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## Newsletter

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# Maniototo Area School

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JUNE 2026

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### A Final Farewell

Dear Students, Families, Staff, and Community,

As I write my final newsletter as Principal of Maniototo Area School, I find myself reflecting on the past three and a half years with immense gratitude.

When I first arrived in the Maniototo, it was the landscape that drew me here. The vast skies, the rugged beauty, and the sense of space were unlike anywhere else. Yet it was the people who made this place home. The warmth, generosity and support of this community have made my time here such a privilege.

Together, we have celebrated successes, faced challenges, embraced change, and continued to grow as a school. I have watched students achieve remarkable things in the classroom, on the sports field and in service to others. I have seen staff go above and beyond every day, and families and whānau stand beside us in supporting our young people.

One of the things I hope Maniototo Area School continues to hold tightly is the courage to dream big. Never let your postcode determine your potential. Some of the most extraordinary achievements begin in small communities where people believe in one another and are prepared to work hard for a shared vision.

I encourage every student to continue striving for personal excellence. Excellence is not about being better than someone else; it is about becoming the very best version of yourself. It is found in the daily choices we make, the effort we give, the kindness we show, and the determination to keep going when things become difficult. Our selection as a finalist in the New Zealand Education Excellence Awards shows us that amazing things can happen when we come together and strive for excellence.

Equally important is gratitude. None of us succeeds alone. Take time to acknowledge the people who walk alongside you—your parents, caregivers, teachers, coaches, support staff, friends, and community members. Their encouragement, guidance, and belief in you help make success possible.

A quote that has always resonated with me is:

*"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."* – Henry David Thoreau

As I leave Maniototo Area School, I do so with confidence that the future is bright. This school has an extraordinary story still to write, and each of you has a part to play in that story.

Thank you for your support, your kindness, your trust, and the memories we have created together. It has been an honour to serve this community.

Wherever your journey takes you next, continue to dream big, strive for excellence, and be grateful for those who help you along the way.

**Ngā mihi nui, Melissa Bell - Principal**

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# Mana Pounamu Awards

On Thursday 24 June, we will celebrate the achievements of two of our senior students at the Mana Pounamu Awards. These awards, attended by schools from across Otago, recognise achievement, service and potential in Māori students. We are incredibly proud to acknowledge both Nate Spooner and Indi as recipients for 2026.

## Nate Spooner – Tuakana Mana Pounamu Award Recipient

Nate is a calm, positive and highly respected student who consistently demonstrates integrity, empathy and quiet determination in all that he does. He excels in both PE and Art, earning school merit awards, and is a valued member of our 1st hockey and basketball teams, where his composure and willingness to learn set him apart.

A passionate sportsman, Nate has represented Maniototo Area School at a range of events, including Area Schools' Tournament and Otago Athletics, where he placed first in the school athletics championships. In 2025 he was selected for the South of the South Area Schools Volleyball team. Nate also embraces his Māori culture through kapa haka, where he has recently stepped into a leadership role as haka leader, earning significant respect for his mana and leadership.

## Indi Hepi – Teina Mana Pounamu Award Recipient

Indi is an outstanding young leader who demonstrates te ārahina through her influence, care for others and commitment to excellence across all areas of school life. She is a key member of the Maniototo Area School 1st XI Hockey team and has been selected as a Central Otago U15 Hockey representative, as well as the South of the South Area Schools football team travelling to Whangārei. She has also been invited to attend a youth curling training camp in Norway in 2026.

Academically, Indi is performing strongly, placing second in Year 9/10 and working towards Level 1 NCEA with Merit. She is also recognised for her outstanding work ethic, receiving the Year 9 PRIDE award. Indi contributes widely to school life as a House Leader and Student Council representative, and her care for others reflects deep manaakitanga and atawhai.

Maniototo Area School is proud to celebrate Nate and Indi as exceptional young people who embody our values and represent our school with distinction.



**CARETAKER/GROUNDSPERSON  
VACANCY**

This position will suit someone who is proactive with excellent practical and problem-solving skills. A solid knowledge of maintenance, grounds keeping and Health and Safety will be an advantage. The ideal applicant is self-motivated, prioritises tasks and communicates well.

The successful candidate needs to work within a budget, manage our school houses, liaise with contractors and manage staff.

Conditions and remuneration are according to the School Caretakers' and Cleaners' Collective Agreement.

