

SMCS STARBOARD



Principal's Message

TERM ONE, WEEK SIX

Kia Ora Koutou,

I really enjoy the writing process, so I'm hoping my light-hearted message about digital chaos, community, and choosing connection wisely resonates for parents, students, teachers, and those among us who still haven't discovered the "Mute" button (your courage is admirable). I'll call this **"The Great Chat Group Circus"**, so wander with me through one of modern life's most peculiar creations: chat groups—the digital circus none of us realised we bought tickets for.

At first glance, chat groups seem harmless—cute, even. Like a basket of puppies.

Until you realise: one puppy is on fire, one is crying, one is eating the couch, and one has mysteriously added 87 new members without permission. And yet... there's something to learn from this circus.

Parent Chat Groups: The Olympic Sport of Oversharing

Parent chat groups from my experience seem to start innocently: "Does anyone know what time the game starts?"

Then suddenly you are knee-deep in a 47-message debate about the ethics of orange slices, three conspiracy theories about the school Wi-Fi, and a photo of a missing sock that could belong to literally any child in the Southern Hemisphere.

And of course, the classic:

"Is today the day they're meant to be at school?"

"No—that was last week."

"...Where are my children?"

Parent chat groups don't always solve the problem they set out to—and sometimes they quietly become the problem. But they also show us something: parents desperately want to get it right.

Teen Chat Groups: Chaos Powered Entirely by Vibes

No ecosystem on Earth is as volatile, complex, or utterly baffling as a teen group chat.

A typical scroll reveals: 185 unread messages, 97 memes, 14 instances of "???", 6 arguments whose origins are lost to humanity, and one accidental video call that terrifies everyone.

Ask a teen what happened and they'll confidently say:

"...nothing." Indeed. Just a tiny implosion of civilisation.

But beneath the chaos lies connection. Teens use chat groups to make sense of their world—even if none of us understand how.

Teachers in Chat Groups: A Comedy of Horrors

Teachers and chat groups are a complicated mix. **Boundaries matter—for everyone's wellbeing.** Joining one can feel like walking into a fireworks factory carrying lit sparklers. Because the moment a teacher's name appears, everyone suddenly behaves as though they're under observation by the Ministry of Education, the Police, and possibly NASA.

Then come the requests: "What time is camp drop-off?", "Is my child allergic to grass?", "Can you check if Mia left her blazer at school... it's 11:57pm?"

Teachers already carry a lot. Midnight blazer missions can wait until morning.

But these moments also reveal the trust families place in our staff—and that is something special.

The Heart of the Matter

Chat groups can be supportive, funny, convenient, and utter, electrifying mayhem (often before breakfast).

But they can also: blow things out of proportion, spread confusion, create conflict, and leave people feeling overwhelmed or exposed. So before posting, forwarding, screenshotting, or unleashing an emoji storm, it's worth pausing to ask: **"Is this helping... or am I just adding another clown to the circus?"**

Sometimes the wisest, bravest act is simply to leave the chat. Or at least... mute it forever.

But more importantly, let's remember this: behind every chaotic message is a human being seeking clarity, connection, or community. And with a little intention, we can make our digital spaces feel calmer, kinder, and more constructive.

So may your notifications be few, your messages be kind, and your digital circuses filled only with joy.

Social Media access for under-16s: a global shift

All of this humour sits alongside a much more serious global conversation about how our digital spaces shape wellbeing—for young people and adults alike.

Across Europe, Asia, and Oceania, many governments are introducing age-based restrictions or verification systems for social media. These changes reflect growing evidence that heavy social media use can contribute to mental-health challenges for young people and increase exposure to harmful content.

So what's happening overseas?

This conversation about chat groups, social media, and wellbeing isn't just playing out in our homes or schools. Around the world, governments are grappling with the same question many families are asking at 10pm while scrolling yet another message thread: how much access is too much, and who should be responsible for setting limits?

Countries such as Australia have already taken firm steps, requiring major social media platforms to actively prevent under-16s from having accounts, with real consequences for companies that fail to do so. France has introduced a digital age of majority at 15, placing a stronger emphasis on parental consent, while Denmark and Germany are exploring similar age-based restrictions. Elsewhere, Spain and Malaysia are progressing legislation that combines age limits with formal verification systems, reflecting growing concern about young people's exposure to harm in online spaces.

