

Introduction

Otahuhu College opened in 1931 as the Otahuhu Junior High School, catering for forms one to three students. In 1933, it became known as the Otahuhu Technical High School, with a capacity to cater for students through to senior levels of study. In 1947, it was renamed Otahuhu College. Otahuhu College is widely respected for its strong academic, sporting and cultural achievements and it is proud of its continuing links with the community of South Auckland.

The 2023 Strategic Plan adapts to the challenging strategic context of Ōtāhuhu College, yet it is unreservedly ambitious. Our ambition is in keeping with our determination to make a prominent contribution to addressing the major challenges that face our community and our nation. There strategic plan is grouped around five areas:

- Engagement and Retention
- Academic Achievement
- Teaching and Curriculum Development
- Our Campus: Built Environment
- A culture of High performance

Engagement and Retention

Completion of senior secondary education is associated with a range of economic and social benefits both in New Zealand and across the OECD. Retention of students into senior secondary schooling is linked to higher levels of skills and knowledge required for participation in our increasingly knowledge-based society and the wider global community (OECD, 2017). According to Norton et al. (2000) the risk of unemployment for those with no school qualifications or only Year 11 qualifications is higher than for those with Year 12 or Year 13 qualifications. The positive effect of each additional year of schooling on incomes has been estimated to range from 5% to 10%. Lashlie (2005) found that one of the factors important for successful school leaving for boys was merely staying at school until the end of the Year 13. This is because it takes boys longer to achieve a similar level of maturity and self-management to girls, and because boys' schools in particular can "hold boys steady while the chaos of adolescence sorts itself". Simply keeping boys at school (by making school relevant) until they have decided what they want their next step in life to be can reduce the chances of a boy "arriving at a prison gate".

Nationally In 2021, 81.4% of school leavers stayed at school to the age of 17 or above, a 2.6 percentage point decrease from 2020 (84.0%). Retention peaked in 2015 at 85.0% and declined 2.0 percentage points from 2015 to 2019. In 2021 female school leavers (84.4%) were more likely to remain at school until at least age 17 than their male counterparts (78.5%). In 2021 67.7.% of Māori school leavers remained at school to at least age 17. Retention of European/Pākehā, Pacific and Asian school leavers was 82.1%, 82.6%, and 94.8% respectively. The difference between retention rates for leavers from decile 1-2 schools compared to decile 9-10 schools is largest for Māori school leavers. In 2021 the

retention rate of Māori school leavers from decile 1-2 schools was 62.8% compared to 84.7% of Māori leavers from decile 9-10 schools, a difference of 21.9 percentage points.

Regular school attendance is the foundation of student achievement. Research by the Ministry of Education has found a direct relationship between attendance and achievement “especially at attendance rates over about 70 percent.”¹ Every day that a student misses school predicts a similar drop in achievement. There is little evidence of a “safe” level of nonattendance. Research has also found that even a few initial absences can reduce student engagement and lead to more frequent absence. This process can start as early as Year 1. Every day counts. Despite its importance, we have observed a troubling decline in regular school attendance in New Zealand. Regular school attendance is defined as attending school on more than 90 percent of the half days schools are open. From 2015 to 2019, the percentage of students who attended school regularly fell 11.8 percentage points, from 69.5 percent to 57.7 percent. While we acknowledge the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected student attendance, it is not a factor in the decline noted above.

For Ōtāhuhu College, retention rates until 17th birthday have been averaging 85% for the last three years. It is expected it will drop in 2022, however Retention has been above the national average. Attendance at Ōtāhuhu College has been low, prior to the pandemic during Terms 1-3 2018 48% of students were attending regularly (Term 4 is not counted as this is impacted by exams for seniors). Since covid attendance has fallen sharply. Ōtāhuhu College’s student management system also records attendance statistics and this shows that weekly attendance rate for the College has been around the 80% mark. There is a notable difference in Māori attendance which is 6-8% points below that of the rest of the College.

One of the most consistent findings in educational research demonstrates that the more times students spend engaged during instruction, the more they learn. In the engaged classroom you will observe that all students are authentically engaged at least some of the time or that most students are authentically engaged most of the time, this is our aim for our teaching practise. We aim to create positive behaviour and create inclusive learning environments that foster well-being and achievement for each and every student.

Involvement in extra curricular activities is also shown to increase student engagement and retention in education, as well as increasing family involvement with the school. Participating in extracurricular activities benefits students’ personal and academic success. First, students who participate in extracurricular activities have greater levels of academic achievement. Second, extracurricular participation supports students’ character development by giving them skills required for personal success, such as leadership skills, time-management skills, and the ability to accept constructive criticism. Third, extracurricular participation raises students’ self-esteem and resiliency. Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities cultivates social development. Lastly, participating in extracurricular activities provides opportunities for students to experience the importance of community involvement.

