



O.V.S

Newsletter

ŌTAIKA VALLEY SCHOOL

TERM 1: WEEK 2, 2026 Issue #01

‘Ka Tupu Kōtahi Ai Tataou
...Together we Grow



Kia ora OVS whānau

Nau mai, haere mai!

A warm welcome back to all our returning families and a special shout out to those joining our OVS school whānau for the first time.

It has been a very pleasing start to the year. We officially kicked off the term with our Mihi Whakatau, where we came together to welcome our new students and staff into our OVS whānau. It is always a special experience to see our school culture in action as we embrace new faces with our own brand of warmth and respect.

This is also a particularly historic year for us. For the first time in the history of OVS, we are incredibly proud to welcome our Year 7 Intermediate year cohort. Having these inaugural senior students take their place in the school marks a significant milestone in our growth and provides a fantastic opportunity for leadership within our kura.

Despite the start of year buzz of new classes and new teachers, I have certainly been impressed by the calm and settled atmosphere across the school allready. The students have returned with a focused mindset, great OVS attitude and have quickly finding their rhythm in the classrooms and the playground.

Looking ahead, this term is packed with OVS opportunity. Our schoolwide theme is CHALLENGE, and we will be encouraging every student to step outside their comfort zone, try new things, and embrace the growth and resilience that comes from perseverance.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we embark on this landmark year together.

New Room 1&2 Pickup procedure.

Our Junior block building programme will be completed over the weekend with our new fences at the entrance to room 1&2 being installed. Please note: Unless you picking your child up early we ask that ALL RM 1 & 2 WHANAU please wait outside these gates until the end of day bell has rung before collecting students.

Attendance 2026

A huge thankyou to all whānau who have taken school attendance to heart and I was very encouraged by us getting to 88% at the end of 2025.

Remember regular attendance is 90% and we still have some work to do. Please make this a whānau goal for 2026.

If your child is absent for any reason, please contact the school office the morning of your child's absence, or prior if it relates to a pre booked appointment.

A text message will be sent daily if we haven't heard from you.

The school is required to track attendance closely and will be following up diligently on all absences.

Year 7: Technology



On Thursday we went to Manaia View Tech Centre for our first ever technology education session. Our first rotation was Soft Materials - learning how to use machines and sew and different types of stitches.

After getting familiar with the different parts of the machines, we used them to sew straight lines, squiggly lines and shapes in paper, and then learned how to feed the sewing machine. We all got our sewing license! We are going to be making and tie dying our own pillow case.





Ruru RockStar!

Class Attendance Award

Each week at assembly we are acknowledging the class with the best attendance for the week...and they win the 'Ruru Rockstar' Award. The last 2 weeks winner is (drum roll please...) **Room 7**



Term 1: CHALLENGE

This term our OVS term is CHALLENGE

At OVS, a Challenge isn't just hard work or a steep hill to climb. It is a special spark that helps us live out our motto: "Together we Grow."

Think of a challenge like a workout for your brain and your heart. It's what happens when we try something new, even if it feels a little bit scary at first. When we face a challenge, we aren't just finishing a task—we are growing to become better versions of ourselves!

New staff shout-out!



A big shout out to the new staff joining our great OVS team for 2026.

