

08/11/21



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

The end of the school year is approaching fast in what has been a hugely disrupted year for our children and teachers. At this time of year we are normally seeing children practicing athletics for our sports events, preparation for Christmas on the Green has started with donations and the work with the children on their songs and items would have begun. One feature of this is the very early singing of Christmas songs, which are usually starting to echo around the school. The usual assessments are completed and the teachers, while doing their normal load, are busily writing reports. What is very clear is that term 4 and our usual routines are not going to be occurring this year. We are reviewing our other end of year events to see what alternatives we can come up with, as we get guidelines through from the Ministry of Education and are able to make some decisions we will let you know.

2021 Updates

We have made the decision to cancel Christmas on the Green. The amount of work the PTA have usually already put in to arrange stalls, prizes and the logistics of running such an event cannot be put together. Couple that to the huge uncertainty over schools, including whether we are opening, how that may look and the issues around having people on site, including restrictions caused by gathering numbers and vaccine status, means we have no alternative but to cancel. The PTA golf day has also been postponed to March 5th 2022.

The work the PTA does for us is incredible, and I know they are disappointed not to be able to support the school with these much needed finances, as well as provide a great social occasion for our community. Next year we will come back even stronger!

2021 Reporting

We are also working on heavily adapted reports for 2021, which the teachers are already writing. We have only had 3 weeks in school since the last report you received and there has been no time or opportunity to fairly assess the children. While our teachers are still wanting to report to you on your child and some of the progress they have seen through online learning, these will obviously be very different to the normal format. Online learning is a help in maintenance activities and to keep the children engaged with school, their peers and their teacher, but it is impossible to accurately assess a child, as support levels from home, opportunities for the one on one teaching, the learning environment and also time and access to help within each home are so varied. I am sure you will understand we would only want to report accurate data, which is impossible to form in 2021.

When we return to school in 2021 (hopefully!), we will be focussed on the social and emotional needs of the children who return to us. They will be anxious and excited all at once. We want to bring them back in and remind them of the care we have for every child, the fun they have with their friends and teachers and to reconnect them to onsite learning.

Back To School 2022 (Including New Parent and Student Conference to start the year)

In 2022, we will be assessing the children carefully very early in the year, then as our very talented teachers always do, we will meet the learning needs of every one of our children. We will have support programmes in place, ready to give those who need it a little boost and be ready to hit the ground running. We will also be trialing a new way of ensuring we can build the relationship between the whānau, child and the teacher quickly and effectively, by holding a parent conference, with the child present as well, prior to starting school. This gives an opportunity for the teacher to get to know the child, their interests, strengths and passions before we even start, ensuring the teacher can build effective relationships quickly. This will also help us to get straight into 2022's learning journey. This helps with anxiety about a new teacher for your child and also gives you an opportunity to meet your child's teacher prior to starting. The 2022 term dates are listed further down the newsletter. We will send booking forms for the conferences out once our 2022 plans are sorted.

Enrolments

Despite the school office having been closed for quite a while now, we are continuing to receive enquiries from families about enrolling at our school. Please contact Judi in the office (office@greenhithe.school.nz) if you or someone you know is wanting to enrol at our school for 2022.

We all know and have experienced how hard this lockdown has been on everyone. As a school we have tried to ensure honest and open communication. While some things are out of our control, we will continue to make every decision based on the best advice we can gather and with the care and best interests of your child, the community and the staff at the centre.

Take care of yourselves and your whānau.

Ngā mihi

Stephen Grady
Principal/Tumuaki
Greenhithe School

Key Dates

Thursday 16th December 2021 - School Year Finishes
Tuesday 1st February 2022 - Parent, Student Conferences
Thursday 3rd February 2022 - Start of term 1 2022
Thursday 5th March 2022 - Golf Day (2021 Postponed Date)
Thursday 14th April - NZEI TOD School Closed (from 2021)
Thursday 14th April - End of term 1 2022