



New Zealand Performance Academy Aotearoa

New Zealand Performance Academy Aotearoa, the country's newest charter school, will be New Zealand's first dedicated sports school, the academy's chief executive Karen van Gernerden says.

The academy will initially offer athletic training in football and rugby training, using the expertise of the Wellington Phoenix' Football Academy, before adding other sports, such as cricket, golf, basketball, league, track and sailing and more. The scope of sport opportunities will be informed by the students attending.

"It will provide academic rigor, while offering flexibility for sporting development and commitment," Ms van Gernerden says. "The sports-focused curriculum is designed for students dedicated to a sport who are looking for a professional, vocational and or an academic pathway."

Opening a secondary school for athletes means talented sportspeople are not forced to choose between their education and their athletic dreams.

The academy will be based at the New Zealand Campus of Innovation and Sport (NZCIS) in Upper Hutt, a state-of-the-art facility designed to support high-performance sports. NZCIS will also partner with the school to provide specialised sports training.

The academy will offer a balanced curriculum that integrates rigorous academics with world-class athletic development, providing flexible scheduling, personalised support, and access to top-tier coaching and facilities.

The academy will offer NCEA qualifications and will integrate the New Zealand Curriculum within a framework that is both flexible and contextually relevant.

"It aims to prepare students to excel in sport and life through a holistic focus on financial literacy, leadership, healthy relationships, mental health, nutrition, physical well-being, and mentorship," Ms van Gernerden says.

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