While the approaches differ, the message is strikingly consistent: digital spaces shape behaviour, wellbeing, and relationships—and leaving families and young people to navigate them alone is no longer seen as acceptable.

What are we doing as a school?

We've already taken steps to support student wellbeing with **bell-to-bell phone collection**. This ensures students can focus on learning without the distractions that personal devices—and social media—often bring. While we previously had expectations around phone use, the reality is that these were difficult to maintain consistently. The new system supports a calmer, more connected learning environment for everyone. (This aligns with New Zealand's **Phones-Away-for-the-Day** requirements for schools and the ERO's findings on learning benefits.)

What about us as adults?

It's easy to focus on young people's online habits without looking at our own. The challenges young people face online don't exist in isolation. Many of the issues—harassment, misinformation, and exposure to extreme or harmful content—are linked to the way digital platforms are designed, and these affect adults as much as they affect teenagers.

While age restrictions can help create safer online pathways for young people, lasting change also relies on platforms taking responsibility for the environments they create. Safer digital spaces benefit every user, regardless of age.

Ngā Mihi



Be kind

Boarding

Kia Ora Koutou.

There is never a dull moment in boarding and although this group of junior boarders don't look overly impressed in this photo, it's no surprise as this was taken after an early morning fire drill last week.

In return for a speedy exit, the Main House girls were able to go to breakfast in their pjs. Well done girls. Although fire drills are not great fun, (especially if you have got up for an early morning shower) they are an important health and safety requirement.

Next week we have a St Patrick's day dinner planned so all boarders in on Tuesday are reminded to return with something green to wear. We also have the Prefects joining us for dinner on Wednesday night which will be a great opportunity for girls to hear what each prefect role involves.

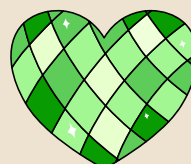
All the best to our touch rugby, tennis and cricket girls representing St Matthew's at Summer Quad this Sunday/ Monday at home.

Enjoy the weekend.

Jo



St Patricks day dinner/ quiz on Tuesday-
"Wear something green to dinner"



