



**SOUTHWELL  
SCHOOL**

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## **Term 1 2026**

### **Years 3 & 4 Learning Overview**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to a new school year with your child being part of the Year 3 and 4 syndicate. It will be an exciting term of learning, fun and relationship-building.

#### **Introducing the Year 3 & 4 Team**

Mrs Kirsty McDonald (Dean) 4KMD:

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Mrs Barb Nicholson 4BN:

[barbara.nicholson@southwell.school.nz](mailto:barbara.nicholson@southwell.school.nz)

Whaea Linda Simon 3LSi:

[linda.simon@southwell.school.nz](mailto:linda.simon@southwell.school.nz)

Miss Jess Field 3JFI:

[jess.field@southwell.school.nz](mailto:jess.field@southwell.school.nz)



Your child's homeroom teacher will be your first port-of-call should you have any questions or queries and can be reached on the above email address, or in person at drop off and pick up times. **Teachers are generally available in their classrooms from 8.00am onwards.** If your child needs to be at school earlier than 8am, please note that the library is open, but there may not always be a teaching staff member present. We look forward to establishing a strong partnership between students, teachers and parents.

#### **Useful things to note about Years 3 and 4**

##### **Week Ahead**

This will be emailed to Parents and Caregivers every Friday from the School Administrator. It is important that you are receiving this and that you read it carefully, as it has useful information about what is coming up in the week ahead. Teachers will also send out an email each Friday with information on the following weeks.



### Learning Conferences

Learning Conferences will take place in Week 3, on the 9th-12th of February. Please book online as soon as possible to get your preferred slot. The link has been emailed to you from the School Administrator. Learning Conferences are a great opportunity for you to get to know your child's teacher, and for the teacher to learn more about your child. Teachers will be involved in collecting assessment data to inform their teaching and your input as a parent will be invaluable to our staff as part of this process. A short questionnaire will be sent home with your child in Week 2. Please bring this to your conference.

### Uniform

It has been lovely to see our learners ready for learning and smartly dressed in their uniforms. To remain sun-safe, our school hats are compulsory in Terms 1 and 4 and all children must wear their hats during break times. Please help us to return uniform items to the right family by making sure all items of the School uniform are clearly named.

### Lunches/Snacks

Named water bottles are important especially during hot weather so please send a drink bottle along each day. Students will be able to access their drink bottle at any time of the day. We will have a fruit and vegetable break each morning in addition to their morning tea. Please provide your child with some sliced / peeled fruit or vegetables, or a small container of raisins or other dried fruit. **Please NO NUTS (we are a nut free school).**

### Timetable

Your child's timetable will be in their school diary, which will come home in the next few days. Please check for the days that your child needs to have their library books and PE uniform at school. Year 4 students are required to wear covered shoes in Science so will need their PE shoes on these days.

You will notice on The Week Ahead that we have labeled our weeks as Week A or Week B. This is to help us run a balanced timetable across two weeks and maximise our resources. For example, there may be PE on a Monday and Thursday in Week A but a Tuesday and Friday in Week B. Bringing gear on the right day will help students to keep organised.

## Homework

Homework at Year 3 and 4 is designed to allow flexibility for learners with differing needs and abilities, reinforce current learning, and to help your child develop an understanding of the importance of developing routines and managing their time. It is also an opportunity to share learning with parents. **Homework should be a stress free situation.** Tasks should be relatively straightforward and students should be able to complete these independently in most cases. Students will be issued with a homework diary and this is a great way to communicate with the homeroom teacher if need be.

All students are set Reading homework four nights of the week (Monday – Thursday). In Year 3 and 4 this will be a mixture of personal reading, library books, and school readers. Most children in Year 4 will be encouraged to read a chapter book. This can be from our school library, the Public library or a book from home. In class, we will also be reading decodable or authentic texts with the children. These will generally come home on a Thursday for you to reread and discuss the text with your child.

In addition to Reading homework, students will have **optional**, additional homework, which can be completed to assist with their learning in Mathematics and Spelling. This homework will be set by your child's class teacher or Mathematics teacher and will reflect the learning they are doing in class. The option of Mathematics and Spelling homework will be phased into your child's homework during Term 1 - once initial assessments have been completed.

If homework is becoming stressful or students are struggling to work within the time-frames, please contact your child's teacher through diary or email. We understand that our students learn at different levels and paces. We also understand that our students are busy learners with activities outside of school hours, so contacting your child's teacher helps us to balance the workload.

The recommended time allowance for **reading** each night is:

Year 3      15 minutes

Year 4      20 minutes

The optional tasks are in addition to this suggested reading time.



## Morning routines

Children are welcome to come into their classroom **from 8.00am**. Before this time the teachers are preparing for the day and having meetings. Between 8.00am and 8.25am is a time to foster independence - we would expect to see children unpacking their own book bag and getting organised for the day by themselves. Please try to have your child at school before 8.20am.



For those children in Year 4, we notice this can be a big step up as your child takes even greater responsibility for their belongings and getting set up for the day. The bell will ring to start the day at 8.25am and we encourage children to arrive at least 10 minutes before, giving them time to set up for the day and interact with their peers.

### **Communication**

Please email or write a note in your child's diary to let teachers know of any appointments, after school care, change of usual person picking up your child, etc.

