

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part One: Sponsor capability

Financial acuity

1. Demonstrate your financial acumen through a profit/loss (P&L) balance sheet for your first three years of operation.

- Please refer to the attached Profit and Loss (P&L) spreadsheet—Appendix A.

2. Demonstrate how you will use the P&L to influence the governance structure to make decisions for your school and manage financial and business performance?

The Advisory Board convened to operate and oversee The Forest School [as a Charter School] has been chosen for their proven ability to operate businesses successfully. Tennille and Gavin have also successfully operated a day school and a school holiday programme for eight years, 9(2)(a) [redacted] These have been run from The Forest School premises. The Advisory Board comprises people with the acumen and experience necessary to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Charter School. They include people with successful financial, construction, marketing and business backgrounds.

9(2)(b)(ii) [redacted]

Detailed monthly budgets and a full monthly financial statement reporting against school budgets are central to our approach to financial management. The detailed budget is attached with our P&L in Appendix A. It has been prepared on a conservative and prudent basis, and we believe it to be realistic. The Forest School Finance Manager will prepare monthly financial

statements and compare them to this budget at the end of each month. In that way, timely interventions can be made should negative variances to the budget arise.

9(2)(b)(ii)

Alistair Owens - Finance Manager for The Forest School | Chartered Accountant (retired)

Leadership and community

3. Outline a clear approach to governance that details how your leadership/value proposition will attract families/students to enrolment. It is important to include specific detail here, as the students will be the main source of your funding.

Approach to governance

Firstly, as indicated in *Part Five, changes to your stage one submission*, we propose a name and entity change for the Sponsor from what was submitted in round one of our application. The trading name of the School will remain the same. We would be grateful if this could be considered. The proposed change is based on two reasons. First, our expansion plan has progressed from being a consideration by the Advisory Board to now being an actively developed growth strategy in collaboration with the Advisory Board. This changes The Forest School (the proposed school), from being only one school at one location to the trading name for multiple schools.

9(2)(b)(ii)

The new proposed name of the Sponsor is **New Zealand Forest Schools Limited**.

NEW ZEALAND FOREST SCHOOLS LIMITED is a registered limited company with company number 9278847 and NZBN: 9429052368738. It was incorporated on 24 September 2024. The

directors of this company are GAVIN MURDOCH and TENNILLE MURDOCH. The IRD number for NEW ZEALAND FOREST SCHOOLS LIMITED is 9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]

The roles and responsibilities of the Sponsor

Roles

- the proprietor of The Forest School (the School)
- the legal employer
- responsible for the contract between the School and the Charter School Agency

Responsibilities

- provide all aspects of the School's performance measures and contract obligations to the Charter School Agency
- communicate openly, transparently and effectively with the Charter School Agency

The trading name for the Charter School will continue to be **The Forest School**.

Advisory Board

The Sponsor appoints an Advisory Board to govern the school. In normal circumstances, the Sponsor does not make individual decisions as an individual entity. The governance of The Forest School is by the Advisory Board, an expert team of professionals who are trusted, experienced business and education leaders with vast skills and expertise. The Advisory Board provides shared oversight, clear strategic direction, responsibility, decisions, and accountability for the school's requirements to meet all measures and targets in relation to the Charter School Agency requirements, specifically the Performance Management Framework.

Each board member has a specific area of the school they have greater oversight of because of that person's background and expertise. Other board members will look to that person as an expert in their field and take guidance from that person. Although each member has a targeted area of focus and will provide detailed oversight and recommendations, the Board's culture and mandate are always to collaborate and have unity in decision-making. There will be some overlap between the key areas and with Board members. The specific areas are: 1. Finance, 2. Curriculum and teaching, 3. Personnel and HR, 4. Facilities, innovation and property; 5. Student safety and wellbeing, 6. Policy and planning 7. Community engagement.

The Sponsor selects the inaugural Advisory Board. The Advisory Board may nominate further advisors from time to time, up to a maximum of 8 members at any time. Advisory board nominees must receive at least four positive votes from fellow advisors to gain an Advisory Board place. Once there are eight advisors, the Advisory Board may not add further members.

Board advisors serve for a maximum term of three years, but re-election by the Advisory Board is admissible. Re-election requires a 2/3rds positive vote of the board members – or greater. Advisors must give at least one month's notice if they intend to resign. Advisors may be voted out of office by a 2/3rds, or greater, majority vote of all other board advisors. The Advisory Board meets monthly from February through to December each year.

Inaugural members of the Advisory Board include

Tamany (Tami) Harris - CEO of Acorn Charitable Trust

Tami is a registered psychotherapist and clinical social worker. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Michigan, a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work from the University of Chicago, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Inclusive Education from the University of Auckland. Tami has over twenty-five years of experience managing non-profit organisations and programmes in New Zealand and the United States. She is a nationally recognised advocate and spokesperson on neurodiversity and mental health.

Philip Reed - Managing Director of Gas Serve

Phil has operated for over twenty-five years as owner and director of several trade-based companies and is currently managing director of Gas Serve Ltd. This role has resulted in significant experience in careful financial management, contract negotiation and delivery, health and safety planning, and staff training and management. Phil is actively involved with community youth programmes through the Boys Brigade of NZ. He leads the Auckland Massey unit and previously served the association in a funding advisory role. Phil focuses on building firm, quality relationships and understanding that integrity and long-term stability are essential for consistent success.

Tennille Murdoch - Principal of The Forest School

Tennille has taught for twenty-four years in various schools and communities across New Zealand, the International School community in South East Asia, and several schools in the UK. Her experience is across all year levels in Early Childhood and Primary education, developing curricula and creating innovative ways for children to learn. She is a registered teacher and visionary school leader who co-founded The Forest School in 2016, a private extension school for Primary students. Tennille is a highly passionate educator and advocate for holistic education for children. She has a Bachelor of Education, and her next step is to obtain a Master's of Education, specialising in Inclusive Education.

Paul Toilalo - Music Company Director

Talofa, Kia ora and warm greetings to you and your loved ones. O le viiga i le Atua aua o ia e pule I mea uma lava. I am Paul Toilalo, and serving as a Board member at The Forest School

will be an honour. I have been a touring and recording professional musician for several years. For over a decade, I was a teacher in High Schools (Papatoetoe, Henderson, Otāhuhu and St. Pauls) as a music specialist. Then, I set up recording studios and wrote music curricula. From there, I moved to Alternative Education and designed a programme that taught literacy through music. I then taught music theory and performance at the Tertiary level. I am now self-employed and have a music production and audio-visual systems company, managing live events and shows such as the Aotearoa Music Awards.