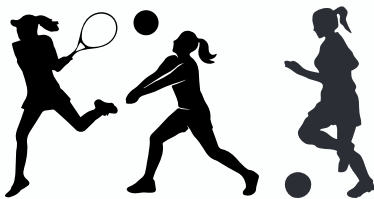
Integrated Activity Schedule

Integrated Activities Schedule

Week 7 - 2018
Monday Mar 16th - Sunday Mar 22nd

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Important Notices: Ovals	Deborah Percy (Voice) David Heath (Drums)	Deborah Percy (Voice)	Deborah Percy (Voice) Thomas Nikora (Piano)	Deborah Percy (Voice) Thomas Nikora (Piano) Kate Marshall (Piano/Flute)	Kate Marshall (Piano/Flute)		
Before school / 1st day	Summer Senior Pent @ SMS	Equestrian Takapora Inter School	Ext XI Cricket in Whanganui: Depart Tam Muhi House Return Appers 9pm vs Hawkes vs SMS & MHS	Wellington Regional Athletics Champs			
During school	1:15-2:00pm Shakespeare Practice (Hall)	1:15-2:00pm Shakespeare Practice (Hall)	1:15-2:00pm Shakespeare Practice, unless in Junior Choir (Hall)	1:15-2:00pm Shakespeare Practice, unless in Kapa Haka (Hall)	1:15-2:00pm Shakespeare Practice (Hall)		
	1:30-1:55pm Junior Dance Troupe @ Lazarus	Swimming pool open- lunch time	1:30-2:00pm Junior Choir Rehearsal (Music Suite)	1:30-2:00pm Kapa Haka (Music Suite)	1:30-2:00pm Bazz Band (Music Suite)		
	Swimming Pool open - lunch time		Swimming Pool open- lunch time	Primary Touch Rugby Training for both teams with Aunty @ SMS Field	Swimming pool open- lunch time		
			Cricket 2nd XI Game TBC	Swimming pool open- lunch time			
				Korahanga Sport 2-3pm			
After school	3:30pm - 4:45pm Tennis - lessons Starlings and Slicers	3:15pm SMS Cricket 2nd XI vs SMS Development 3:45pm @ SMS	3:15pm Primary Cricket Games SMS Primary Green vs Solway College Primary Girls 3:45pm (Van departs 3:35)	3:30pm-4:00pm Cricket training Development	3:30pm-6pm Tennis SMS Starlings vs SMS Hitters SMS Aces vs SMS Slicers		Free season Winter Sport Season 6.7-10am Netball Yr 9-13s SMS Gym Football Yr 9-13s groups SMS Field Football Primary 5-5.45pm with Izzy @ SMS Field Hockey Yr 9-13s SMS Turf
	4:15pm - 5pm Tennis lessons - Aces and hitters						
	5pm - 6pm Regional 1,2-3 Tennis Training						
	3:30pm - 4:30pm Cricket Training Primary Green and Gold	3:30pm-5pm Cricket 1st XI Training	3:30-4:15pm Senior Dance Troupe @ Lazarus	Touch Rugby @ Makoura College, FINAL TBC SMS Jays vs SMS Robins SMS Hawks vs SMS Ravens vs (Van departs 3:35pm & pick up 4:20pm) SMS Falcons vs (Van departs 4:30pm & pick up 5:10pm) SMS Eagles vs (Van departs 5:00pm & pick up 6:30pm)			
	3:30-4:15pm Swim Club @ St Matts pool		3:30-4:30pm Poly Group with Heaven in Music Suite	4:00-5:30pm Schola Cantorum (Hall)			
	Volleyball Inns @ Makoura College LAST 6 AMIS SMS Lynx vs KC B 3:40pm Court 1 (11th place) SMS Panthers vs WaiCol Gold 3:40pm Court 2 (11th Place) Van departs 3:20pm pick up 4:10pm SMS Cheetahs BKE	Volleyball Inns @ Makoura College LAST 6 AMIS SMS Leopards vs WaiCol Gold 3:40pm Court 1 Van departs 3:20pm pick up 4:10pm SMS 13s vs KC Sen C 4:05pm Court 3 Van Departs 3:50pm Pick up 4:30pm		Primary Touch Rugby SMS Primary Green vs SMS Primary Gold 5pm Field 1 (Van departs 4:30pm pick up at 5:30pm)			
	3:35pm-4:30pm Futsal @ WaiCol turf SMS vs WaiCol Yr 9 (Mrs Saitohiro collect Rathkaale 3pm, Main House 3:15pm Return 4:35pm)	3:30pm-4:30pm Touch Rugby Falcons & Eagles Training @ SMS Field		3:30pm-4:00pm Tennis Lessons Primary			
		Fun Tennis with Hannah Beetham 3:30-4:30pm @ SMS		4:00pm-4:40pm Tennis Lessons Secondary			
				6:00pm Regional 3 Tennis Games TBC (Girls to book van runs if required)			

Live Integrated Activity sheet - available on our website:
<https://www.stmatts.school.nz/parents/newsletters/>



Sports Results Week 5



Tennis	
Regional 3	SMS loss
Gold vs Martinborough	SMS loss
White vs Green	SMS Green win

Interclub	
Hitters vs Greytown Team 3	
Acers vs MTC White	SMS win
Starlings vs Slicers	SMS Slicers wi

Volleyball	
Leopards vs WaiCol 11 Blue	SMS loss
13s vs KC Senior A	SMS loss by default
Lynx vs MC Pango	SMS loss
Panthers vs WaiCol Red	SMS loss
Cheetahs vs KC Junior A	SMS loss

Futsal vs Chanel Mixed	9-5 loss
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Cricket	
1st XI	BYE
2nd XI vs Nga Tawa	SMS loss
2nd XI	BYE
Development vs Solanui	Abandoned due to weather
Primary Gold vs Solway College Primary Girls	SMS win
Primary Green vs Hadlow Girls	SMS loss

