



BALMORAL SCHOOL BOARD



NEWSLETTER

To value diversity and to develop curious, confident and connected learners.

Term 1 - 2024

Tena koutou e te whānau he mihi nui Kia koutou katoa

**Tēnā Koutou Malo e Lelei Talofa Lava Bula Vinaka Kia Orana Fakaalofa Lahi Atu Ciao Namaste
Al-Salaam a' Alaykum Ni hao Hola Annyong ha shimnikka Greetings**

Our School Board Members:

Kyle MacDonald (Presiding Member)

Sarah Jack (Deputy Presiding Member)

Stacey Osborne (Treasurer)

Malcolm Milner (Principal)

Sarah Hogg (Staff Representative)

Sarah Johnstone-Smith (Parent Representative)

Erica Hodgson (Parent Representative)

Kia ora e te whānau

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome back all our returning whānau and the new families that have become part of our Balmoral community this year.

We want our school to be a vibrant, connected community where teachers, parents, and whānau work together in partnership for the good of our ākonga. To that end, we thank all of the whānau who attended the recent learning conferences and all of you who contribute to the school community and get involved.

Our PTA is another huge part of maintaining and building community connections. As well as fundraising, PTA events provide opportunities to meet other school families and add to the colour and culture of our school. We would like to thank the new PTA leadership committee elected at last month's AGM - Emma McDowell, Vanessa Goodwin, Scott Blanks, Simonne Elliot, Kathryn Love, Zainab Mussa and Kellie Ames - we are very grateful for your mahi.

We encourage everyone to get involved with these events and to help out wherever you can - many hands make light work, and we'd love to see more volunteering going on in our community. After all the disruptions of the COVID years, we'd also love to see attendance levels at these events get back to what they once were - we'll see you at the Comedy Night!

Property

We are delighted that work has finally begun on the remediation of the bottom courts (following their damage in the 2023 floods). Southbase and the MoE are also working on a roof extension to the verandah outside Hubs 12,13 and 14. We believe this will make this deck more useful and better protect the cubbyholes. We apologise for the inconvenience of having the Eldon Road gate closed during these works, but it was the only viable way to complete the works safely with tamariki on site. We hope to complete this work in mid-May. Thank you for your patience and support.

While our grounds are still closed to public access outside of school hours, whānau are welcome to use the field and playgrounds until 6 p.m. on weeknights. We are mindful that our grounds are a wonderful community resource and that it can be very helpful for young children to familiarise themselves with the school environment before they start. We just ask that your children have adult supervision at all times and that you leave facilities clean and tidy as you found them.

Learning Support

At our March Board meeting, we were fortunate to have SENCO Jacqui Bailey, Kylie Hogg (ESOL specialist) and Don Neil (Literacy Specialist) report on the programmes they have run in the past year. You will know the limited Ministry of Education funding available to support these programmes. We are very grateful to Jacqui, Kylie and Don for using their resources and achieving excellent results. With demographic shifts in our area (following macro immigration trends nationally), we have seen a huge increase in the past two years in the number of tamariki in our school for whom English is not their first language. Kylie is now supported by a teacher aide to cater to this additional demand.

Finances

Thanks to everyone who has paid their school donation this year. We know this isn't always easy with the increased cost of living and ongoing financial pressures. However, the school provides many facilities and programmes that we understandably take for granted, but are not covered by government funding. This includes the school pool and the school gym - along with their running costs and maintenance - the library, the sports coordinator and the considerable additional learning support that far exceeds what current government funding allows for.

Please be aware that you can pay the school donation off in smaller amounts throughout the year and is tax deductible.

Sports Coordinator

We would like to acknowledge and thank Sports Coordinator, Meredith Hughes, who has done an excellent job of organising and growing sporting participation at Balmoral since her appointment last year. Following community feedback, the Board prioritised funding this role to help streamline the sports organisation in which we have school leagues (netball, basketball, flippaball and minipolo). It has also enabled the Board to see the huge organisation behind any extra event outside the classroom that is assumed to be part of a teacher's role. Thanks also to the parents who volunteer their time as coaches and managers of these teams.

Student achievement

The Board reviewed the student achievement data at the February meeting. Our students continue to perform well, rebounding from Covid.

The Board continues to support the professional development of our staff and would like to acknowledge the vast hours our staff put into learning how to be a better teacher. Not only does this improve their classroom practice but also demonstrates to our community a sense of curiosity and lifelong learning. This is what a school or learning institution is about.

Personnel

Senior Management Team in Term 2

Our Principal, Malcolm, has been granted a Ministry of Education-funded sabbatical for Term 2 2024. Trish Cullen will also be away for Term 2 visiting family abroad. The Board is very supportive of Malcolm and Trish taking this time away from school to refresh and gain new experiences. We are fortunate to have excellent leadership capacity within the rest of the senior team to cover for their absence. Katy Sparkes will be Acting Principal for Term 2, Jacqui Bailey taking the Associate Principal role for Years 0-4 and Dan Allen for Years 5-8. We know you will support Katy, Jacqui and Dan as they step up to their new responsibilities.

Staffing

The Board has reluctantly accepted Liz Oorthius's resignation as Executive Officer effective at the end of Term 2. Liz is leaving after 24 years at our school. The Board would like to acknowledge Liz's deep commitment to ensuring our staff and children have incredible resources to deliver the NZ Curriculum. This includes not just classroom resources such as in our music suite but also our state-of-the-art facilities such as our gym, auditorium, pool, cricket wickets, playgrounds and library.

We have also accepted Patrick Ahern's resignation from the end of term 2. Patrick is moving to Australia. We wish him well for the move and thank him for contributing to Balmoral over the last five years.

Finally we would like to welcome Ross Lay to our school team. Ross is the new caretaker working on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday with Alf

Nāku Noa,
Balmoral School Board of Trustees