

Taita College

188 Eastern Hutt Road
Lower Hutt 5019
New Zealand
Phone: 04 567 8728
Email: secretary@taita.school.nz



Tītiro Whakarunga Ki Ngā Puke

Kia ora e te Whānau

As we conclude what has been a very successful and productive Term 1, we celebrate the incredible achievements of our students.

Thank you for your continued support, and please remember that Term 1 officially ends this Thursday, 2nd April, with an early finish at 1.30pm, and we look forward to seeing all our students return for Term 2 on Monday, 20th April.

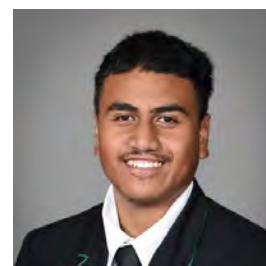
Celebrating Our Head Student – Jeduthun Siaopo

We are proud to share that our Head Student, Jeduthun Siaopo, has been selected to take part in the IGNITE Pōneke programme run by Toi Rauwhārangī Massey University College of Creative Arts at Massey University.

IGNITE Pōneke is a creative programme for rangatahi aged 15–18 from across the Wellington region, offering opportunities to learn about music production, event management, and the creative industries.

Jeduthun attended the Launch Day yesterday (Sunday) and is already having an amazing experience meeting other young creatives and learning from industry professionals.

We are incredibly proud of Jeduthun for representing our school and pursuing his passion for music and the creative arts. Congratulations, Jeduthun!



ASB Polyfest

On Saturday, 21 March, 6 student Poly Leaders had the privilege of flying to Auckland for the day to attend the ASB Polyfest. This annual competition, set across six different stages, celebrates all the cultures of the Pacific and more. Students fundraised to pay for their flights and had a fantastic time. We will look to replicate this in 2027 for future Poly Club leaders.

Absences

Wow!! 66 Students had 100% attendance this term! **100%** Congratulations and thank you for the continued support. Our Goal for 2026 is to have 60% of students attending 90% of the time. We are presently tracking at 55%.

Following on from the good news, you will be aware the Ministry of Education is now tracking student absences. Please ensure that you contact the school on 04 567 8728 to inform of an absence.

Please note that our Attendance Strategy can be found on our school website

<https://taita.school.nz/vision.html>

This outlines the processes which occur when students are absent for 5 or more days per term. Medical absences are categorised as being away from school by the Ministry of Education.

We are very fortunate to have the support of Awhi attendance services who are here to help students to attend school regularly.

Building Update

The new admin block is well under way but there has been a discovery of asbestos within the building so this will need to be removed safely. Please see the attached document from the Ministry of Education regarding the removal of asbestos. The removal work will take place from 09/03/2026 to 27/03/2026. Please be aware that the entrance driveway will be changing over the holidays.

Rendered drawings of the new Administration block and the Wharehenui can be seen below.



2026 Europe Trip

Due to the unforeseen issues that are happening overseas it was decided by the external agency, TravelBound, to defer the trip until things have settled down. The new date for departure will potentially be September.

Mobile Phone Rules: A Refresher

We have seen an increase in the number of students using phones during the school day.

Following the regulations solidified last year, our "Away for the Day" policy remains strictly in place.

- Phones must be **switched off and in bags** from the first bell (8:50 am) until the final bell (3:15 pm).
- This includes interval and lunch times.
- If you need to contact your child urgently during the day, please call the office on 567 8728
- If your child is caught with their phone they will need to hand this into the school office to be collected at the end of the day. If caught with their phone over 3 times a parent will need to collect the phone from school.
- No headphones are allowed to be worn during school time.

Please find attached information from the Te Ihuwaka/Education Evaluation Centre

Uniform

A reminder that we expect our students to be in perfect school uniform, every day. Blazers are a compulsory uniform item however during Terms 1 & 4 students are only required to wear them for formal occasions and assemblies. During Terms 2 & 3 blazers must be worn daily.

Please ensure that you have named your child's uniform so if lost we can return to the correct student.

