



Strath Taieri

School

Information Book

2026



33 Swansea Street, Middlemarch



(03) 4643 798



www.middlemarch.school.nz

Staff



Ms Marlina Howden
Principal
principal@middlemarch.school.nz



Mrs Kirsty Lynch
Team Kārearea teacher
kirsty@middlemarch.school.nz



Mrs Robyn Todd
*Office Administrator &
Teacher Aide*
office@middlemarch.school.nz

Mrs Lauren Becker
Team Ruru teacher
lauren@middlemarch.school.nz

Support Staff

Learning Support Coordinator

Kim Maskill

Teacher Aides

Robyn Todd

Cleaner

Kaye Walker

Bus Drivers

Nola Tisdall

Annie Duncan

Kaye Walker

School Gardens & Lawns

Beryl Marshall

Key Information

2026 Term Dates and Holidays

Term 1	Monday 2nd February to Thursday 2nd April
Term 2	Monday 20th April to Friday 3rd July
Term 3	Monday 20th July to Friday 25th September
Term 4	Monday 12th October to Wednesday 15th December

Public Holidays

Waitangi Day	Friday 6th February
Otago Anniversary Day	Monday 23rd March
Anzac Day Holiday	Monday 27th April
Kings Birthday	Monday 1st June
Matariki	Friday 10th July
Labour Day	Monday 26th October

Office Hours

Robyn's hours are 8.30 till 12.30 each school day.

If you need to get information to students /teachers outside these hours please leave a message on the office phone or contact teachers through Hero.

School Hours

9-10.30am: Learning time

10.30-11am: Morning tea

11.00-12.30pm: Learning time

12.30-12.45pm: Eating lunch

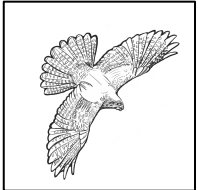
12.45-1.15pm: Playing time

1.15-2.45pm: Learning time

2.45pm: School finishes

Class Information

TEACHING COMPOSITION 2026

	Monday Rāhina	Tuesday Rātu	Wednesday Rāapa	Thursday Rāpare	Friday Rāmere
Team Ruru Room 3 Years 0-4 	Mrs Becker	Mrs Becker	Mrs Becker	Ms Howden	Ms Howden
Team Kārearea Room 5 Years 5-8 	Mrs Lynch	Mrs Lynch	Mrs Lynch	Mrs Lynch	Mrs Lynch

Classroom Information

We have 2 classrooms that operate 5 days a week.

The classrooms are named after native birds which live in the Strath Taieri area.

School Values

We have our special taonga at our front gate of pou pillars which were carved by former students and blessed by kaumatua of Puketeraki Marae at Kartitane, our partnership marae.



Developing Resilience



Taking Responsibility



Having Respect



Nurturing Empathy



Striving for Excellence

At Strath Taieri School we strive to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where every child can thrive. Our school values are at the heart of everything we do, guiding our actions and shaping the character development of our students.

Resilience: We believe in cultivating resilience in our students, teaching them to face challenges with determination and perseverance. We encourage them to bounce back from setbacks, develop a growth mindset, and embrace the learning opportunities that come their way.

Responsibility: We foster a sense of responsibility in our students, both individually and within the wider community. We empower them to take ownership of their actions, make positive choices, and contribute positively to their surroundings.

Empathy: We place great importance on empathy, teaching our students to understand and appreciate the feelings and perspectives of others. Through fostering empathy, we aim to create a compassionate and supportive community where everyone feels valued and understood.

Excellence: Pursuing excellence is a core value at our school. We inspire our students to strive for their personal best in all aspects of their lives, whether it be academics, sports, arts, or personal growth. We encourage them to set high goals, work hard, and celebrate their achievements.

Respect: Above all, respect is our overarching value. We teach our students to show respect for themselves, their peers, teachers, and the wider community. We value diversity, inclusivity, and the importance of treating others with kindness, fairness, and understanding.

We believe that by instilling these values, we are nurturing the future leaders and change-makers of tomorrow. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. Together, as a community, we can create a supportive and enriching learning environment where each child can thrive and reach their full potential.

Communication

School Closure

In the unlikely event of the school being closed, a message will be posted on Hero. Those who do not use Hero will be phoned.

If the need arises to close the school during school time the school will contact all parents before children are sent or transported home. If the school is unable to contact the parent of a student then we will contact the emergency contact person and make appropriate arrangements. If we are unable to contact anybody the child will remain under the care of staff.

Hero app

Our school uses a student management system called Hero to track attendance, academic progress and communicate billing and other information to parents.

<https://hero.linc-ed.com/parents/>



Newsletter

These will be shared via Hero to families each Friday. A hard copy can be given on request.

Buses

The majority of our students catch the bus to school. If your child(ren) will not be using the morning bus, it is appreciated if you can telephone the bus driver, either the night before or prior to 7.30am. If your child/ren is/are not going home on the bus, please telephone the school office before 1.15pm to ensure staff are informed. Older students can inform the class teacher in the morning when the daily Bus Rolls are circulated around the school.