This is a permanent part time position.

All applicants will be required to undergo a police vet.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE  
MONDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JUNE

hr@maniototo.school.nz  
www.maniototo.school.nz

To apply for this position, please include:

- Curriculum Vitae (including referees)
- Completed support staff application form (\*found on our school website)
- Completed Police vetting consent form with the appropriate ID (\*found on our school website)

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Term 1 Excellence Awards



In Term 1, our focus was **Improvements in Self Belief**.

Congratulations to the students who earned Excellence Awards for showing growing confidence, a positive attitude, and the determination to keep going when things get tough.

Mitch Watson, Rocky Woodhead, Wade Watson, Ellie Norman, Oto Kernot-Berke, Kenzie Smitheram, Oscar McAtamney, Thalia Hepi, Brodie McAtamney (absent from photo), Karl Suplente, Mackenzie Knox, Charlie Owens, and Jake Smith



## Jump Rope for Heart



Jump Rope is back!! Many of you will have fond memories of this from your childhood, skipping for fun and fitness!

Jump Rope for Heart is a fundraiser for the Heart Foundation.

If you would like to make a donation please go to the Jumping June website. Where it says 'find a student', type in Maniototo Area School. Thank you.

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our ropes and we can't wait to learn some new tricks!

<https://www.jumpingjune.org.nz/fundraisers/maniototoarea/maniototo-area-school>

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Philippines Independence Day Celebration

As a school we were proud to celebrate Philippine Independence Day and honour the rich history and vibrant culture of the Philippines.

Our Filipino students and families bring so much energy, kindness, leadership, and cultural pride to our school community, and we are grateful for the positivity you share every day.

Mabuhay, and warm wishes to all who celebrated with us.



## Support Staff Day



We recently celebrated the amazing people who keep MAS running smoothly every day – our outstanding Support Staff team.



During a special assembly, students shared heartfelt messages and handmade cards, followed by a well-deserved lunch and the rest of the afternoon off for our support staff.

On behalf of all students and staff at MAS, we offer a huge and heartfelt thank you to every member of our Support Staff team. Your dedication, care, and hard work are truly appreciated.

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Poetry in Action Brings Words of War to Life

The English and Social Sciences departments recently enjoyed a valuable learning opportunity when *Poetry in Action*, a touring theatre company from Australia, visited Maniototo Area School on 9 June to perform their acclaimed production, *Words of War*.

The timing was ideal for our Year 11 English and History students, who are currently studying World War I poetry and the Gallipoli campaign as part of their assessment work. The performance also resonated with our Year 12 and 13 students, who explored World War I poetry in previous years.

Through a powerful combination of drama, storytelling, and poetry, students gained a deeper understanding of how poetry can communicate emotions, experiences, and perspectives that other forms of expression often cannot. The performance brought historical events to life, helping students connect with the experiences of those who lived through the First World War and consider their relevance today.

A group of 21 students also had the opportunity to participate in a workshop led by the visiting actors. Students explored how theatre techniques can bring poetry to life while developing confidence in public speaking, performance, and self-expression. The workshop catered for a wide range of ages, confidence levels, and learning needs, ensuring every participant could engage meaningfully and experience success.

The performers were highly complimentary of our students, commenting on their engagement, thoughtful questions, and enthusiastic participation throughout both the performance and workshop.

The experience left a lasting impression on students and staff alike. Many students are still talking about the performance, particularly its memorable and humorous moments, while English students have found it has greatly enriched their understanding of war poetry. The workshop also highlighted the power of drama as a tool for learning and communication.

We are delighted to have been able to invest in this opportunity for our students and to collaborate with neighbouring schools to make it possible. Experiences such as these enrich the cultural, literary, and creative lives of our learners, and we look forward to pursuing similar opportunities in the future.

Parents and whānau interested in learning more about Poetry in Action and the programmes they offer can visit [https://poetryinaction.com.au/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://poetryinaction.com.au/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Inspiring Visit from Acclaimed NZ Author Kate Duignan

Last Tuesday, our senior English students were fortunate to welcome Kate Duignan, an award-winning New Zealand novelist, and lecturer in the Creative Writing Programme at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. Kate is the author of a number of acclaimed works, including *The New Ships*, *Breakwater* and has received numerous honours for her contributions to New Zealand literature.