Gavin Murdoch - Deputy Principal of The Forest School

For the last eight years, Gavin has been Director and teacher at The Forest School, pioneering nature play-based learning in New Zealand. He has been a professional lifeguard for ten years, leading the Regional Lifeguard Service for Surf Lifesaving Northern Region. Gavin has represented New Zealand in the National Surfing Team at World Championships and was twice awarded the Prime Minister's Scholarship for academic and sporting excellence. He has taught in several schools as an Outdoor Education, PE, Sailing Coach, EOTC and Geography teacher. Gavin has also taught as a PE specialist in Kuala Lumpur, Youth at Risk in NZ and Australia and as NZ Director for an American International Education company, teaching leadership at universities. Gavin holds a Bachelor of Business Studies, a Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy), and a Graduate Diploma in Teaching, and he is a NZ registered teacher.

Alistair Owens - Chartered Accountant (retired)

My professional education includes being a Chartered Accountant with the NZ Society of Accountants since 1988 and completing the Advanced Management Program 1988 at Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration; I am now retired. I have extensive business, accounting, and IT background in various industries in New Zealand and overseas. I have also owned and developed businesses in billing software in New Zealand, the hospitality industry in the United Kingdom and manufacturing in New Zealand. I was on the Board of Trustees at Orewa College from 2013 - 2016 and am the current Treasurer for Restore Hibiscus Coast and Bays (RHCB). My keen conservation interests have led me to gain the New Zealand Agrichemical Education Trust for the Growsafe Basic Certificate (2024) and New Zealand Dotterel (Tūturiwhatu) Practical Management Workshop (2023). I understand how organisations work, how to navigate through financial processes and systems, and how to work with stakeholders to achieve results.

The roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Board

- ask for and receive managerial and performance management reports on all aspects of the school's affairs and provide feedback
- communicate effectively with parents, teachers and the community
- ensure all systems in The Forest School are operating effectively

- ensure teachers are well prepared and supported to implement The Forest School's unique approach
- ensure systems are in place which will keep the school in a continual state of improvement in all aspects of its operation
- provide a forum for any matter needing independence from those employed in the school
- provide strategic plans (including financial and site development plans) for the future development of The Forest School
- provide, modify or remove policies
- provide, oversee, maintain, improve and correct the management system and modify it in the event of an emergency
- provide, require, legitimise, sanction, and enforce policies for the effective running of The Forest School
- write the annual report to parents
- consider all matters presented via the Advisory Board agendas.
- submit matters for inclusion on the Advisory Board agenda(s) in a timely fashion
- give their individual counsel, expertise and advice to the Advisory Board when requested
- keep clear records of their meetings and actions
- operate under standard committee rules, using a Chairperson and minute Secretary

External specialists that support The Forest School

Please refer to Stage One, Part Three Business Plan j) for further details already outlined about these support companies and the Leadership Team.

Legal firm: Goodwin Turner Commercial Lawyers

Accounting firm: Complete Accounting

Human resource: Pure Recruitment

Health & Safety: Ignite Safety

The Forest School has a team of legal, accounting, and other external personnel with whom it has been engaged with for several years. We have also recently engaged with other external services to provide us with updated support and expertise for the new Charter School. We are members of the Auckland Business Chamber and can access all its advisors, including HR, finance, legal, and other professionals, as required. The Governance and Leadership Structure of our Charter School is below. The external management of specialised areas of the School, such as Lawyers, Accountants, Human Resources, Health & Safety, and Information & Software Management, are included alongside the day-to-day leadership team. It is the Advisory Board that oversees the governance of all aspects of the Charter School.

Newly engaged service providers include

HERO - <https://our-hero.com/>

Safe365 - <https://safe365global.com/nz/>

SchoolDocs - <https://www.schooldocs.co.nz/>

Adventure Mark - <https://www.adventuremark.co.nz/>

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team will meet weekly. This team is responsible for setting budgets, curriculum review, and accountability regarding the school's day to day operations and finances as directed by the Advisory Board. It is also responsible for making school-wide decisions and other day-to-day student, community, property, and operational decisions as directed by the Advisory Board. The Property Manager and Office Manager will attend leadership meetings as needed. Likewise, the PTA and Student Council will be asked to key leadership meetings as required. The members of the Leadership Team are:

Principal: Tennille Murdoch

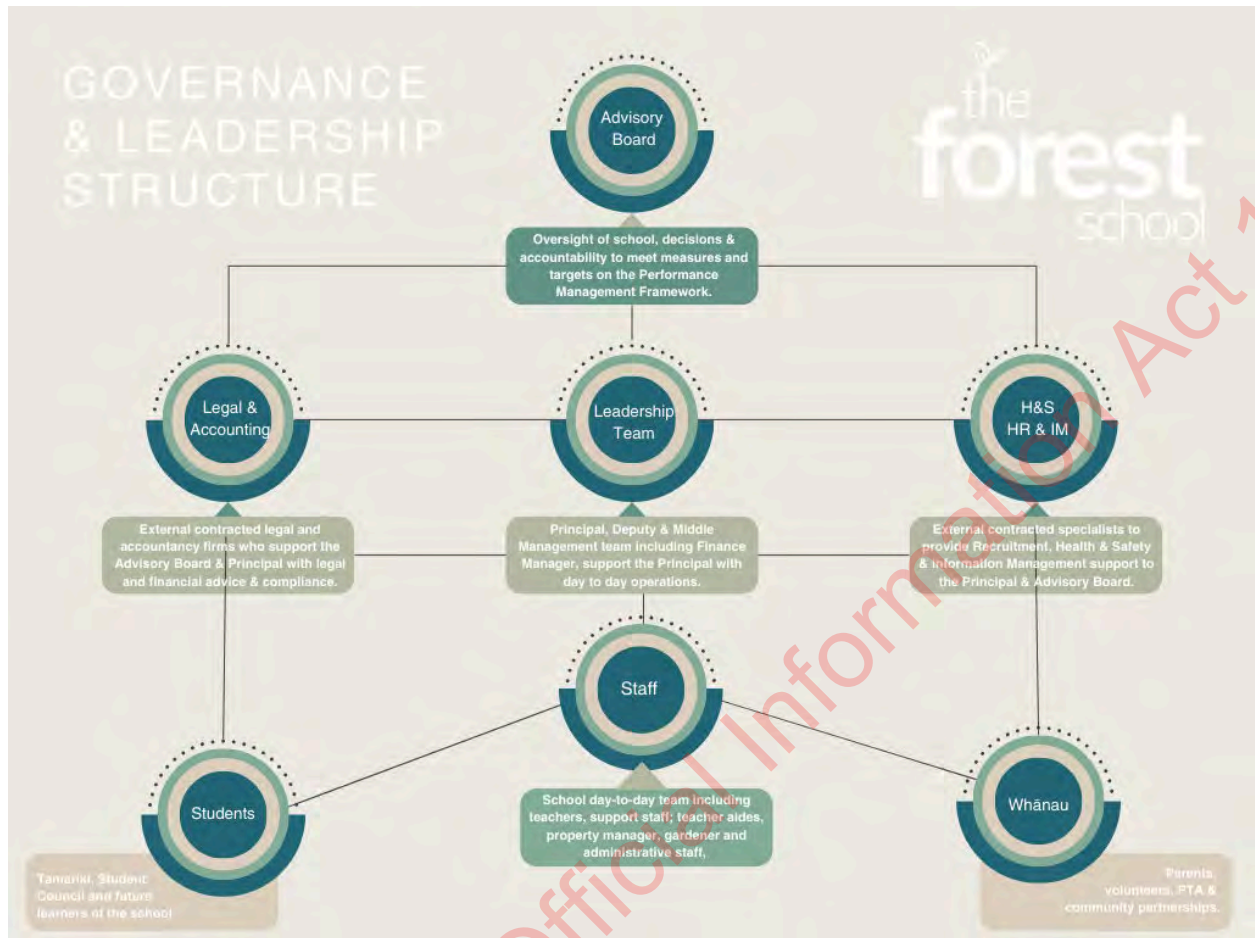
Finance Manager: Alistair Owens

Deputy Principal: Gavin Murdoch

Team Leader Tui Hub: Paul Bricklebank

Team Leader Fantail Hub: Crystal Ku

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How our leadership and value as an innovative school attracts families

Strong governance and effective leadership are crucial to fostering a community where children thrive, and families feel confident in their educational choice.

Strong governance

Ensures that policies, financial decisions, and school operations align with the school's vision and the requirements of the Charter School Agency.

Effective leadership

Creates a transparent culture and roadmap that prioritises student well-being, academic excellence, and community involvement.

Together, strong governance and effective leadership will ensure that our Charter School has clear oversight of all areas and creates a stable, safe, and attractive learning environment. This will build trust with families and make them feel secure in their choice of school.

As well as this, a daily commitment to excellence and constant seeking to improve and do better for children sets education leaders apart from those who are laissez-faire in style to leaders who are hardworking, infectious and who create change. Parents and families are aware of this, and they notice it. We are an innovative and exciting school to be a part of, and parents have a strong desire to be part of our school community. This desire comes from our positive reputation of already meeting whānau and tamariki needs. We will maintain this desire, attraction, and appeal by continuing to work hard, striving for excellence, and having integrity in what we say. Parents and families want a school that offers a stimulating curriculum and a nurturing environment—one that inspires, enriches, and genuinely enhances their children's lives. They want a place they can trust to deliver on that promise. The Forest School is already known to be that school.

Qualities that will keep attracting parents to our school: Built on trust and commitment

Innovative teaching practices

Our school, inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, embraces modern, child-centred, constructivist education. This includes an inquiry-based integrated curriculum, play and nature pedagogy, and the science of learning Literacy and Numeracy.

Strong academic outcomes

We have a proven track record of student achievement and personal growth across various learning areas; this showcases our school's commitment to learning and achievement excellence.

Nurturing environment

We are a school that prioritises mental health and well-being, social-emotional learning, and individual student support to create a safe, caring atmosphere where children thrive.

Experienced and empathetic staff

The team at The Forest School is made up of passionate, skilled educators who are dedicated to nurturing each child's unique talents, fostering strong emotional connections, and demonstrating genuine aroha and empathy.

A holistic and balanced curriculum

Our school's engaging curriculum blends core academic skills with the arts, physical activity and adventure, environmental and science learning in situ, cultural and world studies, and hands-on technology, invention and construction, providing students with a well-rounded education.

Conclusion

These capabilities and unique attributes are valuable assets that will draw parents seeking a progressive environment for their children to The Forest School. Families already trust and value our approach, knowing we deliver on our promises. The strong demand we've already established reflects this trust, and maintaining it is essential to our continued success.

We will be a school with strong governance, effective leadership and an extremely positive reputation because we deliver on what we say. This is attractive to families and why many are already attracted to The Forest School. Families trust us, and we have a positive reputation as educational leaders in our community and New Zealand because of our integrity and demonstrated excellence. Families have already chosen us in anticipation of a Charter School opening in 2025 because of our reputation for providing high-quality, innovative learning.

The Forest School has massive appeal as a Charter School because of our proven track record. Families and the community know we have the experience, knowledge, and capabilities to deliver excellent education, such as the qualities of our school mentioned above. Our expressions of interest are a testament to this. The Forest School will maintain trust, lead, and add value to our community by continuing to walk the talk and proving we have integrity when we say we raise attendance and student achievement.

Of the 156 Expression of Interest we have received

9(2)(b)(ii)



- 100% of surveyed families said they would support a predominantly device-free school.

Note: A predominantly device-free school means that we are not overly reliant on screen-based devices for teaching, learning, and activities. This is comparatively different from many Primary Schools that use iPads and tablets daily in all learning areas. Parents dislike this approach. We will provide a wide range of technological resources and tools for learning, carefully balancing screen-based devices.

4. How will the governance and organisation structure positively impact student achievement and attendance. Consider the key responsibilities of your teaching workforce in relation to the students and how this will be operationalised day to day.

Introduction

In the previous question, we highlighted strong governance, effective leadership, and the trust of families who value our approach is essential for a school's success. In addition to this, a well-organised, professional, and hardworking team with high standards and a clear strategy positively impacts student achievement and attendance. These qualities ensure that every student is supported and encouraged to thrive. Impacting student achievement is a shared responsibility, and all members of the school must acknowledge this. This shared responsibility between the Advisory Board and the school-wide team includes:

Have a clear academic vision and high levels of accountability

Our Advisory Board ensures that the school's academic goals, including those related to the Performance Management Framework, are well-defined and regularly monitored. High standards are set, and both leadership and the teaching workforce are accountable for student outcomes.

