

Kia Ora Tatou,

What a fantastic day yesterday! Excellent conditions, wonderful parents, great kids and terrific staff all coming together for a valuable experience at Vinegar Hill Reserve. One of the bus drivers commented to me, "I don't know of any other schools that do this stuff anymore. How lucky you kids are". I absolutely agree with this sentiment. It takes effort, some boldness and a bit of vision and drive to enrich our pupil's lives. EOTC trips like yesterday are badly needed, and excellent events. All part of the Triple A Values treatment. Thanks to all our parents for helping make this possible!

I am very pleased to report that we are settling into our routines really well. Our pupils are so good at being friendly and asking people to be included, that our twenty new kids are quickly finding their place and have people to hang out with at break times. The teachers all tell me how well their new classes are going, and how well routines are quickly being established. I love going through the classes and seeing what our students are up to and catching up on their interests too. Halcombe is a wonderful, dynamic place to be!

One thing that is evident right now, is the need for all students to get a good night's sleep. Being summer, families are obviously getting out and doing lots of activities. However, it's so important for children to get lots of sleep too. It is needed regardless of age, and good routines for sleep are vital. Thanks for making sure that kids go to bed at a good time (7pm?) and that they don't take devices with them. If the brain is well rested, it is set up for much better learning. If your child needs encouragement to go to bed, feel free to let them know that they can come and see me - I am happy to back you up!

Have a great week (and a great sleep)!

Alastair & the 'H' Team.

Agri Kids

Best wishes to our teams who are travelling to Stratford on Saturday to compete in the Regional Agri Kids competition:

Red: Perez, Phoebe, Zoe

Black: Lee, Lucy, Harry

White: Scott, Gus, Josh

Pink: Ollie, James, Heidi

Blue: Hunter, Anika, Phoebe

Purple: Blake, Max, Brock

Attendance Reminders

We have always had high expectations for attendance at school, and have been generally well supported in this by parents. The rules around how we record absences against a child's name have been tightened. We are no longer able to justify what may have been okay in the past. We are only able to accept absences for sickness/medical appointments, a tangi/funeral, or a child representing the school or their club in sports events.

School Bus

Please see the note below from the Ministry of Education regarding the use of school transport:

Caregivers are responsible for getting their children to school, which may involve getting the children to and from their nearest bus pick-up and drop-off location. Please either stay with your children while they are waiting for their school transport in the morning or keep in contact with them to make sure that they are picked up safely. It is recommended students and caregivers be at the bus pick-up/drop-off locations five to 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.

Senior Camps Coming Up

Best wishes to R7 and R8 for their camps which are taking place next week, at the Kawhatau Outdoor Education Centre. Camps are a real strength of school life at Halcombe, and we are sure our students will enjoy bonding with their classmates and teacher, having adventures and making memories.

Scholastic Book Club.

The latest catalogues are out now. You have the option of ordering online directly from Scholastic via their LOOP website or pay cash at the office. See the catalogue for order forms and details. Orders close on **21 February**.

Basic Facts Testing: Year 4-8

Quick recall of basic facts is a fundamental skill in maths. Those who know their basic facts are able to apply their skills to all areas of maths, and achieve more success. Without doubt, those students who do not have immediate recall of their basic facts, struggle to make progress in maths once they reach Year 6. This is something teachers keep a very close eye on. We test our students on their basic facts three times a year, and parents will be familiar with seeing the results in KIT Books. We test on up to $10 + 10$, and 10×10 , and their reversals. If they haven't already, students will be completing this test before the end of the week. When you look at the results, please take note of any areas your child needs to improve. We expect students to be scoring 90% or above in all four operations by the end of Year 6. We have a number of students in Year 7 and 8 who are not there yet. We are hopeful parents across all year groups will support their child to practice their basic facts at home - some ideas are attached. Don't wait until the teacher discusses this at 3WCs, get started now! We cannot overstate the importance of this. Thank you for your support.