Kate spoke with our Year 12 and 13 English students about the Victoria University creative writing programme and the opportunities available to aspiring writers. She shared valuable insights into the creative writing process, discussed pathways to publication, and generously answered students' questions about developing their craft and pursuing literary careers. Her visit provided timely support for students currently undertaking their writing assessments and pursuing their own literary ambitions.

Kate also highlighted several prestigious writing competitions available to senior secondary students and encouraged our young writers to enter:

- **Sargeson Short Story Competition – Secondary Schools Division (University of Waikato)**

Deadline: 30 June. For writers aged 16–18 years; maximum 3,000 words.

- **National Schools Poetry Award (Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington)**

Deadline: 13 July. Open to Year 12 and 13 students.

- **Landfall Tauraka Young Writers' Essay Prize (University of Otago)**

Deadline: 31 March 2027. For writers aged 16–25 years; maximum 2,000 words.

Following her presentation, Kate generously offered a creative writing workshop for a mixed group of enthusiastic writers from Years 9–13. Students explored examples of writing by young Central Otago author Ella Borrie and engaged in activities designed to spark creativity and develop their own writing voices.

Kate is currently working on a writing project in Ōtūrēhua and, while she frequently undertakes school outreach in the Wellington region, kindly extended the opportunity to visit our school as well. We are incredibly grateful for the time, expertise, and inspiration she shared with our students. Her generosity has provided invaluable encouragement for our aspiring young writers and helped foster a love of creative expression within our school community.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington, which is home to the University's renowned Creative Writing Programme. The IIML is dedicated to developing the imaginative capacity, literary skills, and individual voices of emerging writers through its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, workshops, and outreach initiatives. We are grateful for the Institute's support of young writers and for helping make opportunities such as Kate's visit possible.



# Maniototo Area School

**2026**

Entries open to all  
Year 12 & 13 students in  
Aotearoa New Zealand

**Submit  
your  
Poem**

[schoolspoetryaward.co.nz](http://schoolspoetryaward.co.nz)

**National Schools Poetry Award**  
Te Tohu Toikupu Kura ā-Motu

Entries close: 13 July 2026.  
Winner's announced on National  
Poetry Day 28 August 2026.

with support  
from  
TAURAKA  
CREATIVES NZ  
wonderlab

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS  
Te Tohu Tohu Aotaha o Te Ao

WELLINGTON  
TE HERENGA MĀKA

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# Maniototo Area School

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## NZ Area School Tournament

This year, ten of our students have been selected to attend the New Zealand Area Schools Tournament being held in Whangārei at the beginning of July. These students have been selected for their sporting talents across a number of sports including netball, basketball, volleyball, rugby, ki o rahi and football.

The students attending are:

**Jack Kiri Kiri**

**Charlie Owens**

**Trisha Buragay**

**Nic Inder**

**Jake McMillan**

**Jonty Russell**

**Mahalia Tapatu**

**Indi Hepi**

**Peyton Baddock**

**Vlad Badillo - non travelling**



In order to attend this tournament, we needed to raise close to \$20,000.

We have been privileged to be granted money from a number of local organisations, and this has helped our fundraising target immensely.

Many thanks to the following:  
**Community Trust of Maniototo**  
**Maniototo Trust Fund**  
**Maniototo Lions**  
**Maniototo Lodge**  
**Maniototo Netball Club**  
**Maniototo Area School PTA**  
**Melissa and Mark Inder**

*Thank  
You*

The support and generosity of these people has enabled our students to attend this amazing tournament.

Thank you all the community members who bought raffle tickets too.

We wish the students every success in their sports and look forward to hearing about their achievements.

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Sports Department Update: Winter Wrap-Up and Running Shoes!

### **Basketball: Final Focus**

Our senior boys and Y9 - 13 girls basketball teams have been putting in a lot of work this season. They have clocking up the kilometres travelling all around Central Otago for enjoyable and competitive games, alongside having a great turnout for our home match at the Stadium. All that hard work is paying off as they hit the business end of the season. The girls are firing on all cylinders and are hoping to secure a win in their semifinal next week to book a spot in the finals, while the boys are locking in for their upcoming playoff matches. A big thank you to coach Tom Weir and manager Donna Owens for guiding the teams so brilliantly, and a special mention to Charlie Owens for her fantastic help across both squads.