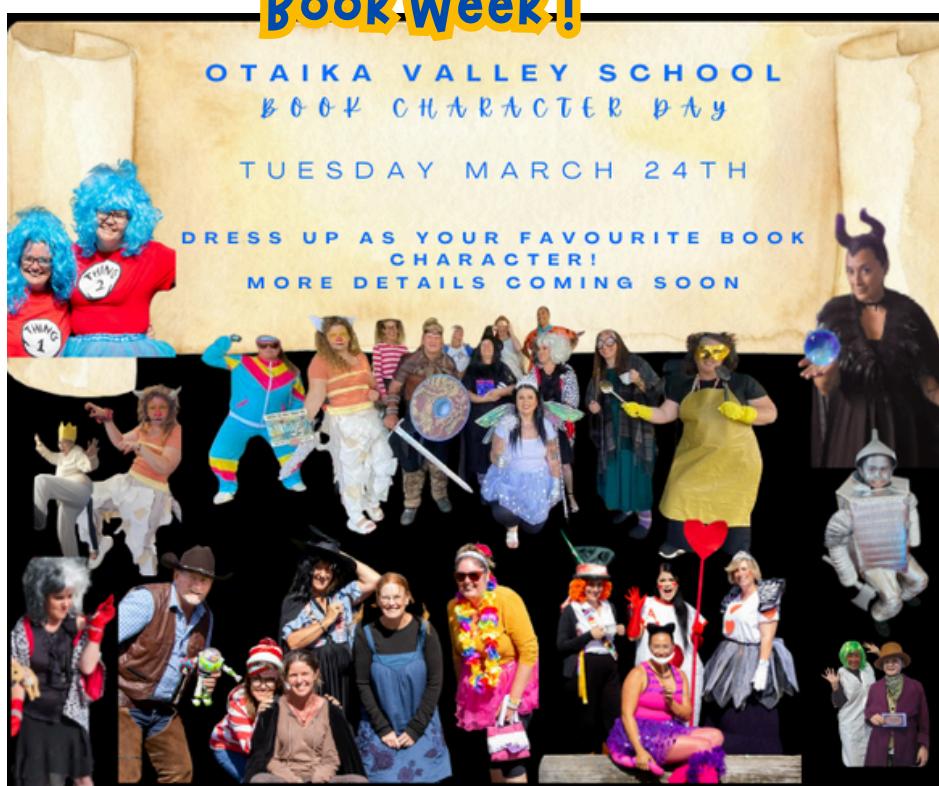
- Trudi Bertie - Year 7 teacher
- Gina Wood - Support staff
- Anika Te Iringa - After School Care
- Jo Gunson - RTLB (Teacher student support)
- Charlotte Jakicevich - Mana Ake (student support)

Book Week!

OTAIKA VALLEY SCHOOL
BOOK CHARACTER DAY

TUESDAY MARCH 24TH

DRESS UP AS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK CHARACTER!
MORE DETAILS COMING SOON



Meet the Teacher. 18th Feb

Kia ora OVS whānau and caregivers.

We would like to warmly invite you to our Meet the Teacher Evening to be held next Wednesday 18th of February.

This will be held for Junior Rooms 1,2, 3 & 4 from 6.00 -6.30 in Room 3

For Senior Rooms, 5,6 & 7 from 6.35 - 7.05 in Rm 7

The purpose of the evening is to give all whānau /caregivers the opportunity to;

- meet your child's new teacher
- find out about classroom programmes for the term and classroom nuts 'n bolts.
- provide an opportunity for teachers to outline expectations for the 2026 year.
- an opportunity to meet other parents and to find out how you can all support and help build a valuable partnership with your child's class this year (class helpers / camps etc)

If childcare is an issue, your tamariki are welcome to play here at school while the meetings are on.

We are keeping one eye on the weather (as next week is looking wet) and will keep you updated with any issues this may present.

We would love to see you there!

Announcements



Car Parking. Please be courteous of others during drop-offs and pick-ups - leave plenty of space for other vehicles.



Pool codes are still able to be purchased from the office



School Comms - DO YOU HAVE HERO?

Hero is our main communication tool and is critical for keeping up to date with school and for our student reporting. If you are not using the App please download it or contact the office for support



Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday 8:30am-3:30pm
Fridays 9:00am - 2:45pm



Strep Throat has been identified in our Kura - please be vigilant

Project Jonah

Whale Walkthrough

Next week on Tuesday OVS will be hosting **Project Jonah**. They will be here with their 'Walkthrough Whale education sessions'. This is all about the majestic humpback whale and why they are so unique. The unforgettable highlight will no doubt be getting to explore inside a life-sized whale, learning about whale biology and being in awe of how large these marine mammals really are!

New School Lunches with:



SUBWAY

We hope your children are enjoying the school lunches provided by Subway. If you would like a list of what ingredients are used in the lunches, please contact Jen at admin@otaika.school.nz.

Sun Smart Term

Please remind your child to wear their hat at school for outside play this term

No Hat means play in the shade!



OVS Policy Review

OVS uses SchoolDocs for all its policies and these are available on our website on the Board of Trustees page. The login is: [otaika](http://otaika.school.nz)

The password is: together

This term we are reviewing some of the policies in the Safety On and Off School Grounds section.