Touch Rugby	
Primary Green vs Gladstone Gladiators	8-7 win
Primary Gold vs Lakeview Blues	4-7 loss
Jays vs WaiCol Yellow	3-0 win
Ravens vs WaiCol Mixed	4-3 win
Robins vs KC Seniors	1-0 loss
Hawks vs Wharekura Teina	11-0 loss
Eagles vs Makoura Girls	4-1 loss
Falcons vs Chanel 1	6-2 win

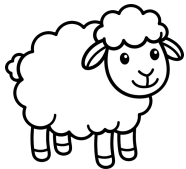
Around School

Volleyball

Our SMS Leopards and SMS 13s volleyball teams who played against each other this week at Makoura College. Leopards came away with the win but both teams had so much fun together!



Shearable Art



Congratulations to Allison MacKay on Fun Guy (fungi) and Fun Gal (fungal). Together they were the supreme winners at Art in Motion (South Island wearable art competition) and Fungal won first prize at the Shearable Arts Awards held at the Golden Shears this year.

Karaitianatanga / Christianity Alive

As we approach March 17th, our school will take a moment to reflect on the life of St. Patrick. While often associated with parades and green attire, Patrick's true legacy is one of profound whakapono (faith) and courage.

Originally taken to Ireland against his will, he later returned as a humble kaitiamaki (guardian) of the Gospel, demonstrating the power of forgiveness and the call to serve others. In our Anglican tradition, we remember him as a man who saw the Divine in every corner of the world.

In the spirit of Patrick's mission to spread the light of Christ, which exemplifies the Anglican Marks of Mission Teach and Tell, we look to Ngā Waiata (Psalms) 119:105:

"Ko tau kupu te rama ki oku waewae, te marama ki oku ara."

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

May we all find inspiration in Patrick's example – to be māhorahora (open) to God's calling and to act with aroha (love) toward all we meet this week. Here is his prayer:



Saint Patrick's Prayer

Christ be with me.
Christ be beside me.
Christ be before me.
Christ be behind me.
Christ at my right hand.
Christ at my left hand.
Christ be with me
everywhere I go.
Christ be my friend,
for ever and ever.
Amen

SMOGA Grants Now Open!

The St Matthew's Old Girls' Association (SMOGA) is delighted to open applications for two exciting student opportunities



Outward Bound Grant – A \$2,500 grant (incl. GST) toward an 8-day or 21-day Teen Outward Bound course.

Apply here: <https://forms.gle/GWIRJ4qiwJ4tCboK7>

Spirit of Adventure Grant – A fully funded voyage aboard the Spirit of New Zealand.

Apply here: <https://forms.gle/xDER84v7JRYi2b9Y8>

These grants are open to current students in Years 11–13 who are either daughters, nieces, or granddaughters of SMOGA members, or who join SMOGA as part of the application process.

For full details, please visit:

www.stmatts.school.nz/academic/scholarships/



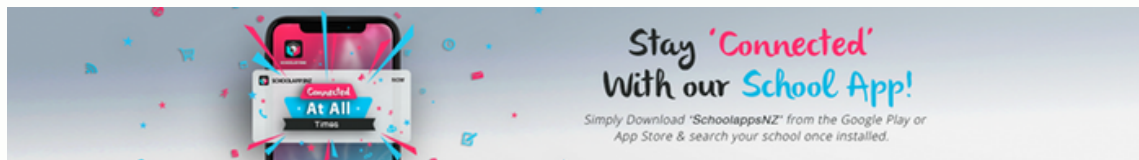
Friends of St Matthew's AGM and Special Constution Meeting

Monday 16th March

6.00pm – welcome, 6.30pm – meeting starts

We would love to see you there!

