



Questions and Queries



What time will school start and finish?

The school day will start at 8:30am and finish at 2:30pm.

Will there be rain shortened days?

We do not see a need to shorten the day in the event of rain unless we are advised by the Ministry of Education (eg. Significant weather that is hazardous).

How will you support the transition of our children from early learning to school?

Upon enrolment we will make contact with each family and arrange an interview where we hope to learn as much about your child as possible. We are also hoping to work closely with the early childhood centres and kindergartens so that we can develop a transition programme during Term 4 of this year. Next year we will establish close links with these centres to develop our flying start transition programme.

Will there be a school uniform?

After consultation with our community a decision was made to have a school uniform. We are currently working with providers to ensure we can offer a uniform that is durable, easy care, flexible and is cost effective. We hope to have more information at our community information evening.

Will there be before school and after school care?

We recognise that this is an area that would support working families and are currently exploring options for after school care with external providers. We hope to have an update for parents early in Term 4.

Will facilities be open to the public after hours?

We believe the school has the potential to be an extension and hub of the wider community. We hope that community members will want to utilise our facilities (playgrounds, courts, fields, passive and active play areas) outside of school hours. There may be some hire age costs associated with some of our facilities.

Will the school be ready for the start of next year?

Absolutely. We will be ready for your children on the first day of the 2019 school year. We do acknowledge that due to delays we will not have all spaces finished but we are working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that we can cater for every learner, within our zone, that wants to come to Taumata School. It is going to be an exciting time as we welcome our foundation students who get to make their mark in history.

Why will the classrooms look so different to what we experienced when we went to school?

What we know about learning has evolved significantly over time and the spaces we have at Taumata School reflect that new knowledge. We know that our spaces will be agile so that they can adapt to the desired learning and teaching. We will have smaller break out spaces and intimate areas for independent, one-to-one or peer group learning, medium sized spaces for small group learning and larger spaces that allow for exploration and peer interaction.

Do these spaces make teaching more effective?

We believe that when teachers work together, share responsibility for learning and the learners, share expertise and strengths and see each other in action every day teaching practice improves and standards are raised. From experience teachers who work in these environments acknowledge that it is different but also exciting and builds their own knowledge and capacity.

How many teachers might be working in a studio?

Our studio spaces are the equivalent of 6 traditional (single-cell classrooms). Each studio will have two hubs (one at each end). There will be up to 3 teachers working in each hub with 3 class equivalent groups of children.

What about New Entrant students? Won't they need a more intimate space?

We believe that the key to successful transitioning is a focus on developing strong relationships with our teachers and supporting exploration of the environment so that children feel safe. We also know that the design of our spaces are not too dissimilar to many early childhood centres. We will have areas defined for certain types of learning and will have spaces designated to support transition for those who may initially find space overwhelming. From experience we find that these children very quickly adapt and enjoy the learning opportunities and flexible spaces.

What will the learner to teacher ratios be?

One misconception with flexible and innovative learning spaces is that there are lots of children with fewer teachers. The Ministry of Education sets a ratio of learners to each teacher and this is the same for single cell (traditional) classrooms and innovative learning environments. In the early years the ratio of teacher to students is lower due to the greater need for teacher support and explicit teaching.

How will you teach your teachers to teach in these new learning environments?

We have had an amazing opportunity to recruit a dedicated and passionate group of teachers who understand what an amazing opportunity this is. We will be working alongside these teachers for all of Term 4 designing our learning curriculum, developing the desired culture that will positively impact student achievement and well-being, exploring what research indicates is best practice, exploring future focused thinking and planning for our learners on day one next year. This is a truly unique opportunity – one not afforded to those new schools who have opened before us. We felt strongly about having our teachers on board early and the Ministry of Education has recognised this accordingly.

Will the hubs be all one-year group?

This is unlikely. The traditional model of teaching was focused on efficiency and conformity and obedience. The industrial model was about a 'one size fits all' approach to producing a 'batch' of students where the common factor was their age (or as Ken Robinson says "date of manufacture"). Today we know that each learner is unique and in order to personalise learning we need to focus on stages. There may well be multi-level groupings in hub, however we hope to limit that to no more than two levels.

