



Term 1, 2026 Year 6 Learning Overview

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome back to Southwell School for 2025 and the Year 6 Syndicate. Hopefully your child has enjoyed the first few days with us and is excited about their first term in Year 6. The following letter outlines a few specifics about Year 6 that will be useful to know.

There are four Year 6 classes. Our teachers are:

Mr Darren Bryan (Dean) - 6DB
darren.bryan@southwell.school.nz
Mrs Liz Donald - 6LD
liz.donald@southwell.school.nz
Mrs Laurene Merritt 6LM
laurene.merritt@southwell.school
Miss Paige Walker - 6PLW
paige.walker@southwell.school



All classes work together to plan and implement consistent learning programmes across the year group, while catering for the individual strengths and needs.

Below are important notices regarding upcoming events and useful things to note:

Week Ahead

This will be emailed every Friday to all Southwell parents from the School Administrator. It is important that you are getting this and you read it carefully, as it has important information about what is coming up in the week ahead. The School's Weekly Themes can be found here [School's Weekly Themes](#).

Timetable

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.

Komodo

Student wellbeing is central to what we do at Southwell. We have a network of support to help us engage with our students to achieve good outcomes. We add to this network by partnering with Komodo, a wellbeing survey platform that can help us with levels of student wellbeing. It is also another avenue that students can use to 'check in' with their teacher. We have been using this successfully for the last few years. Wellbeing surveys are sent out fortnightly, starting after Camp, it will not be compulsory for students to complete these. Here is a link to an [information sheet about Komodo](#).

Learning Conferences

Learning Conferences will take place in Week 3 on the 9th-13th of February. Boarder's conferences are on Friday, 13th 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. A short questionnaire will be sent home with your child in Week 2. Please bring this to your conference.

Specialist classes

Please check for when your child needs to have their P.E.Gear and Library books. Please also note when Science and Technology lessons are. On these days students will need to have their sports shoes as they need to be wearing closed shoes in the Labs.

Sport

Trials and practices start in Week 2. Year 5/6 sports trials are scheduled for Tuesday 3rd February and Thursday 5th February. Once the sports programme is underway children should bring their Sports gear on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If the weather is inclement, coaches will supervise teams in their classrooms until normal collection times.

Sport practice days and times

Tuesdays 3.30—4.20pm

Thursdays 2.30—3.20pm

NB: there is no after-school sports training in Week 3 due to Learning Conferences.



Uniform and Behaviour- Offline and Online.

Please refer to the [handbook](#) for correct uniform details. Please note that we have discussed correct uniform, hairstyles and attitude with the Year 6 students. We have also shared our [Code of Conduct](#) with them so the children are aware of the expectations and attitudes we require in order for everyone to maximise learning. Please discuss with your child's teacher if you have further questions.

School hats are compulsory in Terms 1 and 4. All children must wear their hats during break times. Please ensure your child brings their hat to school each day this term or leaves it hanging on their hook at school. Please make sure all items of school uniform are clearly named. This is very important.

Communication with your child

If you are needing to communicate with your child *during* the school day, we ask you to call or email the office and the message will be forwarded to the Homeroom teachers. **Students do not have access to their phones during the day as they are required to leave them in their bags.** We also remind you that students need to sign out at the office if they are leaving the school grounds during school time. They are also required to be wearing full school uniform.

Sunscreen

Whilst we have sunscreen available in each room, it is a good idea to apply a layer in the morning at home so children are well protected at the beginning of the day.

Homework

All homework will be recorded in Google Classroom that students are able to access at home. The amount of work given over the course of the week will be able to be completed within 30 minutes of work per night on average. Homework will typically include Reading and Mathematics, with occasional tasks from other subjects, depending on the teacher.

Stationery

Each student has been issued with a stationery pack to start the year with. More stationery items can be purchased through the office. Class teachers have copies of an order form that students can use and these are then charged to school accounts. As teachers, we have also found that it is helpful if students bring in a cheap pair of headphones to keep in the classroom to assist with audiobooks and text to voice apps on the computers. These need to be named. It is not recommended that students bring expensive or gaming headphones as these can easily be lost or broken.

Brain Food

Every morning at 10am we have a "brain food break". Please allow your child to pack an additional healthy snack such as fruit. A reminder to please avoid nuts and nut products.



Boarders are able to take extra fruit from the boarding house before school for their brain food break.

School Hours

Children will be supervised in the classroom from 8.00am onwards and the school day finishes at 3.20pm. Any children that are not collected by 3.30pm will be supervised at After School Care in the Library.

Just Read

Southwell values reading for pleasure, and there is a huge amount of research which extols the value of reading for pleasure. As such, this year we have timetabled 10 minutes a day for all children and staff across the whole school to just read. Children should still be encouraged to read at home, but we want to get the message across loud and clear that reading is non-negotiable.



Camp

Camp for Year 6 is coming up in Week 5. We will stay at Lake Taupo for 4 nights from Monday, 23rd February to Friday, 30th February. More information including a timetable and what to bring can be found on the school website. Click [HERE](#) for the 2026 Camp Gear List. Please feel free to talk to your child's classroom teacher if you need more information.

LEARNING IN YEAR 6

We will be starting the year with two Transdisciplinary Themes for Year 6 as part of our IB curriculum framework.

