

At West Harbour School we stand tall, proud and confident, continually discovering and applying new learning. Together we encourage our learning community to realise its unique talents and aspirations.

Teachers' Strike Day: This is taking place this Thursday, 16 March. The school will be closed for learning on this day and we thank you all for your support of our teachers.

Message from Vicki Hitchcock re the strike action:

My personal thoughts on the upcoming industrial action by teachers and primary principals

The decision to strike is something teachers and principals always grapple over. Unfortunately our collective bargaining has not been as successful as it needs to be! It has been a drawn out process and looks like it will continue to be one. The current collective agreement expired back on 30 June 2022. In the current negotiations any back pay would only be taken to December 2022.

I am aware of the challenges and frustrations this strike and any future ones may and will cause. But the bottom line is that this critically important profession is in crisis and has been for some years. Covid just sidetracked us badly! If we cannot attract a lot more good people, then who is going to teach your children and grandchildren now, next year and in the future! Several things to consider-

- Bright young people are not selecting teaching as a profession because of the low salaries when they enter schools and develop their expertise. To spend three years gaining a degree necessary to be able to teach and accumulate student debt as you train- to then find you earn just over \$50 000(Q 3 \$53 358 to be exact) must be crippling both financially and emotionally. A quick survey of our staff shows the range of their own student debt to be from \$20 000- \$60 000! The payments are taken out automatically once you start earning. Imagine student loan repayments coming out automatically from that low salary!*
- If you already have a degree and decide to go into teaching later, you can do an intense one year course at Massey University. Because you now have two higher qualifications, your starting salary will be.... Wait for it.... Q3+ \$55 948!*
- It then takes twelve years of continuous service to reach the top of the scale -Q3 \$85 490/ Q3+ \$90 000. Once at the top of the grade, the only way you can earn more is through promotion to Principal, additional qualifications or management units (which are allocated to each school based on roll number). Or from increases through collective bargaining at the end of the three year cycle (which we are trying to achieve now!).*
- Both in New Zealand and internationally, there are large numbers of teachers in the older age demographic who will be retiring within the next few years. Where are the replacements for all that experience?*
- There are an increasing number of students entering our schools with challenging learning and behavioural issues. These students need extra support through staffing and resourcing. Where is these extra staff coming from?*

I love this job! My late Mum used to always say 'It's not a job; it is a vocation' I currently work with a great team of committed professionals. But the staffing issue does weigh heavy on this ageing soul!! As a grandma to three gorgeous little girls and a wee grandson on the way, I have genuine concerns about the

IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday 16 March - School closed

Friday 24 March - School photos

Monday 24 April - First curriculum refresh professional development day. School closed for learning

Tuesday 25 April - ANZAC Day, School Closed

Wednesday 26 April - First day of Term 2. First day of student conferences

Thursday 27 April - Student conferences

challenges ahead in their school years with the loss of experienced teachers who mentor new ones into the profession. If there are any!!!!

*Yours respectfully
Vicki Hitchcock*

Term 1 Reports/Booking for Conferences: Reports are being sent home at the end of this term. More information about the student conferences will be coming soon. You will each receive a school code that allows you to log on to the conference sheet and choose a time slot for your appointment. Conferences will be taking place in the first week of Term 2 - Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 April.

Class Photos: Photos will be taken on Friday 24 March. More information will be sent home to you later this week giving details of how to log in to the Photolife site to order and pay for your child's photos.

Easter Raffle: We are continuing with our fundraising for the camps this year with an Easter raffle. Tickets go on sale next Monday, 20 March. Tickets will cost \$1.00.

Expression of Interest: We are looking for expressions of interest from people who wish to be considered for teacher aide/learning support work with several young students with high needs. Please contact vickih@westharbour.school.nz

Swimming Sports: Following the postponement of the swimming sports last Friday they were held on Monday of this week. The children who took part had a great time and I would like to thank all parents, caregivers or other family members who came to cheer their child along during the races. Thanks also to Scott Buckingham for his organisation of the day.

SCHOOL CLOSURES: On the following dates West Harbour School will be closed:

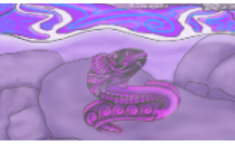
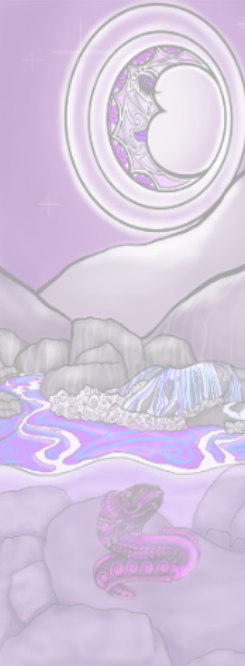

Thursday 16 March - Teachers' Strike Day

Friday 07 April - Good Friday, start of school holidays

Monday 24 April - Curriculum Refresh Professional Development Day

Tuesday 25 April - ANZAC Day

West Harbour School Whanau Houses

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| Rangi | Tiriwa | Manutewhau | Waitemata | Waitakere | Whenua |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Rangi - Orange

Tiriwa - Green

Manutewhau - Purple

Waitemata - Blue

Waitakere - Grey/Silver

Whenua - Yellow

