



## Term 1 – Senior Syndicate

### Welcome to 2026!

There are 4 classes in our syndicate: Room 18 (Sarah Jenner), Room 16 (Nic Kibblewhite), Room 17 (Stacey Mew) and Room 20 (Shaun Bishop).

Sarah Jenner is the Syndicate Leader. We also have a regular part time teacher in our team; Anna Field. Anna will be covering Sarah's leadership release on Thursdays and Claire Gubb will cover classroom release.

This newsletter has important information about our programmes as well as dates for your diary. Please make a note of these on your calendar.

Newsletters and regular memos will be sent out in electronic form throughout the year to keep you informed about syndicate events. These will be emailed by class teachers or sent via Hero.

#### Technology

On Wednesdays, our syndicate travels via bus to Brandon Intermediate for Technology lessons. Throughout the year, students will rotate around the following classes: hard materials (workshop), soft materials (sewing), food technology (cooking), electronics, music and visual art.

Children need to be at school by 8:40am on Wednesday mornings please.

*If for some reason students are running late, they need to be taken to Brandon Intermediate and delivered to the office.*

Students must wear closed covered shoes for Tech (no Crocs or Birks) and long hair needs to be tied back.

Classes finish at 12:30 and students return to Discovery School by 12:50.

Tech begins for 2026 on Wednesday, 11th February and students will be in year level groups while at Brandon.

*There is an annual charge from Brandon Intermediate of \$80 to cover the use of materials. This needs to be paid to the Discovery School office by the end of term 1 please.*

*A receipt will be issued and you can claim part of this donation back through the I.R.D. Bus costs are funded by the Ministry of Education.*



### *Leaving the School Grounds*

From time to time, students leave the school grounds and walk to the local park to play sports or to further their learning outside the classroom. They will also leave the school grounds as part of cross country training in term 2.

Parents will always be made aware when these activities are taking place. RAMs (Risk Management forms) will be completed by the syndicate leader and signed off by the Principal.

*Please complete this [Google Form](#) giving permission for your child/ren to leave the school grounds and to travel via bus each week to Technicraft.*

*Note any dietary allergies on this form and we will pass this information onto the cooking teacher.*



### Tough Guy/ Gal Challenge (OPTIONAL)

We are going to take a group of year 7&8 students to the Junior Tough Guy/Gal Challenge at Camp Wainuiomata. This an extreme (3 kilometre) mud run challenge.

We are entering the event on [Friday, 8th May](#). Please note that there are several Wellington based events.

This is an optional field trip, students who do not opt to complete this challenge will remain at school. Please ask your child if they are interested and then you need to register and pay for their entry on the event promotions website: [Junior Tough Guy and Gal Challenge](#) | Event Promotions. [Entries open on 1st February. Please follow the instructions on the Google form below to enter:](#)  
[Tough Guy/Gal Google form](#)

### Stationery



It is important that we begin our programmes as soon as possible. Please ensure that your child has all of the items on the senior syndicate [stationery list](#), and that these items are named.

[Students need to wear a hat, when outside, during terms 1 and 4. They also need to bring a water bottle to school.](#)

### *Dates For Your Diary:*

Meet the Teacher: Meetings are being held on Tuesday, 3rd February between 1pm and 6pm. Bookings are made through Hero.

These meetings enable parents the opportunity to inform the class teacher about their child to help our staff form positive working relationships.

*Please fill out this [form](#) about your child and email it to your child's teacher (details below) or print it and bring it to the meeting.*

Mihi Whakatau – to welcome new students to Discovery School is on the first day of term; Wednesday, 4th February.

Immunisations: Boostrix and Gardasil immunisations are offered to senior students in the school hall. [Year 8s were immunised in 2025.](#)

*Dates for year 7s are as follows:*

Friday, 20th March

Tuesday, 22nd September

Students will bring home consent forms following an information session on **Thursday, 5th February**. This session, along with the immunisations, are run by public health nurses. Forms need to be returned please regardless of whether consent is given.

School photos are during week 6 of term 1 (beginning 9th March). These will be taken by Sue Allman. Times/days for each class will be confirmed closer to the time. Class, individual and sibling photos will be taken during this week.

Sports photos and the year 8 formal photo will be taken in term 4.

### Communication

Newsletters are uploaded to the school website [www.discovery.school.nz](http://www.discovery.school.nz) if they are misplaced or the email can no longer be located.

Email addresses are as follows:

Sarah Jenner [sjenner@discovery.school.nz](mailto:sjenner@discovery.school.nz)

Stacey Mew [smew@discovery.school.nz](mailto:smew@discovery.school.nz)

Nic Kibblewhite [nkibblewhite@discovery.school.nz](mailto:nkibblewhite@discovery.school.nz)

Shaun Bishop [sbishop@discovery.school.nz](mailto:sbishop@discovery.school.nz)

Please remember that teachers are teaching during the day. If you need to relay information to your child during the school day, please contact the school office and they will let the child/teacher know.

