

Welcome to 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa and welcome to the start of the 2026 school year. A warm welcome to new students, new whanau and to our new staff members:

Ms Hannah Barry-Goss Year 7&8 Teacher
Ms Bree-Ann Hodgkinson Junior Technology Teacher
Matua Rhys Thurston Kai Awhina (Te Reo Maori Focus)

We hope the summer break has provided time for rest, reconnection, renewal and reflection with whānau and friends. As we begin a new year, we are excited by the opportunities ahead and the collective energy that a fresh start brings. It is a good time to remind all of our school values of **Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Hirangatanga**, which continue to guide how we learn, lead, and care for one another.

In 2026, our strategic focus remains on **raising student achievement through high-quality teaching and learning**, while ensuring **student wellbeing and belonging** sit at the heart of everything we do.

Through **Manaakitanga**, we are committed to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments where every student feels valued and supported to succeed. 2026 is a year where we will continue to strengthen high-quality teaching and learning, deepen positive relationships, and ensure our school remains a place where every student feels known, valued, and supported to achieve their best. Our focus remains on creating learning environments that are engaging, inclusive, and culturally responsive, while maintaining high expectations for learning, wellbeing, and behaviour.

Through **Whanaungatanga**, we will continue to strengthen relationships — between students and staff, with whānau, and across our wider community. We know that strong, trusting relationships are essential for engagement, achievement, and positive school culture. We are proud of the dedication and commitment and care shown by our staff, the resilience and potential of our students, and the ongoing partnership we share with our whānau. Together, we will continue to grow a school where learners are confident, capable, and prepared to contribute positively to the world around them

Guided by **Hirangatanga**, we will maintain high expectations for learning, behaviour, and leadership. We encourage our students to take pride in their learning, challenge themselves, and strive for personal excellence, supported by teaching that is purposeful, culturally responsive, and future-focused.

A key and non-negotiable focus for 2026 is **student attendance**. The Ministry of Education is clear that **regular attendance (90% or more)** is critical to student achievement, wellbeing, and long-term success — and that **every day at school matters**. Our expectation is that all students attend school **every day the school is open**, unless there is a genuine reason for

absence. In 2026, we will be closely monitoring attendance, setting clear targets, and taking early action where attendance patterns are of concern. This focus reflects our commitment to **Hirangatanga** — maintaining high expectations and ensuring all students have full access to learning.

We also recognise, through **Manaakitanga and Whanaungatanga**, that some whānau face challenges that can impact attendance. Our approach will be firm, fair, and supportive. Where attendance drops below expectations, we will work proactively with students and whānau to identify barriers and provide support. This may include regular communication with form teachers and Deans, meetings with senior leaders, referrals to our pastoral and wellbeing teams, and engagement with external agencies where appropriate. We strongly encourage whānau to communicate early with the school if attendance becomes difficult — together, we can find solutions that keep students connected to learning.

School Focus 2026: BE THE CHANGE

Our school focus for 2026 is '**BE THE CHANGE**'. This is more than a slogan — it is a shared commitment to take responsibility for the culture, learning, and success of our school community. *BE THE CHANGE* means that positive outcomes begin with the actions, choices, and attitudes of each of us, every day.

For our school, *BE THE CHANGE* means setting high expectations and following through. It means providing high-quality teaching, consistent routines, and clear systems that support learning, wellbeing, and attendance. It also means modelling our values of **Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Hirangatanga** in how we lead, teach, and support students — being consistent, fair, and responsive in everything we do.

For whānau, *BE THE CHANGE* means being active partners in learning. This includes supporting regular attendance, engaging positively with the school, reinforcing expectations at home, and communicating early when challenges arise. Whānau play a vital role in shaping attitudes to learning, behaviour, and effort, and your support makes a powerful difference in student success.

For students, *BE THE CHANGE* means taking ownership of learning, behaviour, and choices. It means showing up every day ready to learn, treating others with respect, and striving to do your best — even when learning feels challenging. Students are encouraged to lead by example, make positive choices, and understand that their actions contribute to the success and wellbeing of the whole school.

At its heart, *BE THE CHANGE* is about moving from expectation to action. It is about choosing effort over excuses, responsibility over blame, and growth over comfort. Together, as a school community, we can create the positive change we want to see — one choice, one action, one day at a time.

Thank you for the trust you place in our school. We look forward to working alongside you throughout the year and sharing in the successes, challenges, and celebrations that 2026 will bring.

We wish your whanau a positive and successful start to the year.

Ngā mihi nui,
Whaea Jocelyn
William Colenso College
Tumuaki / Principal