



21.3.2022.

Tenā koutou, Kia Orana, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei and Hello to all Parents and Caregivers,

We have had seven full weeks back at school, and the children are well settled into their new classroom routines despite all the Covid 19 related adaptations we have had to make. Well done to all of you for being so thoughtful of others health and safety needs before and after school. We are heading into the thick of it now and are beginning to be impacted by absences daily. Sadly many of our children have never experienced school in normal non covid settings and so it is often us the adults which are more effected by the differences to 'normal' school. Our children continue to be happy and excited about their schooling each and every day.

Thanks to you for your organisation at the start of the year. Most of the children arrived with all the books and equipment they needed to learn including their Reading Folders/Book Bag. Once again thank you very much for this, as it means we have been able to settle quickly into our learning.

Our school-wide focus for the next 15 weeks is "Who we are" - An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human. In our Syndicate this is beginning with all the things a human needs to have a happy and healthy life. We are using the 4 pillars of health from the Whare Tapa Wha Model by Sir Mason Durrie and then moving into investigating "play" further ... in particular "What we believe about play at Allenton School and how we want our Junior playground to look". These inquiry units cover a range of subjects, AS ACE key competencies and NPDL 6 Global Competencies. As we have two major Inquiry units every year. We also have a deep focus on two of the 6 global competencies (6C's) each year – Character first then Creativity in the second half of 2022.

So that you all have a good understanding of what we are learning this year and where that fits in the big picture... I have included a copy of our 2022 Curriculum Overview for you all with this newsletter. It would be fantastic if you saw an area of study that you have either physical resources for (books, C.D.'s or in the case of our playground - wood, concrete, plantings, tubes, tunnels, tires, pipe, huge pipe rolls, etc.) or know of people with specific knowledge on that topic (local, national or global experts) please let your child's classroom teacher know – then we can truly work together as a learning community on a topic our children will remember and have ownership of forever!

Each year Allenton School has two Inquiries with a different focus and different objectives to cover so that by the time your child has spent 6 full years at school they would have been exposed to all areas of the New Zealand Curriculum in meaningful contexts. They will also have done a deep focus on each of the 6C's twice – once as a younger child and then again three years later at a much higher level.

We are excited to say that Character is our 6C focus for this topic and know you will be able to offer lots of insights into how your child displays character at home as well as their next steps as you see them.

We began our New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning (NPDL or deep learning) journey two years ago and Covid limitations meant we could not meet to do our big launch and explain the NPDL concepts as we would have liked to last year. This year we are committed to sharing the message with you, our whanau even if we can't meet in person due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

You will have seen our 6C weekly celebration focus within each classroom through your child's Seesaw posts as well as through Facebook. Look out for more to come as we share as much of this learning as we can from you – and get your feedback and home perspectives.

“If we want learners who can thrive in turbulent and complex times, apply thinking to new situations and change the world, then we must re-imagine learning.

“Engage the World – Change the World” is a catch phrase of NPDL / Deep Learning. We want our children to be future focused and solve real world problems by using the skills they have learned through our work on the 6C's. Allenton school is part of a worldwide collaboration with other schools who support and develop its teachers in this important learning journey. Our staff have already learned a great deal from being part of this collaborative group - as have our children. We look forward to sharing more of this journey with you this year.

Reading

Our school is also working on new learning in the area of reading instruction. We are two different pathways in place for teaching reading depending on the needs of our pupils. Some children will be following the traditional methods of learning to read which have been highly successful for most of our children here at Allenton in the past. Other children will be following a Structured Literacy pathway - which is strongly phonetically based and explicitly teaches sounds as well as the blending and segmenting of those sounds as its major way to decode texts.

We have been lucky enough to get the support of our local RTLit (or Resource Teacher of Literacy) to work with 25 of our pupils and implement this programme with them in Term 1, as well as support our classroom teachers with implementing that programme independently. We also have a Structured Literacy Team who have done extra training in this area, sharing that learning with the staff as part of our professional growth cycle this year.

From the beginning of Week 7 (14th March) Rooms 10, 11, 12, 18 and 13 will be doing three full weeks of reading assessment for the children using the traditional approach to reading instruction, before regrouping the children for daily instruction once again from the beginning of Week 10 onwards.

Your child may be selecting their own books during this assessment period from PMeCollection or may be set Structured Literacy books or activities without the usual amount of teacher instruction during this time as we can't teach and assess simultaneously. Doing detailed assessments at a range of levels is common practice in all good schools - so please assist your child with their reading material by being positive and encouraging each night during this time frame. If your child struggles at an unknown word, wait 5 seconds and then just tell them what it is – home reading should be a relaxed experience for all concerned, especially for your child! Please continue to hear reading every night as well as signing their reading log - as this practise is a very important habit to get into for ongoing success with Reading and we don't want to muck with it now we are all underway!

Once testing is completed there are 3 very different types of reading that your child experiences in a normal school day:

1. Guided Reading, where the children are guided through texts at a harder level than they can manage alone, with the support of their teacher.
2. Instructional Reading, where the children read books with their teacher where they achieve 90% - 95% accuracy.
3. Independent Reading, where children read books at a easier level than their instructional level and are expected to decode and understand without help.