Vinegar Hill River Trip

We had a great day yesterday! Many thanks to the army of parents who came with us and helped transport, guide, lifeguard, and enjoy the family atmosphere that was created. Being a country blessed with a lot of water, this is an important experience to have again and again for our tamariki. Being water-confident, and also **aware of danger** is something all people need to know and think about. Helping our 5-13 year-olds to realise their limitations, but also the enjoyment of using their skills and having fun is something that we pride ourselves on as a school. Well done all!



HELPING AT HOME WITH BASIC FACTS

Basic Facts are fundamental to achieving success in maths. They form the building blocks for higher-level math concepts. When a child masters their math facts, these concepts will be significantly easier and the student will be better equipped to solve them faster. Basic facts need to be KNOWLEDGE, like children knowing where they live, or how old they are or $1+1$ - they just KNOW it and don't have to think about it or work it out.

If your child is younger than Year 6, we want to see them develop their known facts: start with addition, then subtraction, then multiplication and finally division.

Examples from our tests are:

Add up to 10 + 10	Multiply up to 10 x 10	Subtract up to 10 - 10	Divide up to 100 ÷ 10
$5 + 9 =$	$7 \times 7 =$	$10 - 3 =$	$28 \div 4 =$
$10 + 3 =$	$7 \times 9 =$	$8 - 1 =$	$10 \div 5 =$
$5 + 1 =$	$6 \times 6 =$	$7 - 5 =$	$40 \div 8 =$
$3 + 9 =$	$6 \times 9 =$	$8 - 0 =$	$72 \div 9 =$
$4 + 8 =$	$8 \times 9 =$	$6 - 1 =$	$30 \div 5 =$
$3 + 0 =$	$9 \times 1 =$	$7 - 2 =$	$48 \div 6 =$
$3 + 3 =$	$8 \times 8 =$	$6 - 0 =$	$42 \div 7 =$

- Division facts are the most difficult for children to learn quickly and off by heart.
- Teach children how to divide by turning the equation around, then multiplying eg $48 \div 6 =$ can be worked out by multiplying $6 \times \square = 48$. This starts to build a 'family of facts' eg. $3 \times 4 = 12$, $4 \times 3 = 12$, $12 \div 4 = 3$ and $12 \div 3 = 4$.
- In multiplication start with $1x$, then $10x$, $2x$ and $5x$. Move on to $4x$, $3x$, $6x$, $7x$, $8x$ and lastly $9x$.
- Use the words 'groups of' instead of 'multiply' or 'times' to begin with eg. 4 groups of 5 = 7 groups of 3 =
- Practice basic facts often. It's not much use doing a whole lot for the first two nights, then nothing for the next week. Learning basic facts takes time and it takes LOTS of practice. Little and often is the key.
- There is nothing wrong with learning basic facts by 'chanting' or rote learning.

FUN WAYS TO LEARN BASIC FACTS:

- Learn them in the car - look at number plates and add or multiply the first two numbers, or subtract the lowest number from the highest.
- Use playing cards or dice - add or multiply the numbers together. Cards and dice can be used in many ways to help consolidate learning in basic facts.
- Write the facts on cards with answers on the back. Sort into two piles of known and unknown.
- Teach the patterns and connections eg. If I know 5×5 , then I must know 5×6 , because it's just 5 more. This leads easily to more difficult facts, for example if I know 2×3 is 6, then $20 \times 30 = 600$.
- Find apps that reinforce basic facts. Choose carefully - some of them are a waste of time. Limit this screen time to five minutes at a time, perhaps twice a day.
- Look for the 'rules' eg. if multiplying by 5, the answer will always end in 0 or 5. So if I multiply by 15 or 35, the answer will also end in 0 or 5.
- Make up word rhymes for the key unknown facts eg. six eights are forty eight, I saw the bull jump over the gate; eight eights are sixty four, we love Richie McCaw, seven nines are sixty three, there's a monkey up that tree.

Whatever you do - keep it fun and keep the pressure off if it starts to affect their attitude to maths.

If you need any more suggestions about how to help your children with learning their basic facts, please ask your child's teacher. They will be able to help you.