



NPGHS NEWSLETTER

19 June 2026

Kia ora koutou katoa

You may have seen recent media coverage about proposed changes to New Zealand's secondary school qualification and assessment system. While some important decisions have been announced, many of the details are still being developed by the Ministry of Education and NZQA.

At this stage, it is important for families to know that NCEA remains a strong, credible, and highly valued qualification. Current students will continue to work towards NCEA, and universities, employers, and tertiary providers continue to recognise it as an important measure of achievement.

Changes are underway and the Government has announced its intention to move towards a new senior secondary qualification system over the coming years. The plan includes:

- Replacing NCEA Level 1 with a Year 11 foundational award with a stronger focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Introducing a new qualification structure across Years 12 and 13.
- Greater emphasis on assessment that reflects learning across whole subjects.

The proposed changes will be introduced gradually, beginning with Year 11 students in 2028, followed by Year 12 in 2029 and Year 13 in 2030.

While many have valued the flexibility of NCEA, we are told that the feedback nationally shows employers, parents, tertiary providers, and students themselves, recognise that they need a broad knowledge base to build on. The intention from those setting up the new assessment system is that it will provide a more coherent pathway for students as they move into tertiary study, training, or employment.

Importantly, however, assessment should never be the starting point. At the heart of education is quality teaching and learning. We believe assessment exists to support, recognise, and celebrate learning, not to drive it. Whatever the qualification structure looks like in the future, our focus remains on providing engaging learning experiences, developing deep understanding, and helping students build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to thrive.

For now, there is no immediate impact on current programmes. Many aspects of the proposed qualification system are still being finalised, and further consultation and development work is underway. As more information becomes available, we will keep our community informed. When the final details are confirmed, our focus will be on ensuring that both staff and students are thoroughly prepared. We are committed to investing in professional learning, adapting programmes where needed, and supporting students to succeed under any new assessment arrangements. We have been refreshing teacher knowledge by looking at high impact teaching strategies for two years now, and this is paying dividends in the classroom and in student outcomes.

Change can create uncertainty, but it also provides an opportunity to reflect on what matters most. Regardless of the assessment system, our commitment remains unchanged: excellent teaching, meaningful learning, and helping every young person go further than they thought possible.

Ngā mihi mahana
Jacqui Brown



Takitahi Day

On Tuesday 3 June, students and staff supported another highly successful Takitahi Day (non-uniform day), raising an impressive \$1452.20 for the New Plymouth Food Bank. The funds raised will allow the Food Bank to purchase the items they are most in need of for our community.

A huge thank you to everyone for your support through donations. Your generosity and cooperation helped make the event a wonderful success. We have already been in touch with the Food Bank, who have expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation for the support from our school community.



Celebrating Samoan Language Week & Pasifika Fusion

In the first week of June, we celebrated Samoan Language Week, an important opportunity to recognise and honour the rich languages, cultures and identities of our Pasifika students and families. At New Plymouth Girls' High School, around 4% of our students identify as Pasifika, sometimes alongside other ethnic identities such as Pākehā/NZ European or Māori. Our diverse community is something we value and celebrate, and Pacific language weeks provide a wonderful chance for all students to learn, and connect together, and to celebrate what makes each of us unique.

As part of Samoan Language Week, our Pasifika student group was invited to perform at Merrilands Primary School, helping them open their celebrations with traditional song and dance. Merrilands staff shared how much the tamariki enjoyed the performance, describing it as "an amazing way for us to kick off Samoan Language Week."

Throughout each Pacific Language Week, we acknowledge and celebrate the culture of the featured nation with activities including a special flag raising ceremony and often the singing of the national anthem by students and staff who wish to join. You can find out more about all Pacific Language Weeks [here](#).



Tonight, Friday 19 June, we have the eagerly anticipated Fia Fia Night. A Fia Fia is a Pacific celebration that brings people together through music, dance, food and cultural performance. It is a special opportunity for students, families and the wider community to celebrate Pasifika identity, culture and belonging in a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. We hope to share more about this evening in the next newsletter.

Our students are currently preparing performances not only for Fia Fia Night, but also for the upcoming Pasifika Fusion competition. Pasifika Fusion is a long-running secondary schools Pacific festival that celebrates both cultural performance and academic excellence, with categories including speech, debate, drama, poetry, visual arts and dance. The festival aims to empower Pacific young people to pursue and achieve excellence in education while celebrating their languages and cultures.

We are incredibly proud of the commitment and cultural pride our Pasifika students continue to show, not to mention their focus on school attendance so they meet the requirements for the trip. We warmly encourage families to come along and celebrate with us at Fia Fia Night.

Stay Active This Winter

At our school, we love seeing students getting involved in activities that keep both body and mind healthy. There are so many winter sports teams doing great things every week – even in the rain and the cold of winter. But keeping active doesn't have to just be about team sports.

Sport Taranaki highlights the importance of active recreation and getting active for wellbeing, enjoyment, and connection. Whether it's team sports, walking, cycling, running, going to the gym, or simply spending time outdoors, staying active helps us feel energized and connected to others.

Sport Taranaki made a great video (when the weather was clearly warmer) about staying active and it includes some of our awesome waka ama students, alongside other young people from around the region. They shared some wonderful kōrero about why they enjoy the sport, from being out on the water with friends to building fitness, teamwork, and confidence. Watch the video [here](#), and then plan your next outdoor adventure with your daughter or the young people in your household.