Will these spaces work for learners with special needs?

The fundamental expectation of every teacher is to know your learners well. This includes our learners with additional/special needs. It is challenging to say that any space (traditional or innovative) will work for everyone, however we believe that our spaces provide us greater flexibility to adapt to the needs of our learners. Noise can be a concern for some students however the MOE has new specifications around acoustics in our new learning spaces and there is greater management of noise through the very fact that there are more adults in a space. At Taumata School we are also fortunate to have a designated space to support those learners who may become overwhelmed – however we are committed to as much inclusion as appropriate for the learner.

What is experiential learning?

At Taumata we believe that children are naturally inquisitive and that we learn best through experiences that are real, relevant and require an emotional connection. If you recall some of your most memorable experiences of learning they are often attached to a particular experience, or person that you made a connection with. Therefore, it is important to us to value the impact of emotions, connections and real life experiences. In the early years we value the natural learning that occurs through play, exploration and discovery. We value the social interactions, oral language and development of competencies such as risk taking, collaboration, perseverance, creativity. As we get older we value the natural curiosity of our learners to explore new things and environments, to search for solutions to problems, and to create new knowledge that can be shared with a real audience. Therefore, our Taumata Curriculum will provide opportunities to engage with real, relevant and emotional learning that will be focused on developing the capacity to learn.

Will reading, writing and maths still be important?

Absolutely. These are the foundation blocks for all learning and part of our learning to learn focus. We will still determine the stage that each learner is at and meet their needs. We will also give equal value to the other areas of learning in our curriculum.

How will our children transition from this style of learning to secondary?

A number of our secondary schools are exploring ways to align with the approaches of primary schools and what research suggests is effective. We will also be working with our contributing secondary schools to ensure our children are well equipped. We also know that working in ILE exposes children to a variety of teachers and helps them to develop learner agency. Learner agency is about having choice, but is also about developing the power to act on choice and understand the responsibility of exercising that choice – these are capacities for lifelong learning.

How important will sporting opportunities be? Not just for competitive?

Leading an active lifestyle is important to us and also acknowledged in the vision and values of the New Zealand Curriculum. We place great value on the skills that children learn through sport and physical activity and as such are committed to offering as many sporting and physically active opportunities as we can. We will also be looking to utilise the many talents and strengths of our community in this area.

What about ICT? What role will it play at Taumata School?

We know that digital literacy is necessary for learners of the future and as a school we are committed to using ICT and digital technology as a tool to support learning. We will be exploring ways to include computational thinking, designing and developing digital outcomes, robotics, and coding.

Will Taumata School be a BYOD (Bring your own device) school?

No. We are committed to providing the necessary tools and devices that support our digital learning focus.

Will Taumata School be a 1:1 device School?

One of our learning principles is collaboration and whilst we value the use of digital tools we don't feel that one device for every child is necessary. We also feel that in the early years the use of 1:1 device use does not align with the value we play on real and relevant learning experiences.

Will you value the other learning areas? Eg. Dance, Drama, Science

Yes! The shift from a National Standards narrow lens has once again opened up the broader curriculum. This is exciting and as we develop our Taumata Curriculum we are committing to bringing life to all curriculum areas.

What values will Taumata School have?

We expect that every learner will be a good contributing citizen and believe that this comes from inheriting moral values like respect, integrity, honesty, compassion, and empathy. We know that these start in the home with a child's first teachers (parents and whanau). Therefore, these are expectations. In addition to these we value collaboration, creativity, authentic learning, learner agency and grit.

How can I support Taumata School to provide a world-class learning experience for my child?

We are very keen to develop positive partnerships and connections with our community. We ask you to believe in our school mission and vision and help us to be the best possible learning environment for your child and The Lakes/Pyes Pa Community. We recognise that childhood is a period of intense physical, emotional and psychological growth. Children are learning what behaviour is acceptable and appropriate in different situations. They are also learning how to get along with their peers and adults. We ask that you help us to have appropriate expectations of your children (socially and academically) so they can develop the necessary skills and attitudes for a successful future.