Cancellation or delay of the bus services will be notified on Hero. Parents who don't have access to these services need to notify the office to be placed on the School's phone list. The school bus is not public transport.

Ms Howden is the Bus Controller and any concerns or questions should be directed to her.

For safety reasons it is essential that we know who is on each bus. Bus Drivers contact phone numbers are -
Nola Tisdall: 4643-883 or 027 672 7092
Les Poulsen: 021 0221 5891

Absences & Policies

School Procedures

We need to know when your child is going to be absent or is absent due to sickness. Absences should be recorded through Hero. If you are unable to access Hero please contact the office in the morning.

Our school policy is that all absences from the classroom are recorded at the beginning of the day and checked again after lunch. The whereabouts of a student will be checked if he or she is absent and the school has not already been advised. If we cannot contact you, the police will assist us in locating your child. Please understand it is your child's safety that is our concern.

Please make sure you let us know if your child is absent and the reason, so we can make sure we code it correctly as children with 5 or more days per term of Explained Unjustified absences are being targeted by the MOE.

 Every Day Counts A DAY HERE OR THERE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE MUCH, BUT...			
When your child misses just...	That equals...	Which is...	And therefore from Year 0 to Year 12 that is equivalent to...
1 day a fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years of school
1 day a week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years of school
2 days a week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years of learning
3 days a week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years of learning

Parent & Whānau Questions/Pātai

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns. Please discuss any queries or problems relating to class programs with the class teacher in the first instance. If further follow up is required, please contact the Principal.

If you feel your concerns are still not addressed, the BOT has a complaints procedure.

School Policies

The Board of Trustees reviews school policies regularly through the 'School Docs' portal. Parents and caregivers will be consulted during the review of policies where appropriate.

Access to School Docs can be found at:
<https://strathtaieri.schooldocs.co.nz/>

Username: strathtaieri

Password: middlemarch

School Life

School Assemblies

We hold a school assembly twice a term - one in Week 5 or 6, and another in Week 10. Students share items of work from their current studies across the curriculum. Awards are presented in recognition of children's achievements. Parents and community members are encouraged to come along and share the successes.

Expenses/stationery

The school will supply stationery to your child at the beginning of the year and as required. This is placed on a school account. You may purchase your own stationery if preferred.

All accounts need to be fully finalised before the end of the year. You are welcome to contact the school if you are experiencing difficulty paying your account. As a school we do not charge additional term fees or a donation, rather we ask you to assist with fundraising when possible.

Uniform

We do not have a school uniform. We do, however, have a school polo and a merino jersey to wear on school trips and sports events. These are worn with a school hat and black/navy shorts. The hats are issued at school as part of our Sun Smart policy. The school office can assist you in ordering any items.

Enrolment of Pupils

Ms Howden will make contact with you at least a month in advance of your child attending school so early contact with the school is preferred. We are happy to talk with you about our school, show you our classrooms, facilities and answer any questions you or your child might have. We recommend before school visits to let your child become familiar with the school environment and the classroom. Visits begin in the weeks before their starting date, and they will have 2x visits each week. Ms Howden co-ordinates this with you.

When you come to enrol your child, please bring a copy of their birth certificate and immunisation record.

Things your child will need when they start school

- School Bag to hold lunch and personal items
- Named lunchbox and drink bottle
- All clothing named - a spare set in school bag
- For Term 1 – A named towel, togs, goggles and a swimming bag.

General Information

Buildings

We are fortunate to have 5 classrooms, Rooms 1, 2 and 3 are located together and Room 4 (Play Group) and Room 5 are located near the administration block. The administration block is central in the school and houses the school library.

We also have a resource room and sports shed where the majority of our curriculum and sports resources are stored.

Grounds

We have seating in shaded areas and redeveloped gardens to allow future shade areas. There is an adventure playground, bike track, sandpit, tennis court and large grass areas for games. We are fortunate to have some large established trees which provide valuable shade areas during the summer.

Families are welcome to use the school grounds during weekends and holidays. The school grounds are a non-smoking/non-vaping area and no dogs are allowed on the grounds.

Lunches

Lunches should include a piece of fruit for an in class fruit break and a named water bottle. Sugary drinks are discouraged.

Children are asked to take home leftovers/ packaging for parents to know how much has been eaten/ if more or less food is required.

Lunches may be ordered from Maggie's (any day). Orders need to be in a sealed envelope with the child's name, order and amount enclosed written clearly on the envelope. Orders are collected first thing in the morning.

The school provides a pie warmer to heat lunches brought from home. This food needs to be wrapped in tinfoil with your child's name written clearly. Children need to bring their own cup, spoon etc.

Leaving School

We have a duty to keep track of students at all times. If your child is to go home at lunchtime the child or parent must notify staff on departure and on return.

Curriculum

Literacy

At Strath Taieri school we use a structured literacy approach to directly and systematically teach the knowledge and skills to decode and encode through reading and writing. We use the iDeaL programme to support spelling learning and implement a consistent structured literacy approach across all three classrooms. Your child's teacher would be happy to discuss how to best support your child at home with their literacy learning.

