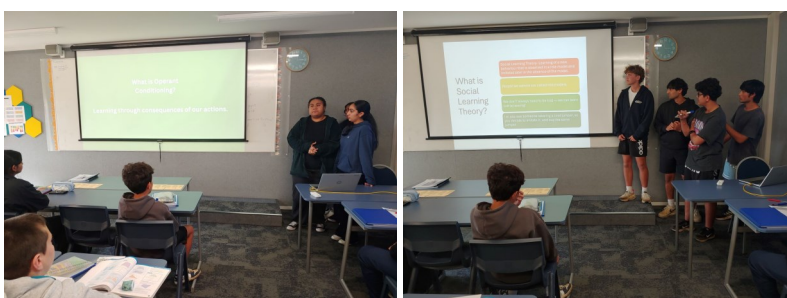
High School Modules

Modules are an integral (and much-anticipated!) part of high school life at MCS. Each term, students get to explore new skills and interests beyond the classroom.

This term's line-up of modules is as diverse as it is exciting! Students will be diving into fast-paced games of squash and badminton, sharpening their minds with debating, mastering calligraphy, and stepping into the spotlight with 'Lights, Camera, Action'. They'll also be exploring big ideas in *Movies and Worldviews*, and learning strategy and probability through the ever-popular Poker module.



AS Psychology Presentations



Our Year 12 AS Psychology students gave presentations to our Year 8 students about Albert Bandura's social learning theory of behaviour.

School Happenings

Thankfulness



A cheerful crowd of students found themselves in the principal's office — but not for correction! Instead, they came bearing a flurry of gratitude cards for Mr Kennedy, filled with kind words, and colourful drawings. It was a delightful ambush of appreciation, and a reminder that thankfulness is alive and well at school.

Community Notices

Facebook Group

Join this private group to see posts on our school community page. There are three simple questions to answer to be able to join.



Manukau Christian School Community

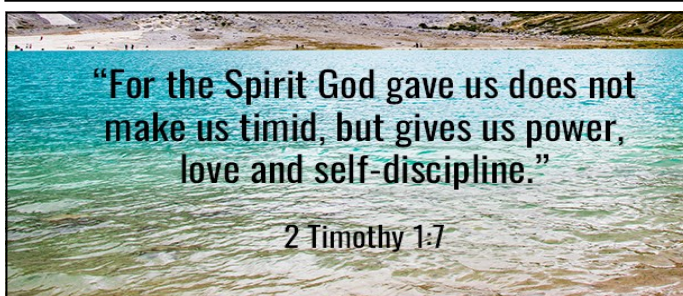
Rail Closures

If you currently use the train to get to school, please note that rail closures will affect the Southern and Western lines through late July and August.



View the calendar here:

<https://at.govt.nz/bus-train-ferry/service-announcements/planned-rail-closures>



PIPS - Parents in Prayer

Parents, please consider joining the weekly prayer team. We meet Friday mornings at church after kids have been dropped off, except for the last day of each term.

Miscellaneous

- ◆ We are collecting **Yummy Fruit** stickers to redeem for a share in \$200,000 of free sports gear. Download a Collection Sheet: <http://www.yummyfruit.co.nz> to collate your stickers. Hand completed forms to the office.
- ◆ **Lost Property** - unclaimed items will be donated to charity at end of term. Please encourage your child to check the junior foyer basket .
- ◆ A bin at the south of the property is available for **Bric-a-Brac and Unwanted Clothing**. We receive a donation once this is emptied.



Matters for Prayer



Give Thanks

- for high attendance rates, even through the challenges of winter illnesses—a real blessing!
- for the opportunity to host another practicum student, Tyler, who has joined our high school team;
- for the Cambridge academic system, which continues to benefit our students and teachers through its clarity, rigor and integrity;
- for ongoing strong interest in Year 1 and Year 9 enrolments for 2026—we are grateful for families looking to join the MCS community.



Please Pray

- for the upcoming cross-country event for our Primary and Year 8 students—for safety, joy and good weather!
- for wisdom in our planning for 2026, particularly for staffing decisions;
- for our senior students as they prepare for their external Cambridge examinations and begin thinking about life beyond school.

Scripture: “The way of the sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway. Proverbs 15:19

Term Dates 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 2025 (Years 8 to 10)
	1 Oct to 21 Nov 2025 (Year 11)

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

2026

Term 1:	26 January to 2 April 2026
Term 2:	20 April to 3 July 2026
Term 3:	20 July to 25 September 2026
Term 4:	12 October to 8 December 2026