Closely monitor data and have an ethos of data-driven decision-making

The Advisory Board and leadership team analyse attendance and academic data to identify patterns and areas for improvement. Using this data, we will implement targeted interventions, such as additional learning support or engagement strategies.

Promote a strong community and support whānau engagement

The Advisory Board and the entire school workforce actively promote a collaborative relationship with parents and the community by being involved, visible members of our school. Regular communication, family involvement in school events and activities, and transparent decision-making create a sense of belonging and trust. When families feel connected and supported, students are more likely to attend school regularly and remain motivated to succeed academically.

How The Forest School will impact student achievement

Strategy 1: Cultivate a school culture that prioritises children and their learning and is centred on respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration, and emotional safety.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Create a child-centric, barrier-free environment that places students' holistic needs at the centre
- Ensure akonga are active participants in their education and have learner agency
- Develop learner-focused relationships that are empathetic and genuine
- Create an environment where students are confident in their identity, language, culture and abilities
- Provide autonomy for children to choose topics and experiences that interest them (child-led inquiry)
- Foster a deep connection to teachers, peers and concepts by allowing tamariki to make decisions about their learning
- Value and nurture the individual learning stage and pace of each student
- Maintain our school culture of inclusion and respect that is learner-focused rather than grade-focused
- Measure progress and achievement that highlights individual effort, improvement and growth
- Regularly assess levels of engagement, strengths and difficulties, emotional resilience and well-being to provide a holistic overview of each learner
- Diligently follow the assessment scope and sequence of school-wide Literacy and Numeracy frameworks to track and monitor progress and attainment
- Foster trust, respect, and cooperation by implementing the practice of tuakana-teina
- Collaborate in learning regardless of age, stage, difference, disability, or learning style; practising ako
- Provide barrier-free access to learning so that achievement is within reach for every child
- Create a safe environment where akonga feel loved and cared for
- Develop strong emotional connections with students and whānau
- Encourage students to view mistakes as learning opportunities and support them to embrace challenges confidently
- Teach and model growth mindset, virtues and important dispositions for the future

Strategy 2: Design learning experiences incorporating a wide range of curricula, pedagogies, and assessments while ensuring a comprehensive understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages, and cultures.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Maintain our school constructivist approach where learners construct knowledge rather than passively take in information
- Allow tamariki to experience the world and reflect upon their experiences
- Support children to build deep representations and incorporate new information into their pre-existing knowledge (schemas)
- Nurture a rich social learning environment
- Commit to helping children 'learn to learn' and 'love to learn'
- Teach Literacy and Numeracy explicitly for at least an hour each day, based on the science of learning and following our school-wide frameworks for these
- Develop Personalised Learning Plans for each child
- Foster learning through play and free play, actively utilise this time to observe, reflect and learn about students and their next steps for inquiry
- Develop professionally in the Reggio Emilia Approach
- Thoroughly understand child-led inquiry and Kath Murdoch's Inquiry Model
- Link new learning to the child's existing knowledge, experiences, and interests by providing voice, choice, and agency
- Support children to ask questions, investigate problems, issues, and interests
- Provide an adult-structured, safe environment with a balanced curriculum that is flexible and child-led
- Nurture individual strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures
- Ensure you are a trusted adult who supports, questions, challenges, and leads and directs when necessary
- Foster high engagement by creating inspiring and exciting learning opportunities
- Create a setting where children thrive, allowing them to engage in self-directed learning and pursue their interests
- Prepare tamariki for the complexities of the modern world by fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and other 21st-century skills
- Make learning visible as part of our school-wide assessment strategy
- Shift mindsets from what teachers are teaching to what learners are learning
- Ensure a complete understanding of the individual student and their learning needs
- Use a range of academic assessment processes and tools, including the school-wide tool e-asTTle for assessing Literacy and Numeracy
- Use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Student Engagement Instrument (SEI), Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and Resilient Youth to understand the whole child

Strategy 3: Respond to children and their learning with expertise and flexibility, adjusting depth and pace to advance student learning effectively.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Actively respond to children and their learning in a way that considers individual needs, abilities, and paces of progress
- Create an innovative space for different learning needs
- Remember tamariki are not a one-size-fits-all
- Foster academic learning as well as supporting well-being and self-efficacy
- Remember that children are diverse, unique individuals, and differentiation in learning is crucial
- Maintain a low teacher-to-child ratio of 1:16 per class that allows for Personalised Learning Plans and differentiation
- Embrace parent and whānau involvement
- Ensure children get the care, attention and direct support they need from trusted adults
- Take the time to know students and their passions, likes, dislikes, goals, challenges and hopes for the future
- Allow tamariki to explore, learn and grow holistically, at the time and pace and in the domain right for them
- Ensure strong emotional connections and relationships to enhance learning
- Remember success is about what learners are learning, not what teachers are teaching
- Avoid rushing or putting pressure on akonga
- Promote consideration for diversity, culture, identity, and ways to promote inclusion
- Integrate learning across all areas, promoting holistic, meaningful learning that is academic, social and emotional and physical
- Model risk-taking, trying new things and accepting mistakes
- Provide learning that inspires the minds and enriches the lives of learners
- Support the educational aspirations of our Māori and Pasifika students and create an inclusive and respectful learning environment that values all cultural identities
- Integrate culturally responsive teaching practices
- Support Māori and Pasifika students and to achieve their full potential
- Be actively involved with our entire school community
- Adjust the depth and pace of learning, specifically for Māori, Pasifika and students of minority groups students when required
- Link tikanga Māori to our students' play and learning experiences

Strategy 4: Establish and sustain professional relationships centred on student learning and well-being.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Invest in reciprocal, collaborative relationships with education and health professionals in the community and across New Zealand
- Enhance own professional practice and stay on a trajectory of professional improvement
- Maintain collegial partnerships with those who share our passion and priority of children being central
- Pursue excellence in educational practice and teacher responsibility
- Create a transformative learning environment beyond conventional methods
- Push the boundaries of traditional education
- Implement current research, pedagogy, and approaches fostering an environment where students can thrive
- Collaborate with other professionals, investing in collegial partnerships and conversations
- Keep one another accountable so that students are in a place where they love to learn, be and belong
- Embody continuous improvement and innovation
- Uphold the school's belief in the power of education to change lives
- Uphold the school's belief that high engagement is where deep, meaningful learning happens
- Commit to well-being so that children are 'learning ready'
- Participate and engage with professionals for PLD workshops, courses, webinars and events to improve student academic achievement, attendance, learning and experiences, particularly in neurodiversity, well-being, Structured Literacy and Numeracy, Reggio Emilia, play pedagogy, nature pedagogy and inquiry-based learning

