



Term 1 2026 **Year 7 Learning Overview**



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to 2026 and to Year 7 at Southwell School. Thank you for choosing to entrust your child to this exceptional place of learning. A special welcome to all our new families—you are now part of a wonderful community, and we look forward to getting to know you in the year ahead.

Introducing the Year 7 Team

Room 17 – Tamsyn Riggins (Dean) - 7TR

tamsyn.riggins@southwell.school.nz

Room 18 – Joel Fleming – 7JF

joel.fleming@southwell.school.nz

Room 19 – Di Hazlett – 7DH

diane.hazlett@southwell.school.nz

Room 20 – Bridget Hawthorn – 7BH

bridget.hawthorn@southwell.school.nz

Room 21 – Rachel Peterson - 7RP

rachel.peterson@southwell.school.nz

Room 22 – Gayle McLean – 7GML

gayle.mclean@southwell.school.nz

One of these teachers will be your child's homeroom teacher. If you have any matters you wish to discuss, please contact your child's teacher first. You can do this through email or by phoning the school office – 07 855 2089. Effective learning begins with a positive partnership between students, teachers, and parents.

Outlined below are several important notices regarding upcoming events and key details relevant to Year 7.

Week Ahead

This will be emailed every Friday to all Southwell parents by the School Administrator. It is important that you receive and read this carefully, as it contains key information about 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 well-being is at the heart of everything we do at Southwell. We have a strong network of support to ensure our students feel safe, connected, and able to thrive. As part of this, we partner with Komodo—a wellbeing survey platform that helps us monitor student wellbeing and provides students with another way to 'check in' with their teacher.

We have used Komodo successfully for several years. Surveys will be sent out fortnightly, beginning after Camp. Participation is encouraged but not compulsory. Here is a link to an [information sheet about Komodo](#).

Learning Conferences

Learning Conferences will take place in Week 3, from 9–12 February, with Boarders' Conferences held on Friday, 13 February. Please book your appointment online as soon as possible to secure your preferred time. A booking link has already been emailed to you by the School Administrator.

Learning Conferences provide a valuable opportunity for you to get to know your child's teacher and for the teacher to learn more about your child as a learner. A short questionnaire has been sent home with your child—please complete it and return it to school before your scheduled conference.

Sport

Trials and practices will begin in **Week 2**. Year 7/8 sports trials are scheduled for **Tuesday 3 February** and **Wednesday 4 February**. Once the sports



programme is underway, students should bring their sports gear to school every **Tuesday and Thursday**. If the weather is inclement, coaches will supervise teams in their classrooms until normal collection times.

Sport practice days and times

Tuesdays 2.30—3.20pm

Thursdays 3.30—4.20pm

NB: there is no after-school sports training in Week 3 (Thursday 12th February) due to Learning Conferences.

Specialist classes

Please check when your child needs their P.E. gear and library books. In addition, please note that on days when Science and Technology lessons are scheduled, students will need to bring sports shoes, as closed shoes are required in the labs.

Uniform and Behaviour - Offline and Online.

Please refer to the [handbook](#) for correct uniform details. Please note that we have discussed the correct uniform, hairstyles, and attitude with the Year 7 students. We have also shared our [Code of Conduct](#) with them, so the children are aware of the expectations and attitudes we require for everyone to maximise learning. Please discuss this 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.

In addition, please make sure all school uniform items are clearly named, as this is very important.

Communication with your child

If you need to communicate with your child during the school day, please contact the school office by phone or email. Your message will then be forwarded to the Homeroom teacher. Please note that **students do not have access to their phones during the school day**, as phones are required to remain in their bags. We also remind you that students must sign out at the office if they are leaving the school grounds during school hours and must be wearing full school uniform.

Homework

All homework will be posted on Google Classroom. Parents will be invited to join their child's Online Classroom, allowing them to stay informed. The Year 7 homework guideline is 45 minutes per school night. This is designed to help students establish positive habits and develop strong study skills for the future. Please note that homework will be assigned every Wednesday and due the following Wednesday. This 7-day window provides families with the flexibility to manage busy schedules or utilise the weekend if preferred. Homework will

typically include Current Events, Keyboard Skills, Reading, and Mathematics, with occasional tasks from other subjects depending on the teacher.

Stationery

Each student has been issued stationery to start the year. More stationery items can be purchased through the Uniform Shop. 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 it helpful if students bring in a pair of cheap headphones to keep in the classroom to assist with audiobooks and text-to-voice apps on their laptops. These need to be named.

Brain Food

Every morning around 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 can take extra fruit from the boarding house before school for their brain food break.

School Hours

Children will be supervised in their classrooms from 8.00am onwards. The school day finishes at 3.20pm. Any children who have not been collected by 3.30pm will be supervised at After School Care in the Library.



Camp

You should have already received a comprehensive information letter regarding Y7 Camp 2026. A copy can be found [HERE](#).

Learning in Year 7

This term, our Year 7 PYP inquiry explores how media influences our thoughts, feelings, and well-being.