The first is "**Who We Are.**" In Year 6, this theme will run throughout the whole year. Students will explore this through an inquiry into what it means to be an IB Learner, examining the Learner Attributes and their own identities as individuals and as part of a collective. They will focus on physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health and well-being; relationships and belonging; and learning and growing.

The second Transdisciplinary Theme for Term 1 is "**Sharing the Planet,**" an inquiry into the interdependence of human and natural worlds. In Year 6, we will specifically look at ecosystems. We will use our Year 6 Camp to investigate Lake Taupō as the main water resource for the Waikato region.

We will also be focusing on the school values of Caring, Excellence, Integrity, Creativity, Resilience, and Respect.

These Transdisciplinary Themes will be reflected throughout all curriculum areas. As such, I have included a brief outline of the learning that will be taking place this term for your information.

LEARNING IN TERM 1

Reading – Year 6 Teachers

We are looking at reading for enjoyment, finding books that are a good fit and exploring a range of different genres. In teaching sessions, the focus is on understanding the main message and purpose of the text and tailored to the learning needs of the individual students in the class.

Writing – Year 6 Teachers

We are using different stimuli to encourage and inspire our writing and setting individual goals. We are looking at the structure of different types of writing and writing for purpose and in Term 1 this will be mainly recounts, letters and writing that supports our big idea.

During Year 6, the handwriting focus is on writing stamina and legibility. We are refining handwriting to ensure it is fast and effortless. This ensures your child is ready to handle the heavier writing workloads of Intermediate and High School without their hand slowing down their thinking.

Mathematics – Year 6 Teachers / Reverend Pickering

Students are looking at the Number strand with particular focus on place value and the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Emphasis is placed on using these in practical situations and with word problems. Mathematics classes are grouped according to learning needs.

Science – Mrs Steffert

This term, Year 6 students will delve into the world of ecosystems and get an understanding of the interdependence of all living and non-living things. We will focus on freshwater environments, linking our classroom learning to real-world observations during our upcoming camp at Lake Taupo. Students will take a hands-on approach to assess the health of a waterway by examining biological indicators alongside chemical and physical factors. Finally, we will examine the bigger picture by considering how human activity can impact ecosystems, empowering students to understand their role in protecting our local waterways.

Healthy Choices– Mrs Bradding

This term, our focus will be on Our Body, Our Ecosystem and in particular how what we eat affects our health and wellbeing, particularly looking at our gut microbiome. We will build foundation cooking skills, looking at the basics of food handling and hygiene, as well as making safe and sensible choices when working in the kitchen. Our Year 6 akonga will work in our school kitchen gardens to maintain these and utilise the produce that comes from these.



Physical Education

Frisbee vs. Golf

Students will explore a variety of frisbee throws to enhance distance, accuracy, and control, culminating in the application of these skills in Frisbee Golf and Ultimate Frisbee. This will also indirectly develop the fundamental skill of catching.

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 Sports.

Just let me play!

Students will have the chance to simply enjoy participating in physical activity, whether revisiting a previous activity, discovering something new, or playing old favourites.

Christian Education – Reverend Pickering

This term students will consolidate their knowledge of Jesus and the Bible, and engage with the key ideas relating to the seasons of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Drawing on the Bible and Christian literature, students will evaluate what meaning and relevance these historic events might have for us in our modern world.

Music – Mrs McIntyre

Students will be working on establishing a tuneful singing voice through learning a range of songs while also learning to play three or more chords on the Ukulele. We will also be listening to and discussing a range of Ukulele performances.

Drama- Mrs Walker

During Term 1, Year 6 students learn to use the theatre conventions of freeze-frame, mime, narrator, roleplay and slow motion to create simple dramatic narratives within a range of genres. They work collaboratively in group situations and take part in a variety of student driven performances. Later this term, Year 6 students will be able to audition for the 2026 Opera, “Annie”.

Art – Mrs Wing

The Year 6 students are learning about the elements of art and the building blocks used by artists to create an artwork. Each lesson they will develop an art technique using a variety of mediums. The students will create a series of artworks based on the art techniques being taught.

Pottery – Mrs Wathen

This term, students are learning how to use the tools, routines, and procedures in the pottery room. They'll explore a range of basic techniques such as joining clay, building forms, adding surface marks, and glazing their finished pieces. Students will also be introduced to the pottery wheel, extruder, and slab roller as they develop confidence working with clay.

Languages and Culture - Mrs Grant

Gakusei (students) will embark on an exciting journey into the Japanese language and culture — Nihon (日本) and Nihongo (日本語). As part of this experience, they will (virtually) travel to Japan, visiting key cultural highlights and experiencing the country's modern infrastructure and transport systems. *Gakusei* will learn basic Japanese communication and customs during their travels.

Library – Mrs 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 a short teaching session. Students in Year 6 will be asked to step outside their reading comfort zone at opportune moments throughout the year. Mrs Huggins will work alongside students and their classroom teachers to ensure that students have suitable books for the classroom Just Read programme.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the classroom teachers. Thank you again for your support.

Kind regards

Darren Bryan,
Liz Donald
Laurene Merritt
Paige Walker

Year 6 Teachers