By 2026, the inclusive learning environment will have resulted in:

- 90% retention of students until at least their 17th birthday
- 90% of students involved in extra-curricular activities.

- 90% weekly attendance
- 90% of students attending above the 70% half day mark
- No significant gap between the attendance and retention of Māori or Male students.

Academic Achievement

Ōtāhuhu College is a place where learning flourishes and helps people transform their community. We grow the capability, skills, and confidence of our students. We support them to be knowledgeable, creative, and innovative, and to pursue their passion and excel in their studies.

Educational achievement is the strongest protective factor for young people's life outcomes, affecting their future employment, income, health and well-being. In order for our students to have the very best possible future it is vital that their academic achievement is aimed at the highest level for every student. The highest qualification available at Otahuhu College is University Entrance.

The attainment of a senior secondary school qualification is linked to labour force status and incomes. Every year around 60,000 young people leave school and face choices about what to do next. The earnings of students attaining University Entrance (UE) standard who forgo employment initially for tertiary study, will overtake the earnings of all their less-qualified peer groups five years after leaving school. By year 7, the average earnings for the UE standard group are 28% higher than those who leave school with only NCEA Level 2. In 2019 New Zealanders with a bachelor's degree earned on average 27% more than their counterparts with only a senior secondary education. The earning advantage increases to 52% for those with a master's or doctoral degree.

Nationally, in 2021, 40.8% of all school leavers attained UE Standard, a 3.4 percentage point decrease from 2020 (44.2%). In 2021, UE Standard was attained by 19.3% of Māori school leavers overall, with 50.5% of Māori leavers from decile 9 -10 schools and 9.4% of Māori leavers from decile 1-2 schools attaining UE standard. UE Standard was attained by 25.7% of Pacific school leavers overall, with 46.4% of Pacific school leavers from decile 9-10 schools and 20.3% of Pacific leavers from decile 1-2 schools attaining UE standard. In terms of UE pass rate nationally the average is 55% of Year 13 students gain UE.

For Ōtāhuhu College, in 2021, 23.9% of our school leavers attained UE Standard, which is reflective of a steady rise from 2013 when 13.5% of leavers were at UE Standard. In 2021, UE Standard was attained by 7.4% of Māori Ōtāhuhu College leavers. In terms of UE pass rate Ōtāhuhu College has seen a steady increase from 22% in 2017 to 28.7% in 2021.

By 2026, the quality of teaching and learning will have resulted in:

- 55% of Year 13 students gaining UE
- 40% of all Ōtāhuhu College leavers attaining the UE Standard
- No significant gap between the outcomes for Māori or Male students.

Teaching and Curriculum Development

Excellent classroom teaching is the key focus for Ōtāhuhu College. The effect of quality teaching outweighs factors associated with students' socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Virtually every study of effective and successful teaching has identified the importance of high expectations. Ōtāhuhu College will direct attention at higher quality teaching and higher expectations that students can meet appropriate challenges. At Ōtāhuhu College teaching emphasises intervening vigorously and systemically in student learning, on the basis of excellent subject knowledge and student conceptions and misconceptions in that subject, assembled from high quality formative assessment. Ōtāhuhu College students want teachers who:

- Know and understand their subject
- Treat each student as an individual
- Make learning the core of what happens in their classroom

Ōtāhuhu College teachers balance a high degree of responsiveness to students with high demands, standards and expectations.

The importance of each Department working as a professional team, as a community of professionals. Teachers, while still maintaining their individuality, are a collective that work, share and, most importantly, learn together to seek improvement in teaching for themselves and their colleagues. The teachers in our Departments collectively establish a high standard of which all members are aware. They set the mark so that all students have a chance to gain UE and feel genuine success. They care for their students as individuals and endeavour to meet the different needs of each and every student.

Our focus will be on starting every student's journey towards gaining UE. The key development in terms of assessment will be moving away from a full Level 1 programme in Year 11. Currently 85% of our leavers gain Level 2 or higher. For the remaining 15%, two thirds (10%) finish their school with no formal qualifications. These students tend to be ones who drop out of school before the completion of Year 11. Only 5% of our leavers finish the schooling with just Level One. Effectively we are running a Level One Assessment programme for 5% of our students. 85% of our students stay at school to Year 13. Our students have struggled with external assessment, with 50% of assessments becoming external we need to look at ways where we can significantly improve the external pass rate. Creating more time for assessments and reducing the workload for staff and students will allow for a greater depth of understanding and better prepare our students for NCEA at Levels Two and Three. Currently for some subjects there is very little difference between the difficulty of Level 1 and Level 2, for others between Level 2 and Level 3. The focus will be looking at how we can develop a longitudinal pathway in each subject so that students have the knowledge and skills needed to gain UE in that subject.

