To the team members of Tekau Twenty-Eleven, parents, care givers and whanau,

Welcome, bienvenido, nau mai haere mai to 2011! I trust you all had a safe and enjoyable holiday where you could spend warm days by the water of some sorts. It's a great way to re-charge the batteries. My holidays seemed to have disappeared with Luca and Eva growing fast and getting into all sorts of mischief! But we are all looking forward to getting back into it; re-establishing rules and routines for new stages that the kids are now in. I look forward to catching up with all of you during this first term.

The teaching staff have recently been away on a retreat, sorting out Russell Street School’s vision and direction for not only this year but for the next 3 - 5 years. I came home very excited and inspired to be part of the RSS team! And what an exciting year we have in store for you this year!

One of the main talking points of the retreat was the notion of creativity. Here is a quote I found that sums it up for me:

“The principle goal of education is to create citizens who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done - citizens who are creative, inventive and discoverers” - Jean Piaget (1980).

Yes, being creative, experimental, innovative, artistic and expressive are all things that we encourage at Russell Street for teachers and students alike and I am amped to see where we might end up!

Some of the other learning areas we will be looking into this term are as follows:

★ **Literacy:** Independent reading activities, reading assessments, how to be a creative writer?, spelling lists.
★ **Numeracy:** Number Knowledge, Statistics, Addition and Subtraction
★ **Inquiry:** How to be a creative and effective community of learners, The treaty of Waitangi, Artist Study
★ **Visual Art:** Art attack, paint and brush techniques
★ **Physical Education:** Swimming, team-building exercises
★ **I.C.T.:** Cyber Safety, ePortfolios, Art
★ **Language:** Te Reo, Karakia, Waiata
★ **Buddy Class Activities**
★ **Rotations:** Teachers in the senior school will rotate our classes to follow their passions and do something fully creative! Exciting!
House-keeping

ePortfolios: As most of you know, in a digitally enhanced class each child has an ‘ePortfolio’ or blog where they post what they have been learning about. A post could be written language, photos or videos. It is an amazing way to share learning with family at home, and around the world. Sharing learning gives students an audience so it makes learning more meaningful and purposeful. Last year Deb sent out a ‘permission slip’ about having the student’s ePortfolios attached to our class blog. People will not be able to log into ePortfolios but will be able to view and/or comment on their learning. This is a powerful way to extend our walls on our classroom. This will carry over for the parents who already have given permission. New parents will need to text or email permission to me (see below) to get their child’s ePortfolio hooked up to the class’s blog. And please feel free to text or email any questions or queries too!

Swimming: During this term we will be swimming at least twice a week. Please be organised and bring togs and towel for swimming lessons.

Email and mobiles: It’s a really great way to send and receive information about up and coming events, reminders, or general conversations about your child’s learning. Please send in your email and mobile number so we can interact without sending screeds and screeds of paper home.

Baking: Are there any keen bakers out there who would like to spend some free time with a group of 4 children baking cookies, muffins or cakes? Baking is a delicious way to learn about time and measurement! Text or email if you’re keen!

Open Door Policy: My door is always open! So please come in for a chat about whatever!

And while my door is open, you are all most welcome to come in during class time, read a story with someone or share your passion with the class. After all, it takes “a whole village to raise a child”.

Well, that’s it for now, I am really looking forward to tackling 2011 with you!

Nic

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