Strategy 5: Commit to tangata whenuatanga and the partnership principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Maintain a respectful concern and appreciation for our diverse country
- Be culturally responsive and competent in implementing the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into daily practice
- Promote and champion Aotearoa as a multicultural nation
- Actively respond to our school's dynamic and diverse cultures
- Continually seek input from experts and those in our school community on how we deliver education in a culturally responsive way

- Uphold the school's belief that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the essence of what brings all people in Aotearoa together
- Contribute to the design and delivery of our programmes and practices in a way that respects and reflects Māori and Pasifika culture and values
- Engage with other kaiako, school staff and whānau in ongoing professional development to enhance understanding and practices of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Foster an inclusive school culture that recognises, respects and celebrates Māori values, traditions, and perspectives
- Strive to create an environment where all children and the community feel valued, supported, and proud of their cultural heritage
- Participate in a range of professional development in cultural competence, implementing a wide range of Te reo, Tikanga Māori, and Te Tiriti processes
- Recognise and champion the richness of each student's cultural knowledge and skills
- Value all learners so they know they matter as the basis for building meaningful learning and raising achievement
- Know your akonga incredibly well; their passions, interests, whānau, home life and whakapapa, learning styles, needs and the challenges they may have faced, bringing them to where they are

Strategy 6: Engage in personal inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and professional development to enhance professional skills and positively impact all students' learning and achievement.

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Contribute with colleagues as part of a professional learning community to improve student engagement and achievement
- Inquire into and reflect on the effectiveness of our practice in an ongoing way
- Share passion, work, creative ideas and practice with colleagues
- Design teaching and learning by drawing from research surrounding play pedagogy, child-led inquiry, Reggio Emilia and constructivism, social-emotional learning, nature pedagogy and project-based learning
- Become familiar with modern Educational Psychologists, child development experts and researchers such as Dr Peter Grey, Sir Ken Robinson, Dr Ross Greene, Jonathon Haidt, Michelle Garcia Winner, Kath Murdoch and others
- Research and share with colleagues and other experts who inspire mahi and pedagogical approaches
- Maintain professionalism as an active lifelong learner who researches, reads and thrives on being current with research and best practices in education and child development
- Develop professionally as a leader and advocate for neurodiverse learners

- Provide equitable opportunities for marginalised students who face inequalities
- Participate in targeted professional development for ADHD, ASD, SPD and other neurodiverse tamariki as well as PLD on cultural competency, inclusive teaching practices, free play, child-led inquiry, social-emotional learning and mental health and wellbeing
- Support one another so that all staff understand how best to support all learners regardless of diversity or difference
- Share research so the culture of the school is one that drives us to consider doing things differently and better constantly
- Uphold the school belief that children's well-being and learning are paramount and that our school is the place to support families with this
- Collaboratively problem-solve with professionals, whānau, children and staff to develop professionally and come up with new strategies to raise achievement and attendance
- Be tuned in to conversations, research and changes in education and health that emerge in Aotearoa and internationally

How The Forest School will impact student attendance

Strategy 1: Create a positive attendance culture and provide clear expectations

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Communicate the expectations of our school from the outset and establish a positive attendance culture
- Value regular attendance and support and acknowledge this
- Create a positive culture where children are valued, supported, highly engaged, belong, and are excited about arriving at school each day
- Provide variety and give students something interesting to look forward to
- Make sure every child has friends and is not isolated from his/her peers
- Be a caring, empathetic, loving teacher
- Invest in, show interest and input into students' lives
- Be trustworthy, honest, reliable and have integrity
- Create an atmosphere where children want to come to school each day
- Create an atmosphere that promotes the importance of being present at school
- Educate children and whānau on the links between attendance and academic achievement and belonging

Strategy 2: Promote parent involvement and have excellent communication with whānau

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Ensure excellent communication with parents that is open, consistent and transparent
- Develop an emotional connection with whānau and students
- Educate parents and children on the importance of attendance using infographics and posters
- Attend and help at information evenings for whānau, promoting the data and benefits of consistent attendance
- Support both students and whānau to understand the research behind regular attendance and its links with academic achievement
- Invite parents regularly to stay on to assist and contribute as parent helpers
- Welcome whānau so they feel like a wanted part of the school community
- Create a culture in your classroom that strengthens relationships and, in turn, attendance accountability
- Contribute to the school being an inviting and family-oriented place for the whole whānau

Strategy 3: Establish an engaging learning environment

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Provide a varied and interesting daily curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to learners
- Spend no less than four hours in nature daily- take the curriculum outside as much as possible
- Demonstrate to children regularly that learning is exciting and goes beyond the four walls of a classroom
- Engage with parents and whānau and utilise their expertise in learning
- Plan regular extracurricular events, school trips, and excursions
- Work directly with the EOTC lead/Deputy Principal to design and supervise class experiences, STEM lab, technologies, extracurricular activities and sport
- Create a holistic and exciting perspective on how education can be varied and experiential for children
- Ensure inquiry learning is child-led
- Be present during Learning Through Play (LTP) and utilise the Notice, Recognise, Respond model to inform meaningful teaching and learning
- Promote learning as a fun, inspiring way to grow and demonstrate how it is relevant to children's lives
- Connect regularly with the local environment, such as the beach, estuary and local businesses in the community

- Ensure learning is interesting, motivating and full of real-life experiences that give children a reason to attend school
- Ensure students feel welcome, valued, respected and loved
- Give children something to look forward to each day so they have an internal need to be at school

Strategy 4: Develop strong school-wide support systems

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Immediately notify leadership if a child faces a barrier to attendance
- Attend 'Attendance Support System' meeting with leadership when required
- Support the leadership team in developing an individual strategy to provide the necessary support systems to any child facing a barrier to attendance. Participate actively in the strategy where necessary.
 - Support systems may include carpooling with another family, visiting the home if there is a health, medical or family problem, providing practical support, such as meals, counselling, mentoring, or engaging with other community outreach groups
- Note: It is crucial the teaching workforce has already invested in establishing positive relationships with the family so home visits are comfortable

Strategy 5: Have a clear understanding of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

Key responsibilities of teaching workforce:

- Learn about motivation styles (extrinsic vs intrinsic) by participating in PLD in this area
- Conduct the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) with students
- Assess the degree to which children are motivated intrinsically or extrinsically across academic and social contexts
- Use motivation information to tailor strategies and approaches to suit each child e.g.:
 - Extrinsic motivation strategy to raise attendance offers immediate, tangible rewards such as recognition or incentives to reinforce attendance habits. Such as a class points programme where students earn points for regular attendance, working towards extra play time, shared lunch, prizes or other privileges or recognition
 - Intrinsic motivation strategy involves students setting personal goals that are meaningful to the student and reflect on how attending school helps them achieve those goals

- Support students to learn the value of attendance and that this directly correlates with achieving the goals they set for themselves
- Provide feedback and encouragement so tamariki feel a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction from achieving their goals (whether intrinsic or extrinsic)

5. As a leader or potential leader in your community, demonstrate with a stakeholder breakdown how the community consultation you have undertaken has informed your decisions about your Charter School, identifying where there is risk and where there is support for your school.

Introduction

The Forest School is an opportunity for everyone who believes in the power of education to change lives and be part of something incredibly life-changing for children. We have a great deal of support from a wide range of key stakeholders because we have a proven track record of providing innovative approaches to learning, and our key stakeholders trust us to deliver high-quality education.

This support includes our parent community, students themselves, local MP and Government Minister Mark Mitchell, support from the Auckland Business Chamber and local Hibiscus Coast and Silverdale Business Associations, Auckland Council, Forest and Bird, leaders in education in Auckland and across New Zealand, such as Dr Sarah Aiono and her team at Longworth Education, and Principals and teachers from across the country, as well as internationally from Sarah Blackwell, Founder of Forest Schools United Kingdom.

Continuing open dialogue and engaging with our community and stakeholders is crucial to the ongoing development and success of our school. However, it would be premature to start open days and information evenings just yet. We will wait to hear from the Charter School Agency regarding our second-round application; then, we will disclose more to the public, hold information evenings, meetings, open days, send newsletters, publish articles in the local newspapers, and have an active social media presence to increase conversations, provide important information, and answer questions.

We have the experience, skills, tenacity, passion, and expertise to provide a leading example of a successful Charter School. The unwavering commitment from families and stakeholders who recognise the importance of our position as innovative education providers has been overwhelming. Below is a breakdown of the consultations we have had with our stakeholders, which have and continue to inform our decisions and unique offerings.

| Stakeholder | Consultation | Risk or Support |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Parents & whānau | We surveyed our past and present families and received 118 responses. We provided some of the results of these survey questions in round one of our application. Further answers to different questions are below. | Support |
| Students | Current One-day School students have been interviewed by their parents and teachers and were asked some questions. The children shared their own voice to let us know their feelings about The Forest School. Answers to these questions are below. | Support |
| Teachers & staff | Staff consultation has been ongoing in team meetings, face-to-face informal discussions and more recently, formal questions via email. Answers to these questions are below. | Support |
| Advisory Board | Ongoing conversations throughout 2024 and specific questions have recently been put to the Advisory Board since getting to the second stage. Answers to these questions are below. | Support |
| Businesses & community organisations | We have a high level of support from MPs, local Council, education businesses and community organisations. Please see the letters attached as a separate document. | Support |
| Local Iwi and Māori Leaders | We have a long-standing relationship with our local marae and have direct ongoing consultation with our school cultural lead: 9(2)(a) [REDACTED] | Support |
| Ministry of Education | We believe we have support 'in principle'. | Support |
| Education Network | Local teachers who share our philosophy and the wider NZ network of teachers (particularly those searching for new opportunities in education) are very supportive, as are independent organisations. Still, there is some risk with some local mainstream schools & teachers. | Support & Risk |

Please see the breakdown of our community consultation below

Parents & whānau

Parents were surveyed in May 2024 before we began the Charter School journey, and they were asked if they supported us in pursuing an application. Engaging with our community was integral from the outset so that we had their input and voice from the start. This has helped inform us immensely about the decisions we have made and the approach we have taken to develop our Charter School. It was important that we had their support as they (and their children) are the main stakeholders in this, and we serve them.

We included some survey results in our round one application, specifically about what families value and their level of satisfaction between their local mainstream school and The Forest School. We do not include a repetition of those survey questions again, but rather, below are answers to some different questions that were asked, as well as additional comments from families that were not included in the first round application. This will give you greater insight into the level of commitment and support we have from our parent community. *Please also refer to our Stage One application: Context and Environment o) and q) to see other data and comments.*

How far in km do you travel [one way] to get to The Forest School?

22.03% travel under 10 km
32.20% travel 10-30 km
36.44% travel 30-50 km
3.39% travel over 50 km

Many of these families are taking two trips: school—home, and back again in one day, which is approximately 120 - 220 km of driving each day. This shows a strong desire and commitment for their child to attend The Forest School and the sacrifice many parents will make to get them there.

What is it about The Forest School that first attracted you?

92.37% - active outdoor learning
72.88% - free play
57.63% - high-quality, caring teachers
48.31% - inclusive of neurodiversity
77.97% - nature immersion
82.20% - developing problem-solving, creativity, risk-taking, confidence & resilience

- 69.49% - social-emotional wellbeing
- 65.25% - physical & mental wellbeing
- 63.56% - device/screen free
- 73.73% - hands-on learning
- 45.76% - mixed ages


What key features does The Forest School provide that differ from the existing schools in your area?

9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



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9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



Teachers & staff

One-day School teachers and administrative staff have been consulted all year on an ongoing basis through regular staff meetings and discussions. We have sought feedback and input on curriculum and school design collaboratively with our team since the middle of 2024. This has always been consistent and cumulative as the year has progressed. Please see some of the more recent direct questions that we asked some of our current full-time staff.