Ōtāhuhu College will apply for re-capitation to become a Year 7 to 13 College. Studies indicate that where students become disengaged in learning, they tend to do so before age 12, with the lack of engagement then escalating. The two year grade span of intermediate schools seriously impedes the realisation of students who need continuity, coherency, and a sustained challenge over a longer period. In applying to become a Year 7-13 school, Ōtāhuhu College students who start in Year 7 will embark on a seven year longitudinal programme in each subject. This will allow students to benefit from qualified specialist teachers and resources.

By 2026 these focus areas will have resulted in:

- 95% of teachers being assessed as knowing their subject well or better by their students
- 95% of teachers rated good or very good by their students.
- Longitudinal pathways in each subject so that students have the knowledge and skills to gain UE in that subject.
- Application to Ministry of Education for Year 7 and 8, and implement Year 7-13 programme when approved.

Our Campus: Built Environment

The Martin Block represents the historic heart of Ōtāhuhu College and is a heritage listed building. Over time the campus has extended from the original Martin Block to include 59 teaching spaces, a gym, swimming pool, sports pavilion and two school houses. The buildings are of mixed composition in terms of age, heritage status, condition and functionality. In the last twenty years significant work has been undertaken including the modernisation of T Block and Gavin Library, and the building of the new Boscawen Technology Block and Laurenson Science Block. The main campus has land area of approximately 7 hectares, with the Memorial Fields being approximately 5.6 hectares.

Our aspiration is for a campus that evokes the rich heritage of Ōtāhuhu College as well as celebrating our cultures and our community. Our campus will be a place where our students, staff and families want to spend time in. The Campus will provide a high quality teaching and learning and student experience across all our teaching spaces. The student experience will be supported through the physical environment by a number of key elements including library, sports and recreation, and quality classrooms. Ōtāhuhu College will ensure that students have access to reliable and good capacity Wi-Fi, power points, computers and comfortable and adaptable furniture.

Key factors for resilience in our campus include critical infrastructure and supply such as power, water, stormwater and sewage. Work will continue to be progressed to ensure that our critical infrastructure is robust and resilient. There are a number of closely related and interlinked aspects to environment sustainability in the built environment. Ōtāhuhu College will focus its attention on improving in efficiency, especially in the key metrics of energy consumption, water consumption and waste to landfill. All projects for new buildings, plant replacement, and refurbishment will be expected to improve efficiencies.

The capital programme of asset replacement will focus on teaching and learning resources and health and safety related assets and systems. The aim is to enhance both our students and staff experience and Ōtāhuhu College reputation. The capital programme will see campus wide priorities progressed through to 2030 including:

- Renovation of central heritage section of M Block
- Relocation and upgrading of Wharenui
- Renovation of A Block
- Building of new class room blocks on east and west wing of the heritage M Block

- Landscaping of grounds.

A Culture of High Performance

Developing a culture of high performance is important for our community. Recent success of international sports teams in competitions highlight the pride and joy that pervades our community. Ōtāhuhu College has a responsibility to strive to normalising high levels of performance. A culture of high performance encourages staff and students to work together to accomplish at great things. When they succeed in their effort, they experience higher levels of satisfaction and increased levels of self-confidence.

Academically, the highest performance students can gain at secondary school is scholarship. Currently Ōtāhuhu College gains on average one scholarship a year, usually in Samoan. Through development of teaching expertise and curriculum our students will develop a greater depth of understanding and this will be reflected in increased success at scholarship level.

Staff development will be a focus in creating a high performance culture. We will develop both our middle leaders and aspiring leaders so that they can impact improvement and success at Ōtāhuhu College and further afield. Bespoke development plans will be researched and created in order to best prepare staff to be the 'engine room of change' and become experts in transforming and energising teaching, learning and the wider life of the College.

Ōtāhuhu College has a proud history of sporting and cultural successes. Extra curricular activities are powerful in conveying the culture of the College and are used by Ōtāhuhu College in the interest in improving every child's education.

Participation and success in sport develops pride and a sense of belonging for Ōtāhuhu College. We want to encourage more teams and sports to strive to compete successfully in North Island and National Tournaments. For a team (or an individual based sport) to be considered to go to Tournament (or similar) the following needs to be done:

- Team performance standards established, these must be based on both results and attendance at training.
- Individual Fitness standards established which must be met to attend tournament, must include aerobic standard.

To be eligible to compete at these tournaments and events students must adhere to the attendance policy and have good levels of engagement in classes.

Visual, Performance and Cultural Arts will continue to be a strength of Ōtāhuhu College. Students will have the opportunity to perform locally, nationally and internationally. Regular competitions and the establishment of tours will enhance student levels of engagement and performance. Already well regarded in this area, Ōtāhuhu College's reputation will be enhanced further.

By 2026, a culture in high performance will have resulted in:

- 10 or more scholarships across three or more subjects
- Ōtāhuhu College staff well regarded and being recruited for leadership roles.
- Auckland and National titles being won at team and individual level

- International tour implemented on triannual basis.