Year 7 and 8 Technology

Students at Year 7 and 8 are provided with rich and exciting opportunities through a weekly drive to Taieri College. This is an exciting way for our oldest students to have hard materials (metal and woodwork), soft materials (sewing and fabrics) and cooking lessons. These visits also serve as an opportunity to give a soft transition to a much larger school. The van for technology departs at 7.45am and departs Mosgiel at 11am.

Inquiry/Topic

Social Studies, Science, Technology, Health and The Arts all integrate ICT to enhance literacy skills. Parents are encouraged to share any expertise or to assist with class activities and/or visits.

Mathematics

At Strath Taieri school we value direct instruction in mathematics and use a variety of tools including 'Maths- No Problem!', Oxford Maths and Numicon to deliver this. This is a new (for us) Maths programme which follows a structure and sequence of learning that is targeted at each level. All classrooms will be implementing this international programme which is becoming increasingly popular throughout Aotearoa NZ and aligns with the NZ Curriculum.

Children are encouraged to see maths as a language and a set of tools that are useful in the real world through practical maths problems. Your child's teacher would be happy to discuss how to best support your child at home with their maths learning.

Te Reo Māori

Our whole school 'Tokomaro Kapa Haka' group has been operating for well over ten years within the school. We perform regularly at PolyFest and Taieri Hui Ako, as well as at community events.

Team Kārearea have weekly online Te Reo lessons with a specialist Māori language teacher through Kōtui Ako virtual learning network. Teams Pīwakawaka and Ruru deliver their Te Reo learning through their regular classroom programme.

Curriculum

Digital Technology

Our school is well resourced with digital technologies with all children in Teams Ruru and Kārearea having their own Chromebook and school email account. Internet safety is taught and monitored across the school. Teachers use Hero or Google Classroom to support student learning and parental involvement in their child's learning.

Education Outside the Classroom

Class visits and activities within our local community and to Dunedin are an important element of learning. Students are expected to attend trips. Transport is generally provided by pooling cars and parental assistance. Year 5, 6, 7 and 8 attend a week long camp each year. There are generally fundraising activities undertaken to help with costs of camp. Year 3, 4 have an end of year camp for 2 nights. Year 0-2 have a fun day or stay at the end of the year.



Reporting Schedule

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Goal Setting Interviews: <i>Mid Term 1</i> Interview with Parents, student and Teacher (15 minutes). The purpose is to discuss learning, establish next steps and set goals for Terms 1 and 2. Previous reports will be used as the baseline along with new assessments, teacher observations, student voice and parent input to create goals and priorities for Terms 1 and 2.	Written Reports: <i>End of Term 2</i> All students will have a report sent home at the end of Term Two showing achievement and progress made in relation to the NZ Curriculum.	Goal Review Interviews: <i>Early Term 3</i> Interview with Parents, student and Teacher (10 minutes). The purpose is to discuss current achievement, review and reflect on goals from Terms 1 and 2. Next step learning and individual learning goals will be set for Terms 3 and 4 based of their Mid Year Report.	Written Reports: <i>End of Term 4</i> All students will have a report sent home showing achievement and progress made in relation to the NZ Curriculum. Specific levels of achievement will be shared via graphs on Hero. We ask that adults access these and make a conscious choice whether to share them with children.

Parent Bodies

Board of Trustees

The Board is an elected body whose primary role is governance of the school. The BoT develops policy while management and policy implementation is the role of the principal. BOT meetings are held twice a term and are advertised in the newsletter.

Parents are most welcome to attend Board meetings.

The minutes of meetings will be displayed in the administration block and are available on request.

Presiding Member:

Mr Bevan Wilson

Principal:

Ms Marlina Howden

Parent Representatives:

Mrs Charlotte Dykes

Ms Kylie Hannah

Mr Willie Jones

Mr Gus Barr

Staff Representative:

Mrs Kirsty Lynch

Email:

boardchair@middlemarch.school.nz

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is an organisation that you automatically become a member of when your child begins school. We meet once a term to discuss fundraising opportunities and events to help subsidise children's activities such as, camps and uniforms etc.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Dates and times are published in the weekly school newsletter and on the school app Hero. Come along and see what we are up to.

President:

Emily Jones

Secretary:

Jacinta Stevenson

Treasurer:

Sheldon Aitken

Email:

strathpta@outlook.com

Community Services

Photocopier

As a community service the school does photocopying during office hours. The fee is based on the size of the paper as well as black/white vs colour copying. The copier is to be operated only by a member of staff.

School Van

We hire out the school van (owned by the Board of Trustees) for a small fee to community groups. Please see Mrs Bankshaw if you would like to hire it.

Strath Taieri Playgroup

The Strath Taieri Playgroup is located on the school grounds and is situated in a spare classroom next to Room 5. Sessions are held on Tuesday mornings. Playgroup provides a good opportunity to meet and mingle with other parents and children. Please contact Laura Russell if you are interested or would like more information.

*We welcome you and your whānau as valued members of our
school community*