

Kia ora whānau

As we fast approach the end of the term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what a fantastic term it has been. We kicked things off with Cross Country at the beginning of term, followed by debating competitions along the way, which culminated in a fantastic win for our Year 8 team, and of course our school production, which saw many new stars born.

Alongside all of this, our teachers have been busy learning a new way of reporting through a series of staff meetings, while also continuing to build their understanding of the new curriculum that was introduced in the final term of 2025.

Things do not stop there, with tomorrow being our biannual Matariki Breakfast, where we are expecting around 150 people to join us and share kai together. Following this, we then have the mammoth task of moving five classrooms worth of furniture into the hall so that new carpet can be installed over the holidays. This upgrade will make these learning spaces feel fresher and, hopefully, warmer for our tamariki.

Alongside all of this, our PTA has spent countless hours working through the legal requirements and paperwork needed to bring together what will be an incredible raffle for our school community. This has been a mammoth undertaking and a huge achievement for a small country school to organise something of this scale. The success of this fundraiser will make the difference between us being able to install a new playground within the next year or having to delay that dream for our tamariki. We would love your support, so please share the raffle link far and wide with your Facebook friends, family, and wider networks so that together we can spread the word right across New Zealand and make this opportunity a huge success.

Thank you for all your ongoing support this term. We look forward to another action-packed term ahead, with a Scholastic Book Fair, Book Character Dress-Up Day, Kapa Haka performances, water safety lessons, and of course all the wonderful learning that happens every day in our classrooms.



Matariki and what it means to us at Ashley Rakahuri School

As we celebrate Matariki, we take time to acknowledge an important part of who we are as people living in Aotearoa New Zealand and the rich cultural heritage that helps shape our identity as a nation.

Matariki marks the Māori New Year and begins with the appearance of the Matariki star cluster, a group of nine stars that become visible in the winter sky. Traditionally, this was an important time for Māori, who would observe and read the stars carefully. The brightness, clarity, and position of the stars helped predict the year ahead – guiding decisions about planting, harvesting, food gathering, and the wellbeing of the community.

Each of the nine stars holds special significance and is connected to different parts of the natural world, including freshwater, the ocean, rain, wind, food grown in the soil, food gathered from the forest, aspirations for the future, remembrance of those who have passed, and the importance of wellbeing and connection.

Traditionally, Matariki is a time to remember those who have gone before us, celebrate the present with those around us, and look ahead with hope and purpose for the future.

At Ashley Rakahuri School, Matariki connects strongly to who we are and the values we live by each day through REACH – Respect, Excellence, Aroha, Courage and Honesty. It reminds us to show aroha by caring for those around us, respect by honouring the traditions and stories that connect us to our past, honesty as we reflect on our own journey, courage as we set goals for the future, and excellence as we continue striving to be the very best versions of ourselves.

Matariki is also a powerful reminder of the importance of connection and community, something captured beautifully in our whakataukī:

“Kia whiria ngā taurahere tangata” – To weave the rope that binds us all together.

As we gather to share kai together, we celebrate not only the Māori New Year, but also the importance of coming together as a community – reflecting on the past, appreciating the present, and looking ahead with hope for what lies ahead.

We wish all of our whānau a happy Matariki and hope this special time provides an opportunity to reflect, connect, and celebrate together.



What's Been Happening in Clubs and Groups?

Many teachers take on extra responsibilities on top of their classroom work - here is a summary of their term

Kayleigh Bruerton - Enviro Group

Our Enviro Leaders have enjoyed a busy and exciting term! We started the term by taking part in a BioBlitz at school, where the group explored our grounds to find and record the many bugs and plants living around us. It was fascinating to observe these creatures up close before safely releasing them back into their habitats.

We also discussed how many households have an abundance of fruit that often goes unused, linking this to our successful apple sale. To help make use of this surplus and give back to our school community, we held a Friday Morning Market. Thanks to everyone's support, we raised funds that were donated to the PTA.

More recently, our Enviro Leaders attended a Leaders' Hui at Ashley Rakahuri River, our local river. During the day, they investigated the invertebrates that live in the water and learned about ways to care for our local waterways. They also discovered how we can help protect and support native wildlife, including the Wrybill, so these native species can continue to thrive.



Kayleigh Bruerton Year 5-6 Jump Jam Team

The Year 5-6 Jump Jam Team has had a fantastic term preparing for the upcoming Strictly Jump Jam event in August. At the beginning of the term, the team chose the Jump Jam routine they wanted to perform and have been working hard to perfect it.

Over the past term, we have been polishing our dance moves, building our energy, and adding our own chants to make our performance even more exciting. As August draws closer, we will continue to practise so that we can perform to the best of our ability while having lots of fun along the way.

Team bonding has been a real highlight this term. We have a fantastic group of students who encourage one another, work hard together, and always bring plenty of enthusiasm to every practice. We have also chosen our team name, Ashley Rakahuri Rapids, and are excited to represent our school. We can't wait to showcase all of our hard work at the event!