### **Mixed Hockey: Turning the Tide**

It has been a thrilling season for our senior mixed hockey team. Competing in an all boys grade means the action is always fast and hard hitting, which tested our mettle early on. After a tough start with a few losses, the team has shown immense grit, turning things around to secure some very convincing, dominant wins lately.

Our sincere thanks go to Michelle Grundy, Nikki Meyer, and Jake Smith for their outstanding coaching, leadership, and positive energy from the sidelines.

### **Rippa Rugby Fun on Home Turf**

Our Year 3–8 students had a brilliant day out recently, playing in a fun Rippa Rugby tournament right here in Ranfurly against some excellent St John's teams. It was a fantastic opportunity for the kids from both schools to mix together, enjoy the sunshine, and show off their skills.

A big thank you to St John's for hosting the day, and to the local rugby club members who volunteered their time to referee the games - our community is great at working together.

### **Coming Up: Road Race!**

Don't forget to keep an eye out this coming Friday as students hit the streets of Ranfurly for our annual whole school Road Race! Come out to your front gates, cheer them on, and help give them that extra burst of energy to get across the finish line.

### **Winter Activities: Ice Luge Camp is Coming**

Last week, we were lucky enough to have the NZ Luge camp coach (Louie Coburn) come to speak with our Year 6-8 students. There is quite a lot of excitement with lots of children showing a keen interest in a sport that is truly unique to our backyard in Naseby.

Thanks to securing Tū Manawa Sport Otago funding, the rink is able to offer students the opportunity to participate in the upcoming camp for free. It's an excellent opportunity for our students to try a winter discipline that most kids around the country never get to experience. If you would like information on this contact Geraldine Duncan on [jnrsports@maniototo.school.nz](mailto:jnrsports@maniototo.school.nz)

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Breakfast Club



It was a big thumbs up for surprise Pancake Day at Breakfast Club!

There's something special about watching students gather around the table, laughing, chatting, and enjoying breakfast together. Those BIG smiles are the best reminder of why Breakfast Club exists – and why it matters.

It's more than just food - It's about caring for our community and it's a great way to start the school day.

Some of our students travel long distances each morning, while others simply aren't hungry before leaving home...and some students just come for the social aspect. Whatever the reason, it's all good!

But we couldn't do it alone, we are extremely grateful to everyone that makes Breakfast Club possible.

Support from our **PTA & Parent volunteers** - your time, energy, and willingness to show up make mornings like this possible.

A massive thank you to the following groups and individuals for their essential contributions and ongoing generosity:

- **KickStart Breakfast programme**
- **Morgan & Four Square Maniototo**
- **Maniototo Food Bank**
- **Tash Kane & Central Youth Development Trust**

**THANK  
YOU!**

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# Maniototo Area School

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## Important Dates

- 25 June - Primary School Production
- 26 June - Road Race 1.05pm
- 29 June - 2 July - NZAST Whangarei
- 2 July - Farewell Assembly for Melissa 2pm
- 3 July - Last Day of Term
- 20 July - Term 3 beings
- 25 July - School Formal
- 27 - 30 July - Year 1-8 Ice Week
- 28 July - BOT Meeting
- 7 August - Secondary School Ice Morning
- 24 August - Maniototo Cross Country (tbc)



## RSA Fundraiser

Our students were proud to present over \$300 to Shirley the RSA President, thanks to the incredible support from our poppy fundraiser.

The handmade poppies – crafted by our Art Department using recycled shells donated by Bonnie and Colin Smith – were a complete sell out.

Thank you for helping make this project such a success, we were thrilled to be able to show our support to the RSA in such a meaningful way.

**PEOPLE CONNECTING PEOPLE**

INTERNET / MOBILE / HOME PHONE - RURAL OR URBAN

Across the Otago Region, including the Maniototo.

Call our local team to find out more.

**Unifone**

unifone.nz 0800 894 114

Maniototo Area  
School Primary School  
proudly presents....



*Donations to help with  
the costs are gratefully  
accepted.*

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June**  
**12.30pm and 6.30pm**  
**Ranfurly Town Hall**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY NASEBY DARK SKY CHARITABLE TRUST

# NASEBY'S

## MATARIKI EVENTS



**11  
JULY**

**11am -  
1:30pm**

### **A beginners guide to Astronomy**

Where: Naseby Fire Brigade Room  
Cost: \$25 Adult/\$20 Student

*Light lunch included*

**12  
JULY**

**11am -  
1:30pm**

### **A beginners guide to Astrophotography**

Where: Naseby Fire Brigade Room  
Cost: \$25 Adult/\$20 Student

*Light lunch included*

Classroom and practical sessions during the day and, weather permitting, evening sessions to try out your new skills.