- Alcohol, Drugs, and Other Harmful Substances Policy (board)
- Sun Protection (board)
- Digital Technology and Online Safety (board)
- Cellphones and Other Personal Digital Devices (whānau)
- To do this login to our School Docs site OVS Policies. Go to the Current Review tab at the top of your SchoolDocs site, read the instructions, and take part in this term's review. We welcome your feedback.

Term Dates

Terms	Start	Finish
Term 1:	Wed, 4 Feb	Thurs, 2 April
Term 2:	Mon, 20 April	Fri, 3 July
Term 3:	Mon, 20 July	Fri, 25 Sept
Term 4:	Mon, 12 Oct	Thurs, 17 Dec

After School Care and Ground Use 2026

Kia ora whānau - just a reminder to the operational adjustments we have made to ensure the best possible experience for all our students.

After School Care (ASC) Programme will be exclusively utilizing the school grounds from 3:30 pm as a core part of the service provided to families. This adjustment is necessary due to the high number of students enrolled in the programme and is essential for ensuring robust supervision and safety for all children in the ASC environment.

We absolutely love seeing our whānau and students enjoying a relaxed play on the grounds after the final bell! You are very welcome to continue this tradition, but we kindly ask for your cooperation with the following:

Please be mindful to conclude your after-school play session and vacate the main school grounds when the 3:30 pm bell rings. This is the moment the ASC students will be leaving the library and moving out to safely use the grounds for their supervised activities. PTA meetings and approved sports practices will be exceptions to this rule.

Thank you so much for your understanding and continued cooperation. By working together, we ensure that every student, whether they are in the ASC programme or enjoying a quick play with whānau, has a positive and safe end to their school day!

What's on this term?

- 17 Feb - Whale Walk-Through!
- 18 Feb - Meet the Teacher Evening
- 26-27 Feb - Junior Camp
- 11-13 March - Year 7 Survivor Camp
- 19-20 March - Middle school Camp
- 23-27 March - Book Week
- Tues 31st March - PTA Triathlon
- Thurs 2 April - End of term

If you need any help feel free to contact us.



admin@otaika.school.nz



09 432 2731

Creating a "Goodbye Plan" for Safer Mornings

Are school drop-offs feeling a bit hectic? Creating a predictable, calm way to separate can significantly reduce anxiety and emotional overload for your child. A great tool for this is the "Goodbye Plan" resource featured on The Contented Child Facebook page.

The plan emphasizes that short, consistent goodbyes help a child's nervous system settle more quickly, as staying longer can sometimes increase distress. By having a clear plan—like a specific walking route, a designated hug, and a firm reassurance that you will return—you help your child feel safe and confident.

THE GOODBYE PLAN: HELPING MORNINGS FEEL SAFER

WHAT A GOODBYE PLAN IS

A goodbye plan is a predictable, calm way to separate in the morning. It helps children know exactly what will happen, reducing anxiety and emotional overload at the school door.

WHAT MAKES A GOODBYE PLAN WORK

Short, consistent goodbyes help the nervous system settle more quickly. When separation feels hard, staying longer can sometimes increase distress rather than reduce it. This isn't because children need less comfort — it's because their bodies are finding it hard to let go while the attachment figure is still there.

HOW TO SUPPORT BIG FEELINGS

You can acknowledge feelings without extending the goodbye. Calm confidence, gentle validation, and a clear plan help children borrow regulation. Tears can happen alongside a safe goodbye — they don't mean you've caused harm or that the plan isn't working.

WHY GOODBYES CAN FEEL HARD

Goodbyes activate the attachment system. For some children, especially those experiencing separation anxiety, the presence of a parent can intensify big feelings — not because the parent is doing anything wrong, but because attachment makes the separation feel more real.

A SIMPLE GOODBYE PLAN MIGHT SOUND LIKE

"We walk to the gate together. We have one hug. I tell you I love you and that I'll be back after school. You go in with your teacher. I'll be thinking of

you".



WHAT CHILDREN NEED MOST

Children need to feel believed, supported, and confident in your return. A clear goodbye plan sends a powerful message: "You are safe. You can cope. And I will always come back".