9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



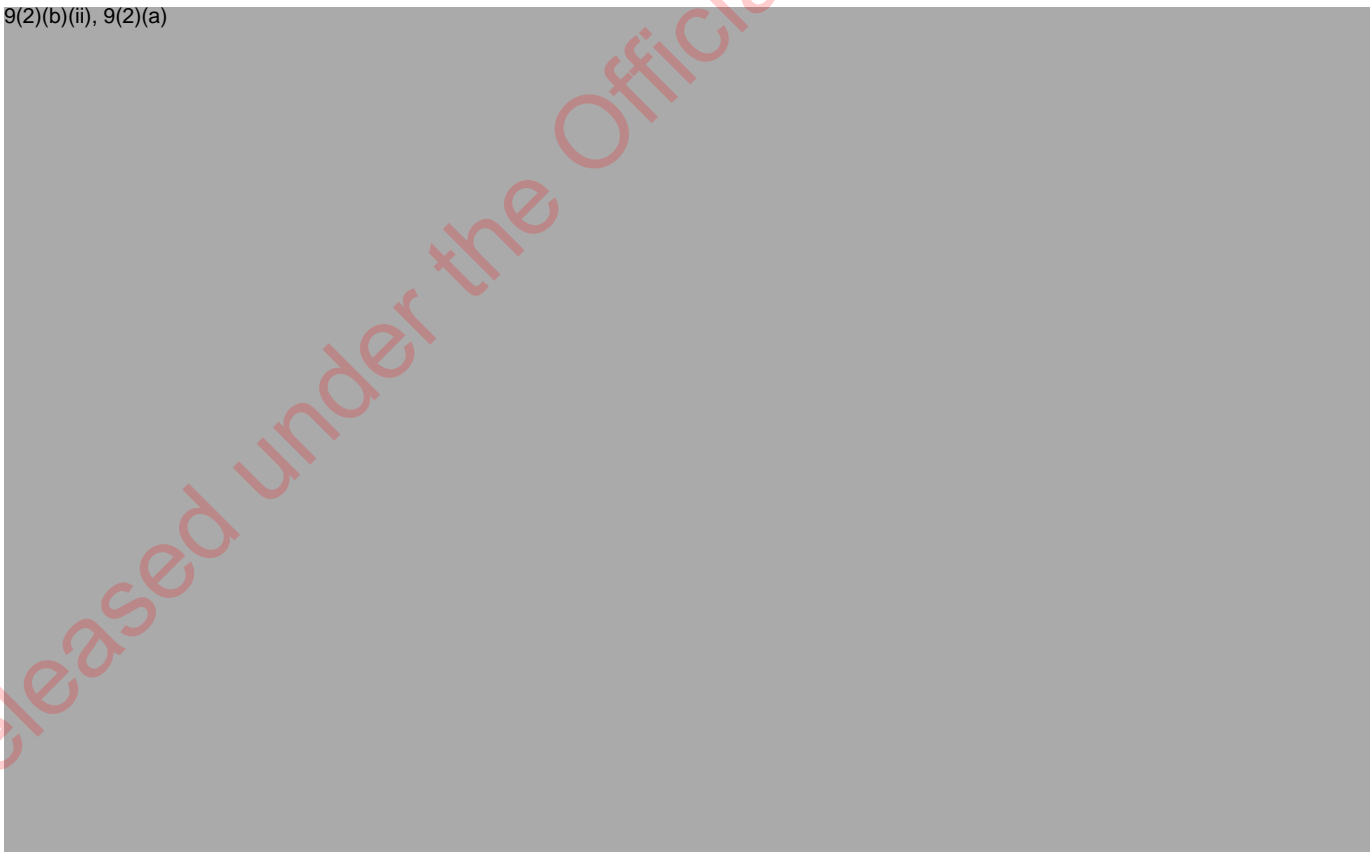
9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



Advisory Board

The Advisory Board communicates via email regularly and on an ongoing basis. Below are some of the recent questions that members were asked and their responses.

9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



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9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



Businesses & Community Organisations

Please refer to our written letters of support as a separate attachment, Appendix B.

Local Iwi and Māori Leaders

Our people are our school's greatest asset, and we are very fortunate to have Māori leaders in our school community who support the cultural approaches integral to teaching and learning at our school. They are ^{9(2)(a)} [redacted]

[redacted] and cultural lead at The Forest School; ^{9(2)(a)} [redacted]
[redacted]

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^{9(2)(a)} Our local kaumātua ^{9(2)(a)} at Te Herenga Waka o Orewa are the heart and soul of our local marae, and in addition to ^{9(2)(a)} they are our go-to for guidance on all aspects of Māori culture and tikanga. All highly support our mahi and regularly donate time, support, guidance and advice on improving our cultural practices at The Forest School.

Ministry of Education

We have a long-standing direct relationship with the MOE IWS and Psychology team, as we have served many of these children over the years. However, I believe MOE employees are not able to provide or say they 'support' us. Though, in principle, I believe we have support from these professional departments. RTLB colleagues in Auckland support us as they work with children struggling in traditional environments. They see the value an alternative setting and approach can provide.

Education Network

Teachers and schools who share our philosophy, such as local Orewa Primary Schools, Stanmore Bay and Red Beach School, Warkworth Primary, KingsWay School and many others across Auckland which allow their students to attend alternative education with us one day per week, are all supportive of The Forest School and have been for many years. However, we have yet to directly update them that we are applying to open a Charter School as there are very mixed views and conversations happening currently that we would rather avoid.

Independent organisations and education businesses such as Longworth Education, Junky Monkeys, Ann Langis Play, NZ Nature Educators, Little Kiwis Nature Play, Acorn Neurodiversity, local private clinical psychologists, and health and social workers are all very, very supportive.

There will always be some people who have entirely different views on education and what education should look like. Groups such as NZEI and PPTA, as well as the school Principals and teachers who follow this narrative and agree with these views, will not likely support us. We are doing our best to keep our heads down and focus on our application submission without getting caught up in the politics of Charter Schools (particularly on Social Media); we prefer to stay right away from this. It is not the area where we need our energy right now. When decisions are made as to whether we are successful in our application, then it will be time to actively approach our local public schools and those across Auckland whom we have a relationship with to update them, meet with them and talk about how we can continue to work together.

Conclusion

Upstanding members of the community and broadly across New Zealand are actively championing our mission to establish a Charter School. They advocate for us because they know we have the capabilities to achieve it. Education and business leaders across New Zealand and internationally will continue to provide us with invaluable support, collaboration and advice, ensuring our curriculum and methods meet the highest standards of excellence. This collective support highlights the shared belief in our vision, dedication to innovative education to uplift student achievement, and the significant impact our Charter School will have on children and families.

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Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Two: Contribution to the wider school network

6. As well as uplifting academic achievement and attendance, how will the school positively impact it's students and contribute to the wider school network/education sector?

How The Forest School will positively impact students

We are a school where natural inquisitiveness is at the heart of each experience. Play and child-led inquiry spark creativity, resilience and wonder, which means when this is a daily practice, we are setting children up for a life of continual curiosity.

