

Community Newsletter

April 2016—Paenga-whāwhā 2016

Principal's Column—Whakataki o Tumuaki

Nau mai, haere mai. Welcome to our first community newsletter for this year. There are over 200 children at Whatawhata School and we continue to grow and develop at a rapid pace. We are currently awaiting confirmation of further new learning spaces for later this year to meet demand for spaces.

It's been an extremely busy but fun term for us here at Whatawhata School. We've made the most of our outside environment for learning. If you want to get a better idea of our learning and lives here, check out our Facebook page at [facebook.com/whatawhataschool](https://www.facebook.com/whatawhataschool). We've enjoyed everything from triathlons and swimming to Lamborghinis and chickens - we certainly enjoy helping our children learn in lots of different ways!

We hope you like the new look newsletter. Many thanks to the businesses on the back of this newsletter who have supported us, we really appreciate it and we know they'd appreciate your support too.

Mā te wā—Until next time. Matt Stockton, Principal.

Our priorities for 2016

We have a number of main priorities this year:

Collaborative teaching: Working much more closely together to make the most of our collective strengths, passions and knowledge. Getting to know all of our learners and developing a sense of collective responsibility for them

Collaborative learning: Helping children to learn in different ways with different teachers and different peers. Making learning just right for them. Finding ways to build their passions and interests into learning.

Learner agency: Helping children become stronger leaders of their own learning, better understand how they are going and to share their learning with parents and whānau. Supporting them to become leaders in their classes and the school as a whole.

Learning pathways: Making sure that learning doesn't stop and start but carries on along a clear pathway from 5 to 13
Māori success and engagement: Improving relationships with our Māori whānau and community, developing a school-wide Te Reo, Te Ao and Tikanga programme

Enviroschools: Continuing to empower learners (and staff) to become more environment and sustainability focused

Embracing new learning opportunities: Improving our use of digital technologies and providing an even wider range of practical and meaningful learning opportunities

Our new staff

We have welcomed four new teachers to the school this year. Emile Valkenborg and Sarah Jayne McLachlan are our new Te Pihinga team working with Year 2 and 3 learners and adding their extensive knowledge of the environment and Māori learning to our school-wide kete. Michael Fawcett has joined us in Te Kaho 3, bringing huge experience in using digital technologies for enhancing learning. Emma Sercombe joined our Te Pihinga team and brings her knowledge, skills and passions for supporting our youngest learners as well as great knowledge of our school, community and families.

Our new learning teams

As part of our focus on learning pathways we have redeveloped our school into four learning levels:

Te Kākano (Seeds) - Our newest learners in their first steps of learning

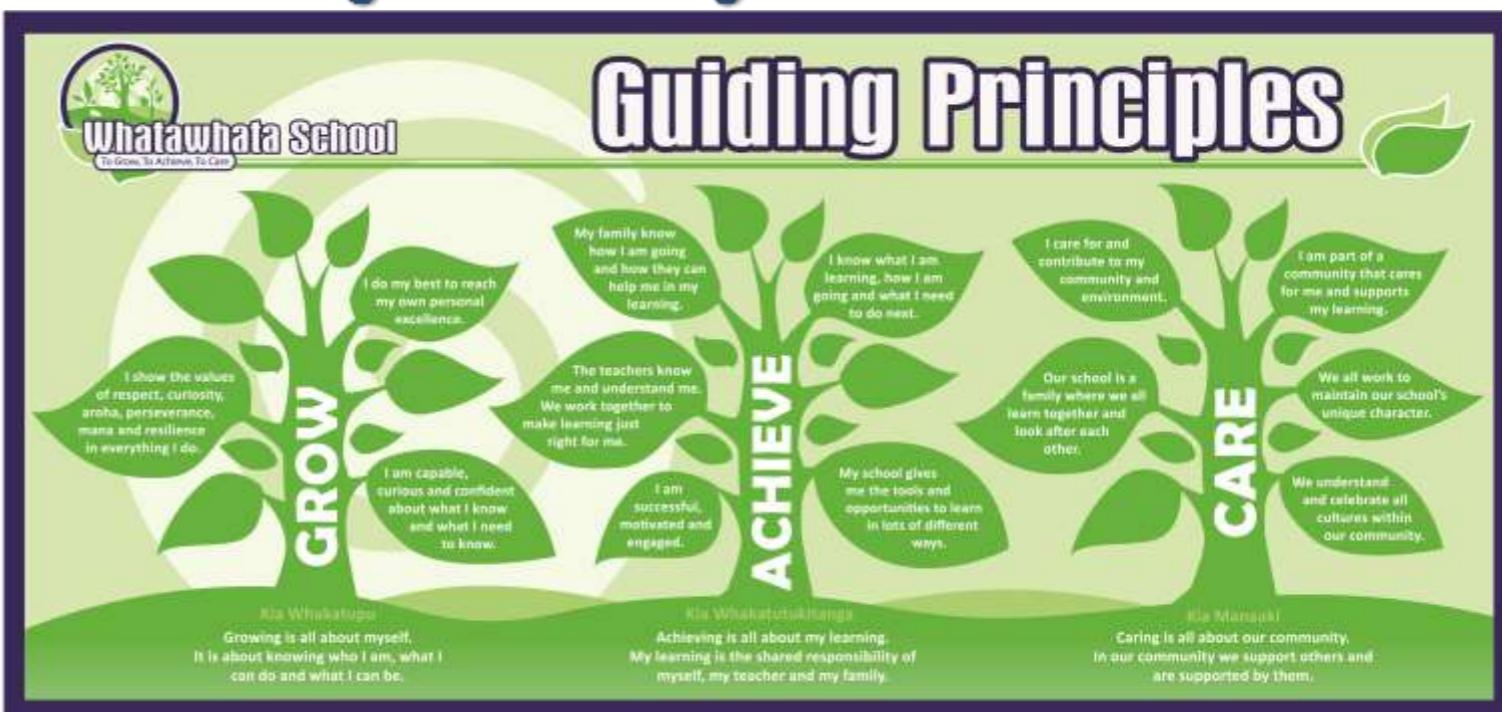
Te Pihinga (Seedlings) - Our younger learners (around years 2 and 3) who are really starting to grow in their range of learning strategies and knowledge

Te Kaho (Saplings) - Our middle years learners (around Years 4 to 6) who are becoming confident in using what they know as tools for new learning

Te Rākau (Trees) - Our oldest learners who are applying, evaluating and challenging their own learning to develop independence and self-direction



Your guide to learning at Whatawhata School



There are different emphases to learning at Whatawhata School. Together these help us achieve our vision, ensuring we grow our children academically, socially, emotionally and physically for now and their lives ahead.

Our Guiding Principles: Our Guiding Principles (above) help shape everything we do at Whatawhata School. They were developed with parents, whānau, learners and staff to capture what it means To Grow, To Achieve and To Care.

Essential learning: Each morning, we focus on essential learning in reading, writing and maths. These learning areas provide the building blocks for learning in all other areas. Learners use our learning mountains to understand what they are learning and the progress they are making.

Discovery learning: Our afternoons focus on discovery learning. This provides real-world learning in all learning areas through discovery, enquiry and exploration. The aim is to make learning deep, meaningful, challenging, hands-on - and lots of fun!

Out there and active: From regular energizers through the day to hut building and tree climbing to sports and fitness, we want our children out there and active. We compete and work alongside other schools in a range of sports and run many clubs and activities in school too. Our older learners are actively involved in the William Pike Challenge Award, facing outdoor challenges, learning their own new skill and giving their time to the community.

Te Ao Māori: We help all our children understand and enjoy Māori culture, language, arts, stories and activities through our Te Ao Māori and classroom programmes.

Whatawhata Values: Everything the school does is based on our six core values of respect, curiosity, perseverance, mana, resilience and aroha. These are modelled, developed and celebrated in classes and throughout the school.

Learner agency: Learners leading learning We want our learners to be fully in control of their own learning. Children develop ever more sophisticated ways to know, understand and reflect on what they are learning, how this helps them, how they can be successful and the progress they are making. Our children also serve as school leaders in a range of ways.

Collaborative teaching, collaborative learning: We are focused on working ever more collaboratively as teachers and as learners. We talk about how all the learners in school are going, discuss how we can better meet their needs, develop plans for action together and work together in different ways.

Using technology: We use technology as a tool for learning both in essential and discovery learning. We use a range of iPads, NextBooks, PCs and laptops to support, engage and challenge learners as creators and users of knowledge.

Enviroschools: We are a proud Enviroschool. We support our children to learn about important environmental practices and issues through them being actively involved in improving our school environment and identifying and implementing ways we can live and work more sustainably.

Whatawhata School
To Grow, To Achieve, To Care

