

Mangawhai Beach School  
Environmental Studies Programme  
**Update for parents and advice of upcoming activity**

As of beginning of this week we have had 5 sessions:

- the first 4 focussing on the water environment with use of scientific instruments to measure water quality, sorting of aquatic organisms from samples collected from ponds at Mangawhai and discussions about water quality and how it affects us and the environment.
- A session on 14 May where we discussed noise, took measurements with a noise meter and the children tried to “outscream” each other – far away from the school buildings.

I have been very impressed with the enthusiasm, their focus on the work, their questioning, and understanding of what are some quite complex aspects by most of the children.

Every session there is a handout with a prepared outline of what we will do that day, and also some notes for “homework” that I expect them to do before the next session, mostly so they can think about it beforehand, perhaps think of questions to ask and be able to get more out of this. Unfortunately most forget to take the sheets home, or come the following week saying they did not have time to read the “homework”. Please, if you can spend a few minutes encouraging your child to do this reading and / or internet searching I am sure they would get even more out of the sessions.

We applied for and received a grant of \$1000 funded by Beyer via the Royal Society towards equipment to support the programme. Through this we have already purchased a dissolved oxygen / salinity meter and two aquaria. On Thursday 21 May we will be having a session on the use of the dissolved oxygen meter, discussion on its importance for water quality and some simple experiments. We will also start to set up the aquaria at the school.

On Thursday 28 May we are planning for both groups to go together to the Ecocare / Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant at Thelma Road. We did this last year and it was a great experience for the children; and this year we will have the additional advantage of being able to discuss the activity beforehand and having handout sheets provided on 21 May. However, to undertake the programme we do need some parental assistance with transport to and from the plant (and to stay there if you are interested). Please fill in the “tear off” the bottom of this page and return to the school by Thursday 21 May to indicate whether you can assist.

There have also been a few “expressions of interest” from students to have some of the equipment we use in the programme, especially digital / computer connected microscopes that I have been purchasing via eBay for some \$35-\$50 (depending on the stand type, which is important for ease of use!). Please see me, or send a message with your child if you are interested in purchasing any equipment.

***Please remember, you are always welcome to join us for any part of the programme,  
or to contact me if you want to discuss any aspect of our studies.***

John

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Proposed trip to Sewage Treatment Plant - 0900 to 1115 Thursday 28 May 2015  
Please return by 21 May

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing for your child to attend this session?                      Yes                      No

Would you be able to assist in transportation to / from the STP?      Yes                      No  
If “Yes” how many children would to be able to take                      \_\_\_\_\_

Are you available to assist in supervision during the visit?              Yes                      No