The diary will be read and signed each day by the teacher. Your child will write their reading homework and reminders in their diary. Please read and sign this each night. This will let us know that your child has completed their reading. Each week we will focus on one of the Southwell School Values and we may ask you to write a sentence stating when you have seen your child display this value.

We know that at times, parents will have a change of plan with regard to end-of-day pick up arrangements. If you need to communicate a change to your child, please let the office know first and they will contact the classroom teacher on your behalf, as we are not always able to check our emails during the day.

### **Physical Education (PE)**

Your child will have 2-3 PE sessions a week taken by specialist PE teachers. This will be a mix of swimming and other physical activities. If for some reason your child is unable to do PE please write in the diary and their PE teacher will take note of this.



### **Learning in Year 3&4**

In the first few weeks of school we will be working on building a positive classroom culture by developing relationships with others, being resilient and having a growth mindset. We will also base much of the learning around camp (Week 4 for Year 4, and Week 5 for Year 3). We will work on meeting challenges, cooperation and personal achievements. Later in the term we will focus on Grandparents and their stories, to coincide with Grandparents' Day.



### **Reading**

Reading in Term 1 will focus on reading to children, reading with children and reading by children. Guided reading programmes will focus on reinforcing decoding strategies and developing reading comprehension skills.

### **Writing**

Writing programmes this term will cover a variety of genres, including recounts from the holidays, writing letters and poetry. We will build up our writing stamina and teach students the tools to enhance their writing content.



Steps web, a computer based literacy programme, will be used to assess and determine which spelling strategies your child needs to develop. These will be reinforced with class and group activities in the classroom, and are also part of their homework programme.

### **Maths**

In Mathematics, we will be learning through Structured Maths. Students will be learning about number, with a particular focus on addition and subtraction as well as problem solving strategies.

The Maths Buddy (Year 3), or Mathletics (Year 4) online tools will be a part of the class programme, as well as being available for children to use outside of school to develop Mathematical skills.

### **Big Idea for Inquiry**

Our Big Idea this term is **How We Organise Ourselves**. The children will be looking into the communities they belong to and how they have responsibilities within those groups, to achieve a common purpose.

### **Physical Education - Mr Johannes Botha and Miss Bex Lovell**

#### ***All for one and one for all!***

Students will explore the concepts of teamwork when playing together and how their actions can affect others.

#### ***Swimming***

Students will continue to develop their swimming competence by exploring swimming strokes appropriate to their ability level and working toward showcasing their progress at our School Swimming Championships.

#### ***To infinity and Beyond (Team Invasion)***

In this unit, students will explore the concepts of invasion, focusing on developing the ability to utilize space effectively to evade an opponent or to close down space when marking.



### **Christian Education – Reverend Matt Pickering and Reverend Canon Neale Troon**

The students will begin a series of lessons looking at the basics of the Christian faith, as we journey towards one of the main festivals in the Christian calendar, the festival of Easter. As students interact with the Biblical story and participate in related activities, they can discover God's love for all people and how we can look after God's beautiful world.

### **Library – Mrs Julie Huggins**

The focus throughout the year in the Library is to respond to the needs of individual classes and students, with specific reference to developing key library skills, encouraging a love of literature and supporting teachers to build up a toolkit of inquiry skills. Each library session will include some time for children to choose and read books and also a short teaching session. Term 1 will specifically focus on learning to use the library effectively and respectfully.

### **Languages and Culture - Mrs Grant**

Students will embark on an exciting journey into the Japanese language and culture, Nihon (日本) and Nihongo (日本語). Through fun songs, games, and hands-on activities, they will learn basic Japanese communication and customs. By exploring different cultures, students will develop an appreciation for how language connects people and cultures, celebrating their learning on Grandparents Day.

### **Drama (Year 4) - Mrs Angela Walker**

Students are introduced to the key drama techniques of facial expression, gesture, movement and voice. They work collaboratively in a range of group situations in order to create and perform dramatic scenarios. Later this term, the children will have the opportunity to audition for the 2026 Year 3&4 Production “The Wizard of Oz”.

### **Music (Year 4) and Performing Arts (Year 3) - Mrs Julia McIntyre**

Students will work on continuing to develop a tuneful singing voice. They will continue learning to sing a range of folk songs individually and with others, using mainly the pitches so, mi, la, do and re (year 4 only). Students will be able to sing the solfa of those pieces (Year 4 students will use the related hand signals fluently). Students will also recap the rhythms learnt last year of ta, ti-ti, za, tika-tika and too. Year 4 students will also learn songs for the Year Four Production.

### **Science (Year 4) - Mrs Raewyn Steffert**

This term, Year 4 students are stepping into the shoes of a scientist to discover what it means to work safely and effectively in a laboratory. We will be learning to “think scientifically” by sharpening our powers of observation, and using our senses to gather information about the world around us.

Parents are reminded that students need to wear covered shoes when they come to the Science laboratory. As sandals are worn in Term 1 and Term 4, this is something to remember on the day your child has Science. Shoes used for PE are suitable.



We are looking forward to a year of learning and fun with your child.

Kirsty McDonald (Dean), Barb Nicholson, Linda Simon, Jess Field  
**Year 3 and 4 Teachers**