**Any queries or RSVP please ring Trish Thomson
ph: 0274605838**



Key Dates:

Monday 16 March – Equestrian Takaporo

Tuesday 17 March – St Patricks Day

Wednesday 18 March – 1st XI Cricket Kotiahitanga Cup

Mstn Primary Swimming Champs /NCEA PE Trip

Thursday 19 March – InterCol Tennis / Regional

Athletics / SC CR Field Day

Friday 20 March – Duke of Ed Silver & Gold Trip / Grip

Leadership Conference/ Rathkeale Open Day

Monday 23 March – Friday 27 March – Summer

Tournament Week

2026 Term Dates

Term One – Monday 2nd
February to Thursday 2nd April

Term Two – Monday 20th April to
Friday 3rd July

Term Three – Monday 20th July
to Friday 25th September

Term Four – Monday 12th
October to Saturday 5 December

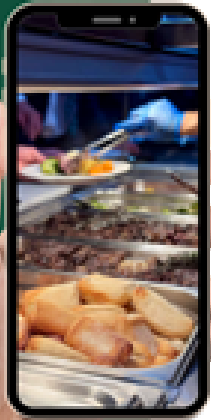




What's on the menu this week?



Launch the Camera App and aim your camera at the QR Code to scan it.



FUN QUIZ NIGHT & AUCTION

TEAMS OF 6 - \$120 A TABLE

A FUNDRAISER IN SUPPORT OF COBBLESTONES HERITAGE VILLAGE

20TH MARCH - 7PM

VENUE - GREYTOWN RUGBY CLUB
123 EAST ST, GREYTOWN

Cash Bar

Awesome prizes!

Light food provided

To register your team contact:
cobblestonesmuseumgreytown@gmail.com
or phone - 0211606088



School Holiday Production
St Matthew's Collegiate School



1920s Gangsters and Flapper Girls
Youth Theatre Ages 8-13yrs
14/04/2026 - 17/04/2026
<https://wairarapa.actingantics.com>

Hot Summer Days, Cool School Updates.



With our School app!

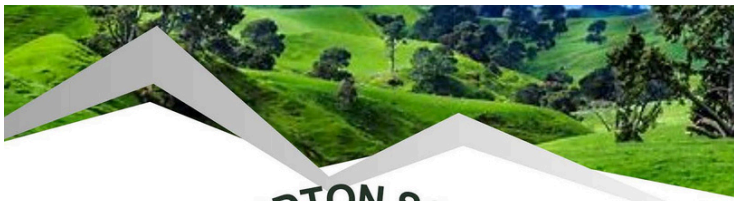
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Simple free download

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School Apps NZ
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ALFREDTON SCHOOL HILL COUNTRY WALK *and run*

28 MARCH 2026

Set in the heart of Alfredton, join us for a hill country farm walk or run featuring spectacular views & rural hospitality at its finest!

11km Short Walk/Run - 17km Long Walk/Run

Adults \$55 per person Youth \$30 per person
Catered Lunch Included

BBQ & Beverages at the finish line (cash only)

WWW.EVENTBRITE.CO.NZ



CASTLEPOINT RACING CLUB *Annual Beach Race Meeting!*



Saturday 21 March 2026

FAMILY FUN FROM 11AM

Spread out a picnic rug and enjoy a relaxed day at the beach. Children's games & LoveRacing.nz pony race to start the fun!



RACING FROM MIDDAY

First horse race approx. 12pm
Arrive early and settle in for the day



GATE ENTRY

\$5 per person

NO DOGS

Please leave pets at home

FOOD & DRINK AVAILABLE

Castlepoint Store
Berry Lush
Lulu's Taqueria
Levitate Coffee
Dao Thai & Asian Foods
Gracias Coffee
Salt Street Food



John Griffith & Co Ltd

Proud Sponsors of the Castlepoint Cup Race

www.castlepointracingclub.com

[@CastlepointRacingClub](https://www.facebook.com/CastlepointRacingClub)



PASEFIKA STUDY HUB THURSDAYS

Yr7 - Yr13

from 3:30pm - 5:15pm!

Yr7 - Yr13

Homework
to catch up on!
Need Help!

Professional
Assistance
provided

Snacks
Provided !!

Yr7 - Yr13

23 Intermediate Street

Contact: 0800 727 924

www.pw.org.nz



MRC

Manaia RC Raceway

Radio Control Car Racing

Solway Showgrounds Masterton

Next Meeting

22nd March

Practice on Tuesdays from 4.30 pm
weather permitting

Spectators free No dogs

info.manaia.rc@gmail.com