PRINCIPAL PĀNUI

Kia ora e te whānau

4th September 2026

The end of Term Three is always packed with assessments and preparation for the end of the year. Many of our students are aiming for the highest academic results, and our staff are working hard to provide them with practice opportunities, advice and support.

Exams can be challenging at first, and it's important that students take advantage of our preliminary exams to practice their strategies. This includes how they read and interpret the questions, how they structure their answers, and how they prioritise their time in the exam. These skills are just as important as knowing and remembering the content, and our teachers make sure that students get the chance to work out how to maximise their chance of success. We're immensely proud of the hard work our students put into their learning, and the high levels of success they enjoy.

Preliminary exams also provide an opportunity to get a derived grade. This means that if there was an unexpected serious event, like illness or a bereavement, this grade can be used by NZQA.

All students have their timetable for preliminary exams. If they've spotted any problems, or have questions or concerns, they should speak with their classroom teacher, their Dean, or Jo Sturme as Curriculum DP. All senior students will be on study leave, and are expected at school in uniform for their exams or practice sessions. We're looking forward to seeing the results from the preliminary exams and starting our work towards Senior Prizegiving in week four next term.

We're also looking ahead to the planned curriculum changes for next year. We rely on information from the Ministry and NZQA, and so we've scheduled our Teacher Only Days for November. That gives us the best chance at having full and final information from the Ministry. The changes do mean that things will look a little different in our subjects, our assessments, and the way we structure things in the school. We'll make sure we keep you updated, but it may mean that classes may run differently to past years.

Ngā mihi

Gwyneth

Feel free to contact me at
principal@rotorualakes.school.nz

THIS IS LAKES

Celebrating the moments, achievements, and spirit of our students.

FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2026

DANCERS SHINE AT DANCENZMADE

Lakes Talent Heads to Nationals

Twenty-three Lakes dancers took to the floor at DanceNZmade Rotorua, competing alongside around 260 students from 15 local schools. Lakes collected an impressive haul of solo, duo and team placings, with Kristin Conradie, Charlotte Hodge, Charlotte Woerd and Kate Ganotice selected for Nationals alongside Open Senior Team The Great Race. Charlotte Woerd and Kristin were also selected for New Zealand School of Dance intensive training, while Charlotte received a Golden Ticket for an NZ Gold Awards audition. Ngā mihi to Whaea Te Ao, Mrs Hodge, choreographers Sam Patangan, Cora Aichison and Amber Baker, and supporters Rotorua Civic Arts Trust and Hodgie's Services.

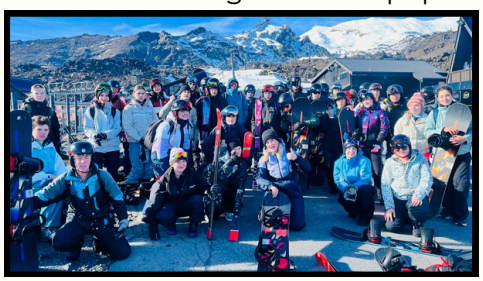
COUNCIL IN ACTION

Year 9s See Civics Firsthand

Students from 9 Pōhutukawa and 9 Kōwhai took Social Studies beyond the classroom with a visit to Rotorua Lakes Council. Tauira discovered just how much council work is woven into everyday life, learning about its many roles in the community, where rates go and what happens when Rotorua faces a Civil Defence emergency. The visit brought classroom learning to life while showing whanaungatanga and manaakitanga in action as people and organisations work together for their community. Ngā mihi to Ben Sandford, Bruce Horne and Raj Seneviratne for hosting our students, and to Matua Justin and Mrs Hodge for supporting the experience.

SENIORS HIT THE SNOW

From fundraising to Whakapapa



Months of fundraising paid off when 40 senior PE and Outdoor Education students headed to Whakapapa for two days on the snow. For many, it was their first experience in snow, bringing new challenges, skills and plenty of memorable moments. The trip was whanaungatanga in action, made possible by fundraising, donations and support from across the Lakes community. Ngā mihi to Whaea Sophie, Dave Whitby, Sandy Anaru and parent volunteers Amy and Pete for making the trip happen, and to Whaea Christina for her huge contribution to the fundraising effort. After such a successful first trip, the hope is to make it a Lakes tradition.

CHESS SUCCESS

Lakes Take Second at Regionals

Lakes came agonisingly close to the top spot at the Term 3 Rotorua Regionals, finishing second and equal on points with Whakatāne High School, with just half a point separating the top three teams. There was individual success too, with Michael de Lore finishing second overall and Koki Hara third, while Josh Ford produced the tournament's biggest upset by defeating a player rated more than 200 points above him. Ngā mihi to Mokoia Intermediate for hosting the tournament and to Whaea Christina for the passion and commitment she continues to give Lakes chess and its players. The result continues an impressive year for the team, with Nationals in Hamilton now waiting in Term 4.

We're authentic. We're real. We're pono. Mauria te pono.