It is important that children who are feeling unwell during the day let their teacher know, rather than contacting parents directly themselves. Please support them to do this.

Please ensure that your details are up to date with our school office. If you have moved house or changed phone numbers, contact the school office – [office@discovery.school.nz](mailto:office@discovery.school.nz) or phone 234-7103 during term time.

### Devices

If students bring a cellphone to school, it must be switched off and kept in their teacher's (locked) cupboard during the day. It can be turned on again once they leave the school grounds at the end of the day. i.e. they are not allowed on their phones until they are outside of the school grounds.

*Misused phones will be held in a locked cupboard in the Principal's office. They must be collected by a parent.*

It is important that Chromebooks come to school ready to use, i.e. at least 75%. We don't have the capacity to charge devices in each room.

**We ask that ChromeBooks stay at home on Wednesdays because we will be at Brandon Intermediate until lunchtime.**



Please join the school Facebook page -  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DiscoverySchool>

*This is a closed page and only parents of current students will be accepted to join it.*



Camp Makahika



As you know, the Senior Team leaves for camp on Monday, 16th February and returns on Thursday, 19th February.

Separate newsletters were sent out last term about camp and further information/reminders about camp will follow shortly.

Please start organising your child's gear; ask around and borrow items if you can:

[Gear List](#)

Further information about the camp itself can be found on this website:

<https://www.makahika.co.nz/>

### *Merits / School Badge*

Throughout their time in the Senior Team, students work towards achieving their school badge. They need to receive 24 merits during their time as a year 7 & 8 student to achieve this goal.

Merits are awarded for taking initiative, such as; assisting younger students, helping with odd jobs around the school and/or completing monitor duties.



They are not awarded for participating in extracurricular activities or achieving high marks in an assessment task. It takes a lot of dedication, initiative and perseverance to achieve a school badge at Discovery School; we encourage our students to work towards this achievement.

### *Gumboot Challenges*

4-5 times each term, senior syndicate children will be competing in a syndicate challenge called "The Golden Gumboot." The challenges include a range of activities, such as singing, relays, tug of war, Maths games, design challenges, brain teasers, football matches..

The winning class gets to keep the Golden Gumboot until the next challenge.



## Term 1 learning opportunities



### Mathematics / Numeracy

Our students will begin the year focusing on rational numbers; adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing large and decimal numbers. They will learn knowledge and strategies needed to solve problems. They will focus on basic facts and place value of numbers.

### Literacy

Our main focus will be reading and writing biographies.

They will complete follow up activities that relate to texts and they will also complete shared reading activities, listen to class stories and visit the school library.

They will learn spelling rules, grammar conventions and they will complete activities in a structured literacy approach.

### Topic/Inquiry and Health: Relationships

We will begin the term by focusing on creating positive classroom environments and getting to know each other. Students will aim to build relationships with others in their class and the wider syndicate and learn what successful collaboration looks and feels like. We will spend time learning about and focusing on our school values which are Excellence, Responsibility, Respect and Integrity.

Life Education in the mobile classroom is booked to start in week 7 on Monday, 16th March.



Nutrition lessons: Nova is a nutritionist who will be working with our seniors about making healthy decisions about food. These lessons will take place in week 6 and are free for our tamariki.

St Johns: Jel from St John's will be coming to Discovery School to work with our seniors about health and well being. These sessions are also free.

Students will also be completing a unit about puberty. The focus of this unit is about changes to the body during adolescence.

We follow various Ministry of Education resources which we will share with you prior to starting the lessons.

### Physical Education

During term 1, our focus will be on small ball skills and games.

P.E. is an important part of our programme. If a student is unable to participate due to injury, they need a note from a caregiver/parent. Sick children need to stay at home please.

Students need to come to school with sports shoes each day please.  
At this age level, a change of t-shirt and/or use of deodorant is encouraged.

### Languages / Te Reo Māori

Throughout the year, students will learn international languages in year level groups. They will spend a term learning each of the following:

French with Sarah Jenner  
Japanese with Nic Kibblewhite  
Italian with Shaun Bishop  
NZ Sign Language with Stacey Mew



We aim to integrate Te Reo Māori into our daily programmes. During term 1, we will focus on greetings, commands, learning new whakatauki, Karakia and waiata. We begin our mornings with a 'mihi o te ata' during which we aim to speak only te reo Māori. We believe that it is important for all of our students to learn te reo because it is one of New Zealand's official languages.

### Homework

We run a daily home learning programme. Children are expected to spend time each day/evening completing maths tasks, reading a book and doing an assignment task. We appreciate your support with this. Further information will follow about homework soon.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

We look forward to a positive year with your child!

Ngā mihi,

Sarah, Stacey, Nic and Shaun