Register your interest today.

Contact: Paul on 021 234 5044 or pekbishop@gmail.com or book on-line at <https://nasebynightskytours.wixsite.com/home/contact>

UNIQUE. LOCAL. UNFORGETTABLE.

# SCHOOL HOLIDAY ICE SPORTS CAMPS

FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 8-15

This July, give your students an unforgettable experience on New Zealand's only ice luge track and one of the few outdoor ice skating rinks in the country!



LEARN NEW SKILLS



BUILD CONFIDENCE



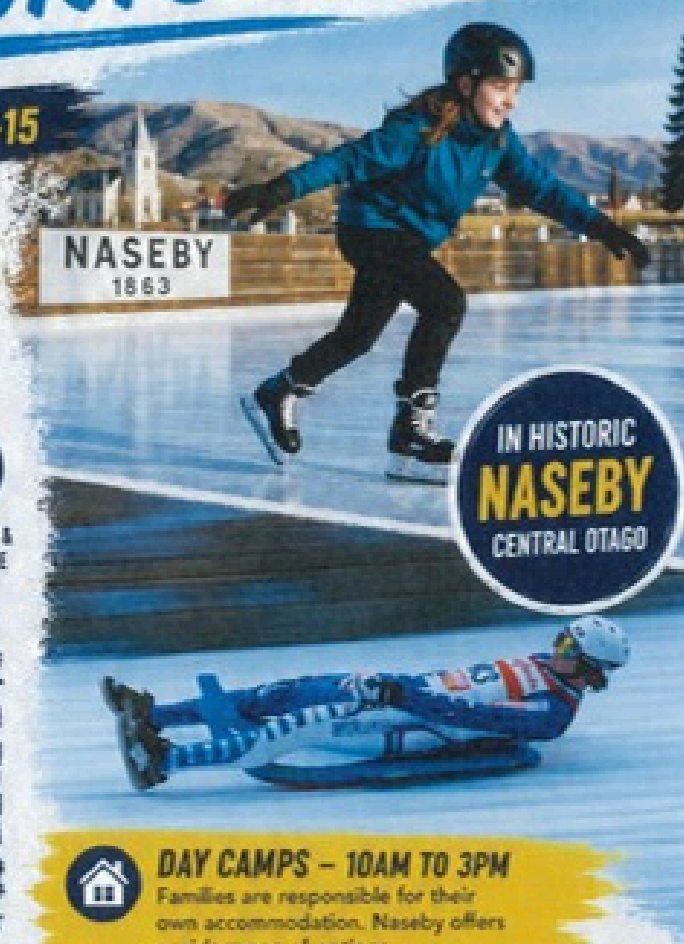
UNIQUE OUTDOOR VENUE



FUN, ACTIVE & SUPPORTIVE

## BENEFITS THAT LAST

- ✓ Develop skills, coordination & balance
- ✓ Build confidence & resilience
- ✓ Encourage teamwork & sportsmanship
- ✓ Enjoy active fun in a unique setting
- ✓ Beginners welcome - all equipment & expert coaching provided



### DAY CAMPS - 10AM TO 3PM

Families are responsible for their own accommodation. Naseby offers a wide range of options.

## ICE CAMP

ICE SKATING + INTRODUCTORY ICE LUGE

MONDAY 7 - FRIDAY 10 JULY  
10:00AM - 3:00PM DAILY



For more information or to register

Email [nzluge@gmail.com](mailto:nzluge@gmail.com)

## ICE LUGE CAMP

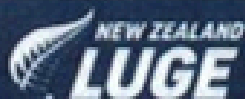
FOCUSED ICE LUGE DEVELOPMENT

MONDAY 13 - FRIDAY 17 JULY  
10:00AM - 3:00PM DAILY



For more information or to register

Email [nzluge@gmail.com](mailto:nzluge@gmail.com)



TRY SOMETHING RARE.  
BUILD SKILLS FOR LIFE.

NASEBY, CENTRAL OTAGO  
THE ICE CAPITAL OF NEW ZEALAND