Caitlin Horne - Year 3 and 4 Jump Jam/Talent Quest

Wow, what a fantastic term we have had on the Arts front! Firstly, we have finalised our Year 3-4 Jump Jam team and have been very busy practising our routine once a week to 'Dancing Queen', preparing for our Strictly competition in August. All of the girls have shown a great deal of excitement, commitment, and passion for this, and I can't wait to see it all come together. With the competition happening in Term 3, we will be increasing practices to twice a week. This will help the girls feel confident and well prepared before performance day. We are also lucky enough to be welcoming Brett Fairweather, the Jump Jam man himself, closer to the competition date to give us a few tips and tricks, which will be very exciting as well.

Another exciting event happening next term is the Talent Quest. At this stage, if your child is wanting to take part, all they need to do is start thinking about what they would like to perform and begin practising. We will have two sections: a Junior section for Years 1-4 and a Senior section for Years 5-8. Solo acts and group performances are all welcome, so start getting creative and thinking about how you would like to showcase your talents! Remember, talents come in all forms: singing, dancing, comedy, magic tricks, gymnastics, cultural performances, and much more. We would love to see lots of students give it a go, even if this is your first time performing. I will be organising this alongside Miss B, and we are very excited to see the amazing talents we have here at Ashley Rakahuri School. More information, including audition information, will be shared at the beginning of Term 3.



The Props Club - Jenny Layton

With the school production in full swing and many of our senior students busy with rehearsals during break times, we welcomed our junior students into the Props Club. Their enthusiasm and willingness to help make a valuable contribution to our production Forevergreen.

A big thank you to everyone who gave up their break times to cut out countless leaves and paint branches. A special thank you to Brianna, who worked with great efficiency and took pride in her work. She also shared thoughtful feedback about how the tree was coming together and suggesting ways it could be improved. I look forward to welcoming our junior students back in Term 3 to our STEM club for a very worthwhile project.



John Lynskey - Sports and PALs

Cross Country

This term started with our Ashley Rakahuri School Cross Country on the 1st of May both at our own school and at Loburn Domain. We were fortunate with the good weather and it was a wonderful opportunity to have everyone watch the juniors in the morning and then come down and watch seniors in the afternoon. Both events were very successful and well supported by the Ashley Rakahuri School parent/whānau community as always.

We then had our representative team go to the North Canterbury Zone and Rakahuri/Pegasus Events at the Show Grounds on the 27th May which involved 20 Yr 5-8's. All of these students had to meet a very hard qualifying criteria.

Year 5 Girls Ezinta Quan, Annabel Johnson

Year 5 Boys Quinn King, Sam Clark, Louis Harrod

Year 6 Girls Pippa O'Malley, Leia Beaumont, Aria Salkeld

Year 6 Boys Mitchell Fountain, Walter Cartwright, Bertram Ridge

Year 7 Girls no one qualified

Year 7 Boys Charlie Archer, William Clark

Year 8 Girls Ruby Cartwright, Olympia Whimp

Year 8 Boys Ollie Harrod, Louie King, Clyde Robinson, Tyler Salkeld, Max Clark

Ezinta was 4th in the Year 5 Girls. Leia Beaumont finished 5th in the Year 6 Girls. Olympia Whimp was 6th and Ruby Cartwright was 7th in the Year 8 Girls competition for our zone.

We were fortunate to have Ruby, Leia and Ezinta go onto the Canterbury Championships as part of the Rakahuri Zone team. Ezinta Quan finished 61st in the Yr 5 Girls. Leia Beaumont finished 74th in the Year 6 Girls and Ruby Cartwright was 93rd in the Year 8 Girls.

PAL'S (Physical Activity Leaders)

Our physical activity leaders kicked off their lunchtime sports coaching this term. Mitchell, Walter, Bertram, Briar, Evie and Pippa have teamed up to take Mānuka and Harakeke children for lunchtime games from Monday to Friday. They are enjoying organising equipment and teaching new activities to the younger students. This is a highly active and responsible group of Year 6 Students.

Calendar of Events

3rd July - Matariki Breakfast

3rd July Last Day Term 2

3rd July - 19th July Term 2 School Holidays

14th August - PTA Bake Sale

20th August - School Photos (Note change of day)

4th September Whole School Disco

7th - 11th September Scholastic Book Fair and READATHON

10th September - Dress up Book Character Day (change of day)

11th September - Ruataniwha Kapa Haka Festival

14th September - Learning Conferences

21st September - Learning Conferences

25th September - 11th October - Term 3 School Holidays

26th October SCHOOL CLOSED - Labour Day

6th November - Gumboot Friday

13th November Canterbury Show Day Holiday

25th November Tūhono Kapa Haka Competition

9th December Year 8 Leavers Dinner

11th December - Hotdogs/Non Uniform Day - Christmas

14th December - Whole School Prizegiving

16th December - Last Day of Term 4 (note change of day)