Important Term Dates

Thursday 2nd April	Last Day of Term 1 - Early finish at 1.30pm
Tuesday 7th April	Girls Noho for Poly
Thursday 9th April	Boys Noho for Poly
Friday 17th - 19th April	1st XV Rugby trip
Monday 20th April	First Day of Term 2
Monday 27th April	ANZAC Day Observed (Public Holiday)
Thursday 30th April	Board of Trustees Meeting - 5.30pm

You can keep up to date with events during the year by following us on FaceBook or Instagram or by viewing the Taita College website.



Insights for parents and whānau: Cell phone rules and how you can help

The Education Review Office (ERO) found that removing cell phones from class has led to increased focus, improved academic outcomes, and a reduction in bullying in New Zealand schools. This guide gives suggestions and tips for how parents and whānau can help their children experience these benefits.

ERO looked at the removal of cell phones from New Zealand classrooms

Like many other countries, New Zealand has put rules in place around students using cell phones at school. ERO reviewed the difference that these rules have made. We gathered over 10,000 survey responses, ran focus groups, and interviewed board members, school leaders, teachers, students, parents and whānau, and education experts.

What is the 'Phones Away for the Day' policy and how does it work?

This policy, introduced in Term 2 2024, says that students should not access or use their cell phones at all during the school day – including break times. Schools design their own rules and consequences to make sure this happens.

Exemptions to this rule are allowed for health, disability, and learning support needs. Teachers can also allow students to use phones in class for a specific educational task.

Why does removing cell phones from the classroom help?

- **Focus:** There is increasing evidence that simply having a phone nearby can reduce students' attention and 'working memory', which are critical for learning. Around eight in ten secondary leaders and teachers told us that removing phones from school has improved students' ability to focus on schoolwork.
- **Learning:** There is also growing evidence of the benefits that removing cell phones has on achievement. In our review, two-thirds of secondary teachers said students' learning has improved.
- **Behaviour:** Over three-quarters of secondary teachers and leaders say restricting cell phone use has improved classroom behaviour.
- **Bullying:** Just over two-thirds of secondary leaders say that bullying has decreased.
- **Social interactions:** Teachers report that students are now talking more and having good social interactions during breaks – now that they aren't on their phones.

Why we need parents and whānau to help

Students need to buy in to the rule

- We found that students are more likely to follow the cell phone rules when they understand why they have been implemented and how the rules benefit their learning.
- If not, they tend to see the rules as ‘unfair’. Three in ten (30 percent) of the students who use their phone at school break the rules because they disagree with them.

Mixed messages from parents and whānau make things harder

- Messaging parents and whānau is the number one reason students break the rules.
- We heard that while some parents and whānau understand prohibiting phone use can reduce distractions, others still expect to be able to reach their children, even during class time. Over 85 percent of teachers say parent support helps them implement phone rules.
- In schools where parents resist phone rules, students are nearly twice as likely to break them. For example, parents and whānau complaining to the school about their child’s phone being confiscated, gives mixed messages to students.

“I’d given zero consideration to the fact I was perhaps encouraging rule breaking. It’s so natural for me to prioritise replying to my kids, I’d not stopped to think that most of the comms could wait until they were outside of school.”

PARENT

Practical steps

- 1) **Talk to your child about the *benefits* of keeping their phone off at school.** The rule is about improving focus, learning, behaviour, social interaction, and reducing bullying.
- 2) Talk with your child to **decide on how to communicate without texting or calling** them on their cell phone. For example, you could email their school account, or agree that any urgent messages will be delivered through the school office from now on. You can also ask the school about their ideas and processes for leaving voicemails or texting staff.
- 3) **Support the school’s enforcement of cell phone rules.** This is about making sure what you say to your child aligns with the school’s messages, including when the school puts consequences in place.

Want to know more? The full report is on ERO’s website www.evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/do-not-disturb-a-review-of-removing-cell-phones-from-new-zealand-s-classrooms



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga
www.ero.govt.nz



Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