This is why some books appear to be at easier or harder levels when they come home in their reading folder – Children need all 3 types of reading to become successful readers – adjust your support accordingly.

Swimming

Once again this year we are all going to the EA Networks Pool for swimming lessons with trained instructors. Rooms 10, 11, 12 and 13 go in Weeks 9 and 10 of Term 1. Rooms 18 and 14 go in Weeks 9 and 10 of Term 2 and Room 15 and 16 go in Weeks 9 and 10 of Term 3. Swimming is part of the school curriculum, not an optional activity. If your child is unable to swim due to ill health, please ring the school office, as if they are too sick for swimming - they are too sick for school!

Absences/Medication

Just a reminder not to use Seesaw for your children's absences. Instead ring in to the school office for absences before 8:45 am, stating a reason (as we are required to record this alongside our roll return each day) or use the "Skool Loop" app to text, email or link directly. Please download this if you have not already done so as Skool Loop is a very important part of our communication network. When your child returns to school after their absence they also need a written note (in their communication book is fine) explaining details of the absence. This note needs to be given to the class teacher.

All medications need to be sent to the office and forms detailing its use signed by you. These can not be left with classroom teachers or in bags for children to self medicate.

Uniforms

Here is a detailed list of the Allenton School uniform to ensure everyone knows what they should be wearing when.

Allenton School Uniform

All Year items for Students

School monogram embossed on left side of a Maroon polo top. Both these items can be in long or short arm length styles.

Maroon Jersey, Polar Fleece or sweatshirt with school monogram.

Plain completely black shoes. If your shoes have laces they must also be black.

Non-visible undergarments can be worn.

Summer (Term 1 & 4)

Full brimmed sun hat with school logo embossed at the front available for purchase from the Warehouse. Completely Black sandals with no socks may be worn in summer.

Girls:

Checked Skort (Crestalane Material) white ankle socks.

Boys:

School grey shorts and grey long socks

Winter: (Term 2 & 3)

Girls:

Kilt, Pinafore or Winter Skort (All to be Anderson Tartan)

Navy or black tights or socks

Boys:

School grey shorts and long grey socks

(Allenton School maroon and gold pattern grey socks are optional.)

Sports Days:

Black shorts and sneaker/sport shoes

Jewellery and Personal Items

For safety reasons no Jewellery is to be worn.

The following exceptions are allowed; plain ear studs, a watch, a cultural necklace, birth or medical bracelet. The necklace and bracelets must be worn tightly on the body and against the skin.

Hair accessories can only be black, brown, maroon or yellow.

No nail polish is to be worn.

Many of our children get too hot if wearing socks and shoes this term so completely black sandals with no socks has been a very popular option for Term 1 and Term 4 in the past (and saves lots of discarded socks getting lost).

Communication

Please make full use of your classroom's system for communication between home and school (Home/School Communication Book / Seesaw Journal Posts/ Seesaw Blogs etc.). We can achieve so much when we are working together for your child, and any questions or misunderstandings can be quickly cleared up by a note or pre-arranged meeting directly with the teacher concerned, as they are highly trained professionals who have a wealth of knowledge behind the decisions they make.

Sadly we have seen a huge decline in the starting levels of our New Entrant children over the last 8 years. We now have children at school who know very little on arrival - which means our staff have to work extremely hard to fill their knowledge gaps. There are many reasons for this, but one possible piece of advice is please limit your child's use on devices as we are told they can have hugely detrimental effects on their learning, concentration, physical and social skills.

Our Junior School became a Play Based Learning Environment 5 years ago as children learn so quickly through self-directed play and we were concerned about the low entry levels then. We use Action Stations and/or self-directed Reading Stations in the mornings and Maths Stations as well as Co – Constructed Inquiries in the afternoons. We, like many other schools in New Zealand are committed to putting agentic learning at the very centre of what we do to ensure maximum engagement of our pupils – and therefore maximise their learning progress.

As a long time educator who has also retrained and worked in the early childhood sector, I've found there are many wonderful things we now make use of at Primary School that wasn't part of a junior classroom 10 years ago. Whilst this is advantageous, the teachers concurrently also need to ensure our children are accelerated to reach (and possibly for many of them surpass) the curriculum levels expected for their age.

As parents we need you to work alongside us in supporting your child with this journey. Talk to them about anything and everything to develop their vocabulary and understanding of the world around them. Play with them, read to them, help them with their Maths Brick Walls as well as hearing their reading each night and signing their reading logs. Make a game of working on their known sight words (if you have been given some), or help them learn spelling words (for our older Y1 and Y2 pupils). Support them when doing their Seesaw activities, as well as making positive comments about the work they share. Help them view learning as a fun, ongoing, part of life.

Education is sometimes likened to a triangle where the child, parents and teacher are the 3 corners. Each of us needs to do the best we can in order to keep our corner sharp and as a result have the very best learning outcomes for our tamariki.

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Maw

Deputy Principal/Junior Area Leader