Through the transdisciplinary themes *How We Express Ourselves* and *Who We Are*, students will examine the central idea that **media has both intended and unintended consequences on well-being**.

Students will analyse a range of media, including advertisements, music, visual texts, and digital content, to understand how messages are created and how they can influence behaviour and emotions. They will also learn to think critically about media messages and reflect on their responsibilities as both consumers and creators of media.

Writing - Year 7 Teachers

Students will be learning to plan, draft, and edit their writing using a variety of skills to enhance their work. They will be motivated to write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

Reading - Year 7 Teachers

In the initial stages of the Reading Programme, teachers will focus on getting to know their students as readers by understanding their reading habits, behaviours and abilities. Following this, students will develop and practice a range of comprehension skills to deepen their understanding of texts and grow as confident, capable readers. This year, we are introducing "Just Read," in which students will spend 10 minutes every day after lunch reading for enjoyment.

Mathematics – Mrs Riggins, Mr Fleming, Mrs Hawthorn, Mrs McLean, Mr Walch, Mrs Peterson.

We have 7 Mathematics classes which are grouped according to learning needs. These classes are based on data and information that has been gathered from last year and the start of this year. We use PAT and e-asTTle assessments to help us place students in appropriate classes. There may be some movement between classes in the first term but classes are fixed from Term 2. During Term 1, students will learn effective strategies to help them solve Number problems. Mathematics classes will start on the 3rd of February once we have completed some initial assessments.

Physical Education – Year 7 Teachers, Mr Botha, Mr Norman and Miss Lovell



What in the World!

Students will explore a variety of national and international cultural games, focusing on transferring their skill sets, including tactical understanding, into unfamiliar games. Reflecting on the question, "How can I use my sporting knowledge in games I don't know?" Covering Ki O Rahi (Aotearoa), Flag Football (USA) and an individual inquiry.

Swimming

Students will refine their swimming techniques and reflect on their performance by exploring swimming drills appropriate to their ability level. They will work toward showcasing their progress at our School Swimming School.

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



Science – Mrs Voss

Our students will start the year learning how to work safely in the Science laboratory. They will go on to learn about how heat can move from one place to another and the mechanisms by which this occurs. They will then look at how insulation can be used to reduce this heat transfer.

Technology/Healthy Choices – Mr Williams/Ms Hazlett

The students will be learning to use innovation and creativity to solve problems, along with an inquiry into 'Healthy Choices for Life', looking at food choices and well-being.

Music – Mrs Albery

In Term 1, Year 7 students will develop their knowledge and understanding of music theory and will demonstrate and extend their learning by playing the keyboard. By the end of this unit, students will be able to perform a piece of music to their peers.



Drama – Mrs Walker

Students will be learning to structure dramatic narratives and represent their ideas through the techniques and conventions of Drama. This term, all Year 7 students will be able to audition for the 2026 Southwell Opera, "Annie". After Camp Week, students will begin working on the Year 7 class productions.



Art – Mrs Wing

This term, students will be drawing, painting, and creating artworks inspired by this year's *Dr Seuss* theme. Each lesson gives them the chance to explore different materials and techniques while building their skills, expressing their creativity, and making connections through art.

Pottery – Mrs Wathen

they bring *Dr Seuss*-inspired artworks to life. Early in the term, they will be introduced to the

wheel, extruder, and slab roller, learning how to shape and join clay while experimenting with surface textures and glazing. Each lesson helps students develop their skills, express their creativity, and enjoy the hands-on process of making.

Christian Education – Chaplain

In this term, lessons will be centering on the upcoming festival of Easter. This will involve analysis of Biblical stories and activities that will seek to contextualise Easter events into the modern context and the student's personal lives.

Library – Mrs Walch

Library for Year 7 students focuses on promoting a love of literature, browsing and issuing books of interest to themselves and also developing their inquiry skills. Students will be encouraged to borrow a book which they can enjoy during *Just Read* (after lunch daily), as well as reading material they can take home to enjoy. In terms of inquiry, the aim is to support what their teachers are working on in class, and these will be skills they can take with them into Year 8, secondary school and beyond.

Te Ao Maaori – Whaea Whetu

This term, our focus will be on developing an understanding about who we are and our place in the world. Students will write and recite a simple pepeha explaining who they are and where they come from. Tamariki will delve into local history, exploring the rich narratives of the Waikato region and in particular, Ngāti Wairere.

Languages and Culture - Mrs Grant

Gakusei (students) will explore Japanese language and culture — Nihon (日本) and Nihongo (日本語) — through the lens of media and its influence. Japanese travel influencers will guide students (virtually) as they travel across Japan, discovering cities, cultural landmarks, and lifestyle experiences. They will learn simple conversational Japanese and introductory written language to support their travels, and analyse how images, videos, and social media shape the way we think, feel, and the places we choose to visit.

We are looking forward to a fantastic year together.

Kind regards,

Tamsyn Riggins

Joel Fleming

Di Hazlett

Bridget Hawthorn

Rachel Peterson

Gayle McLean

Year 7 Teachers