Drama Productions

Congratulations to our Level 2 and Level 3 Drama students on two highly successful productions presented over recent weeks as part of their NCEA programme. The Level 2 Drama class delighted audiences with “Wheeler's Luck”, a distinctly New Zealand rural comedy. The play follows an Auckland property developer who arrives in the small town of Bell End with ambitious plans for a hotel, casino and golf course development. As locals weigh up the opportunities and challenges such a proposal might bring, audiences were treated to an entertaining mix of humour, colourful characters and small-town charm.

The Level 3 Drama class took on the challenging “Blood Wedding” (Bodas de Sangre) by Spanish playwright Federico García Lorca. First performed in 1933 and inspired by a real-life event, this powerful tragedy explores themes of love, fate, family loyalty and conflict. The complexity of the script, its emotional depth and its cultural context provided students with a significant theatrical challenge, which they embraced with maturity and dedication.

Both productions highlighted the growth and development of our drama students. It was especially rewarding to see students who have been studying Drama since Year 10 showcase the skills they have developed over time, while also celebrating the courage and commitment of those who have taken up Drama as an academic subject for the first time this year.

Studying Drama offers students far more than performance experience. It builds confidence, communication skills, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and the ability to empathise with different perspectives. These are valuable lifelong skills that support success across a wide range of future pathways.

Most importantly, both productions were wonderful and highly entertaining evenings that showcased the impressive talent within our school. Thank you to the many families, friends and students who attended and provided such enthusiastic audience support. We were also delighted to welcome a group of students from Spotswood College to the Level 2 performance. Your encouragement and engagement helped make both productions memorable celebrations of student achievement.





Celebrating Musical Success

It has been an exceptional few weeks for music at NPGHS, with students showcasing their talent, dedication, and passion across a range of prestigious events.

Our Jubilate Choir recently represented the school at The Big Sing, joining choirs from NPBHS and Patea Area School for an enjoyable afternoon. The choir delivered a strong programme and was recognised with the Award for Best Performance of a Work Overall for their moving rendition of Taku Raumiri. We are incredibly proud of the commitment and musicianship demonstrated by every member of the choir.



Students also enjoyed remarkable success at this year's Chamber Music Contest. Of the 30 ensembles performing, almost half included NPGHS students, highlighting the strength and depth of our music programme. Congratulations to all who took part in what was a truly inspiring day of music-making. Special congratulations go to Year 9 student Angela Wang, whose ensemble was awarded First Place. We also acknowledge the achievements of Claire Frew, Paige Chatterton, Liliom Ridder, Yanis To, Imogen Den-McKay, Marie Wilkinson, and Angela Wang, whose groups received Highly Commended awards. We wish these students all the very best as they await news of possible selection for the Northern Regional Finals in Auckland. Further congratulations to Claire Frew and Paige Chatterton, whose ensemble earned the KBB Award for the best group featuring brass, woodwind, or percussion.



The celebrations started at the Taranaki Regional Final of Smokefree Rockquest, held in our School Hall. With 26 acts performing, the evening was a fantastic showcase of young musical talent. NPGHS students were well represented across six bands and two solo acts, contributing to an unforgettable event. A special acknowledgement goes to Lucy Swan, who performed as part of the NPBHS/NPGHS band Who's Johnson, which achieved an outstanding second place finish. Lucy and her bandmates now have the exciting opportunity to be considered for the national finals.

We congratulate all of our musicians on their achievements and say a particular thank you to Mrs Juliet Woller, HoD Music, and the team of tutors who help many of these students with their individual music lessons and their development as groups. Well done everyone!



Upcoming Events

Please check <https://npghs.bridge.school.nz/notices>, or the 'Coming Events' post on facebook, for even more information.

Every Monday in Term 2	Sports activities every Monday and Wednesday. Join Karaoke in the Music room every Friday lunchtime.
Sat 20 June	NZSS Cross Country Championships
Mon 22 to Fri 26 June	Tech Week
Tues 23 June	Whanganui High School sports exchange in Whanganui
Wed 24 June	TSSSA Senior 3x3 Basketball
Thurs 25 June	Year 12 Loves Me Not programme with the Police
Fri 26 June	Careers - NZ Defence Force Presentation at lunchtime
Sat 27 June	NPGHS Year 13 Ball
Wed 1 July to 11 July	Geography trip to Great Barrier Reef
Wed 1 July to Fri 3 July	Pasifika Fusion in Palmerston North
Wed 1 July	TSSSA Rugby League
Wed 1 July	Choir Workshop with the New Zealand Youth Choir
Thurs 2 July	2027 Student Leadership process begins with a leadership presentation to current Year 12 students.
Fri 3 July	End of first half year options for Y9, and end of Term 2
Fri 3 July	Next newsletter available. You can click here to see the current and previous newsletters.

2026 DATES

TERM 1

30 January - 2 April

TERM 2

20 April – 3 July

Mon 27 April Anzac Day (observed)

Mon 1 June King's Birthday

TERM 3

20 July - 25 September

Fri 21 Aug Curriculum Staff Only Day

TERM 4

12 October - 11 December

Mon 26 Oct Labour Day

Fri 20 Nov Curriculum Staff Only Day

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SCHOOLBRIDGE

'SchoolBridge' on app store

ICAS Competitions

ICAS is an online academic competition that is designed to assess students' higher order thinking and problem-solving skills in Mathematics, Science and Writing. Each assessment celebrates students' accomplishments by providing opportunities for recognition and development. Every student who participates will receive a printed certificate and an online results report. Top performers will be eligible for medals. We encourage you to consider entering your child into ICAS this year. Please click this [link](#) for further information.