

PRINCIPAL'S PANUI

TOGETHER IS BETTER

One of the subtle delights of this job is recognising the things that don't demand a spotlight – the brief interactions, the gentle acknowledgments of progress, and the minor victories that weave the fabric of our kura culture.

Recently, I've been particularly touched by the growing sense of connection unfolding across our spaces. It's heartwarming to witness families – those new to our kura and those who've been with us since the beginning – engaging with one another in simple, genuine ways. There's a newfound ease during drop-offs, a rhythm to our mornings, and a familiarity that has been built since the start of the year. This is more significant than we often realise.

In the playground, I've also observed unexpected pairings of ākonga playing side by side. This is a quiet testament to how a sense of belonging develops not solely through design, but through shared experiences, gentle guidance, and a little patience. It also notes the wonderful albeit unplanned outcomes of choices we make as “educational architect” in our programmes, spaces and systems.

One of these choices, was that adjustment we implemented to our eating routines – utilising our house groups as a framework for gathering. This approach was about offering a tailored environment for ākonga that fostered connection and consistency. While we anticipated some positive changes, what we're witnessing is even more remarkable: love and respect. Older students looking out for their younger peers, and a calmness that reflects a sense of camaraderie and trust with one another.

Beyond this, there's been an active pursuit of simple but engaging activities that ākonga can partake in during their breaks. Spearheaded by the incredible Mrs Smith, our library and games club are vibrant hubs of energy and laughter, but they also exude a genuine sense of ownership from our seniors and joy from our juniors. These spaces aren't merely 'lunchtime options'; they are invitations – to engage, to lead, and to feel a sense of belonging.

All of this is a timely reminder for me – one that I couldn't wait to share with you – that culture is seldom established through grand declarations. More often, it's crafted through the quiet, faithful repetition of what truly matters, and for us at Elim Christian College Henderson, it's a resounding sense of belonging, because...

“Everyone needs someone to believe in them”

A NAME TO NEST IN

We're excited to share that with growing interest in our kura, we'll be expanding to open a new New Entrant akomanga from the start of next term. The pieces are falling into place – you may have seen our teaching position advertised recently, and that will remain live for the next week and a half as we search for the right fit to lead this special space.

With the practical planning underway, there's one important piece still to land – a name.

As many of you know, our akomanga (classroom) are named after native manu (birds), and often grouped by stage – like Pīwakawaka, Pīwauwau, and Pūtakitaki in our junior classes. But this time, with a class dedicated solely to welcoming our newest ākonga into kura life, we see a unique opportunity to choose a name with even greater symbolism – one that captures the essence of beginnings, nurture, and potential.

And this is where we need your help.

We're inviting you – and soon, our ākonga too – to be part of naming this new class. It's a chance to contribute something lasting, something that will become part of how we welcome, settle, and celebrate each child who walks through its doors.

THE CONTENDERS

MŌHUA (YELLOWHEAD)

Mōhua are small yellow birds, bright and full of life. Often found in groups, it reminds us of the joy that comes from being part of something bigger than ourselves. Choosing mōhua reflects a class where learning is shared, voices are heard, and each child brings a light of their own.

MĀTĀTĀ (FERNBIRD)

Mātātā tends to stay hidden, heard before seen, moving carefully through the reeds. It reminds us that growth doesn't always look loud or obvious – sometimes, it's quiet and unfolding. A class named Mātātā honours the steady, gentle start each learner makes at their own pace.

MAKOMAKO (BELLBIRD)

Makomako is known for its beautiful, clear song – often the first sound at dawn. It's a bird that tells us a new day has begun. This name suits a space where children are just beginning their journey, where their ideas and questions are welcomed like birdsong in the morning.

MĀTUI (ROBIN)

Mātui are confident little birds that aren't afraid to hop close and investigate. They carry a sense of friendliness and trust. Choosing Mātui would speak to a space where curiosity is welcomed, and tamariki are encouraged to take small steps with big courage.

[PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTES HERE](#)

INVESTING IN HEARTS AND MINDS

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