

COUNTRY DAY 2026

LIFE ON PLANET EARTH
FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER



KEY DATES

FRIDAY 28 AUGUST - ALL COUNTRY DAY FORMS BACK AT SCHOOL.

**MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER - LAST DAY TO HAND IN PET AND
RESEARCH PROJECTS.**

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER - COUNTRY DAY 2026.



Dear Parents/Caregivers

Welcome to the 2026 Dunsandel School Country Day.

This newsletter provides important information about our upcoming Country Day, a much-anticipated event in the school calendar. This year's Country Day will be held on Friday 18 September 2026.

The pink sheet is the official Country Day entry form and is essential for planning and organisation. Please return it to school by Wednesday 26 August. Pet Projects and Research Projects are due to your child's class teacher by Monday 14 September.

Thank you in advance for supporting your child to return their entry form and projects by the due dates.

The staff, children, and I are all looking forward to sharing this special day with you on Friday 18 September.

Ngā mihi

Dave Robinson

Principal/Tumuaki/Punong-guro



COUNTRY DAY – ON THE DAY

10.00am Morning Tea time for our children

By 10.45am All pets to be at school on the big field

11.00am – 12.00pm Judging begins. The judges are friends of our school from our Community.

From 12.00pm we will have lunch on the school side, feel free to bring a picnic lunch to have with your family; Performances from our Senior Kapa haka will commence. Cake viewing for the PTA Cake Auctions; Hall will be open to view the research projects, Art and Handwriting. The annual PTA Cake Auction will take place.

1.30pm Lamb Drinking Competition, Calf Drinking Competition, Dog races and Best Dressed Pet Parade.

Some key points to be aware of:-

- **All pets** need to be at school by 10:45am for judging at 11:00am
- **Our judges** are local people who have had or continue to have an association with our school. Our judges have a set criterion to use for their judging. Judges enjoy talking to our children – we do ask parents/ caregivers to allow the children to answer the question. Things the Judge may ask include knowledge (bred, age, diet) Care and Attention (feeding times, sleeping, what does your pet need, grooming) and handling (what makes your pet happy/sad, games, what happens when strangers come).
- **Lunch** – We will have lunch on the school side. Staff check on animals during this time – it also gives the animals a break. The hall will be open to view the art and handwriting. It is also an opportunity to view the cakes which are part of the PTA Cake Auction and Bake a Cake Competition.
- **Best Dressed Pet** – We will give children some time to dress up their pet or pet cage. The children will then parade their pet for the secret judges to decide on the Best Dressed Pet' from each class. This will be the last event for the day. Please do not put your pet through unnecessary stress for this part of the day.
- **Lamb Drinking Race** – Please bring a bottle with 300mls of milk for lambs. This event is optional
- **Calf Drinking Race** – Please bring a bottle with 500mls of milk for your calf. This event is optional.
- **Dog Race** – Adult/Parent to have dog on leash and holding hand of child (see Picture in this booklet). This event is optional.

PETS



All children are encouraged to bring a pet. Families can bring one pet and children will be judged individually.

The judge will ask your child questions around care, attention, knowledge and handling.

From there the judge will decide on either a first (red ribbon), second (blue ribbon) or a third (yellow ribbon) placing. All children will receive a ribbon.

Only those children who complete a pet project will be eligible for a first place ribbon.

Criteria for Judging

First Place Pet Project is completed. The child has a high level of knowledge about their pet and can confidently answer the judge's question independently.

Second Place The child is able to answer most of the judge's questions and shows a good level of knowledge.

Third Place The child has some knowledge of their pet and is able to answer some of the judge's questions independently.

All pets need to be at school by 10:45am for judging at 11:00am

Pets will be tethered on our Sports Field where designated areas will be signposted for the animals. We ask that all children stay at school for the duration of the day. Once animals are judged or if you feel they are under stress please feel free to take them home.

PET PROJECTS

All projects are to be in A4 booklet/exercise book/scrapbook form - no posters or dioramas etc. For children in Year 3-6 projects must be handwritten. These are marked by teachers.

Projects should include the following :

Name, Breed, Care and Attention, Health Requirements and Housing.

JUDGING

Our judges are local people who have had or continue to have an association with our school.

We do not use current parents as judges.

Our judges have a set criteria to use for their judging. Judges enjoy talking to our children we do ask parents/caregivers to allow the children to answer the questions.

We appreciate our judges giving up their time to be part of our Country Day

Things your Judge may ask include: Knowledge (breed, age, diet,); Care and Attention (feeding times, sleeping, what does your pet need, grooming) and Handling (what makes your pet happy/sad, games, what happens when strangers come).

RESEARCH PROJECTS

We are including a Research Project option for those children who do not have a pet, but would like to have their work judged on Country Day and earn themselves a Country Day ribbon. This Research Project can be on any animal/creature that the child chooses.

The project must include an animal description, its habitat, diet, predators, interesting facts, pictures and/or diagrams.

Judges will talk to the children about their projects on Country Day.

All projects must be on A4 paper/booklet and the projects will be marked on the day by the judge. These will be displayed in the hall after judging.

BEST DRESSED PET

We will give children some time to dress up their pet or pet cage. The children will then parade their pet for the secret judges to decide on the Best Dressed Pet from each class. This will be the last event for the day. Please do not put your pet through unnecessary stress for this part of the day. **This is an optional event.**

DOG RACE

More fun and always a Country Day highlight.... Dog Racing Adult/Parent to have dog on leash and holding hand of child (see below). **This event is optional.**



HANDWRITING AND ART

This year the children will enter an art and handwriting competition. These pieces of work will be done at school and then judged on Country Day. Our theme this year is Life on Planet Earth. All art is to stay at school at the end of the day - we use this at the Ellesmere Show.

LAMB DRINKING RACE

A bit of fun. Please bring a bottle with 300mls of milk for lambs. **This event is optional.**

CALF DRINKING RACE

A bit of fun. Please bring a bottle with 500mls of milk for calves. **This event is optional.**

LUNCH

We invite you to have a picnic lunch with your child/ren and other families at lunchtime. We have lunch on the school side. Staff check on animals during this time it also gives the animals a break. The hall will be open to view the art and handwriting. During the lunch break the PTA will be auctioning off the cakes in the Bake a Cake competition. This year the Bake a Cake theme is Animal Planet. Information on the Bake a Cake competition will be in the PTA news in the school newsletter. There will be a coffee cart for the coffee lovers and a sausage sizzle during lunch time.

CALVES

If you are bringing a calf please ensure your calf has its own water and food containers and its own halter and lead. We will ensure that calves are tied up at least two metres away from other calves this is the recommendation from MPI.

Calves from different herds or farms should be transported to and from Country Day separately.

When moving your calf at Country Day please ensure an adult is supervising the calf so it can be kept under control.

All calves coming to Country Day must have a readable NAIT ear tag.

Please lay straw to collect effluent and remove any faeces from our grounds.