Teachers care and show warmth and aroha for their students every day. We prioritise strong emotional connections that empower students to share ideas, ask questions, and make mistakes. Children grow in a safe, secure, trusting environment where they are respected and valued. We foster independence, self-confidence, and a deep sense of ownership over learning. This leads to becoming a lifelong learner who is unafraid of trying things, has a growth mindset and perseveres as an adult.

We focus on academic achievement through high-quality, explicit instruction and nurturing emotional intelligence and well-being. The Forest School helps children cultivate resilience, empathy, and social skills to develop strong social connections for belonging and maintaining relationships. Our vibrant learning environment is designed to keep students motivated and engaged. With various exciting learning opportunities and a culture that values every child's unique strengths, students come to school eager to learn, consistently attending because they feel seen, heard, and valued.

Our dynamic approach integrates high-quality academic instruction with hands-on experiences in nature, environmental stewardship, community values and virtues. Children learn not just from textbooks but from the world around them, engaging in real-life challenges, connecting with nature, and understanding the value of working as a team to contribute and make a difference. This holistic approach ensures that children see themselves as an essential part of something bigger, cultivating selflessness and respect for the natural world and fostering a

sense of responsibility and global citizenship.

Our school leads by example, showing students that community is key to a thriving society. At The Forest School, children will have the opportunity to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally, and they will be surrounded by passionate educators, whānau and peers. Why would parents choose anything less when they can give their children the chance to grow and thrive in an environment that inspires minds and enriches lives?

How The Forest School will contribute to the wider education sector

The Forest School is dedicated to transforming education through play-based, child-led inquiry, high-quality instructional teaching and nature-centred pedagogy. As a funded Charter School, we will be positioned to serve as an influential model in the education sector. The Forest School will have the opportunity to showcase innovative educational approaches that foster the holistic development of tamariki and demonstrate the powerful intersection between learning and nature.

We will be an ideal example of innovative practice, highlighting a high-quality learning environment, confident, happy children and excellent student outcomes. Through our practices, we hope to inspire others, support systemic change, and work alongside multiple schools and organisations to create richer, more meaningful learning experiences for all tamariki. Specifically, we will:

1. Support the mahi of schools and organisations

The Forest School will open its 'doors' to educators, organisations, and community members who wish to observe and learn from our approach. We will inspire other teachers and schools by sharing our practices and showcasing how our students engage with learning through nature, providing a tangible example of our approach to education. In time, we will be able to lead collaborative workshops and PLD training, helping other schools enhance their educational practices.

2. Model nature pedagogy

We will be an exemplary school, demonstrating nature pedagogy and a new level of environmental learning. The Forest School curriculum is brought to life through hands-on, experiential learning that is deeply connected to the whenua. Our approach provides a working example of how integrating nature into everyday learning supports cognitive, emotional, and physical development, not to mention mental health and well-being, in ways that traditional classroom settings cannot replicate. We aim to inspire other schools and educators to explore nature-based learning as a viable and effective educational model.

3. Showcase the benefits of play and child-led inquiry

By prioritising play and child-led inquiry, The Forest School creates a dynamic learning environment where students are empowered to take charge of their own learning. This approach nurtures creativity, problem-solving skills, well-being, and self-confidence, demonstrating play's powerful role in both academic and personal growth. By sharing our experiences and successes, we aim to inspire other schools to adopt similar practices that emphasise the importance of play and inquiry for mental health and social-emotional development, treating these aspects as equally valuable to academic achievements in the learning process.

4. Provide evidence for research

By opening our 'doors' to researchers, The Forest School will contribute valuable evidence to the broader education sector about the positive impacts of nature-based and inquiry-driven education. There is already cumulative research on high-quality explicit instruction (Structured Literacy and Numeracy), so by being a beacon school for research findings on child-led inquiry and nature pedagogy and sharing this with policymakers, educators, and the wider education network, we aim to advocate for the adoption of these educational approaches.

5. Promote sustainable and inclusive education

Our commitment to sustainability is embedded in our pedagogical approach. The Forest School will be a more widely recognised model of a Green-gold Enviroschool, showing how it is possible to integrate environmental stewardship into everyday learning, fostering a sense of kaitiakitanga among students. Our approach also demonstrates how schools can build inclusive environments with strong emotional connections and respect and celebrate the cultural and neurodiversity of learners, making education accessible, equitable, and meaningful for all.

6. Collaborate with a global network

The Forest School is already part of a growing movement championing innovative educational practices, particularly in nature pedagogy, play, and child-led inquiry. We want to connect further with like-minded educators, organisations, schools, and health professionals in Aotearoa and internationally. We also aim to be more active in this space, as the past eight years have seen us so stretched with personnel, resources and time. However, moving forward, we will be able to collaborate more and advocate for innovation in education that honours children. Together with other national and global educational leaders, we can increase our efforts to create a more engaging, relevant, and innovative educational landscape.

7. Student and whānau initiatives

The Forest School and tamariki and parents, can organise open days, cross-school events, projects, extracurricular competitions, and programmes like exhibitions, fairs, concerts, and community celebrations. We can also facilitate community outreach activities such as beach clean-ups and continue our pest control and trapping work with Forest and Bird, as well as planting projects with Restore HBC. We will commit to fostering community connections and collaborations—not only with our local neighbours but also with nearby schools, businesses, and other organisations—establishing The Forest School as a beacon and central hub for the community, environmental work, and kaitiakitanga.

These contributions to the wider education sector will benefit many schools and our students, who will learn that community and contributions are essential to a healthy, thriving society. A strong, well-established community school that leads by example can motivate and inspire people of all ages to unite, fostering broader learning and deeper connections in the local area and across New Zealand.

7. How will the school help prepare students for life in wider society, outside of the specific focus or setting of your Charter School?

Introduction

The Forest School is uniquely positioned to prepare students for life in wider society by equipping them with the skills, values, and mindsets necessary to thrive in our fast-paced, rapidly changing world.

Our approach to education emphasises high-quality academic learning, but it extends beyond the traditional knowledge-focused model seen in some schools. We prioritise the holistic development of our tamariki, nurturing not only their intellect but also their emotional, social, and creative growth. According to UNESCO, 21st-century skills require a broad, holistic set of competencies, and our educational philosophy reflects this. These include communication, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, information and digital literacy, social skills, adaptability, curiosity, resilience, a willingness to learn, critical thinking, citizenship, and environmental learning. These skills are considered essential for students to meet the demands of the future and are developed daily at The Forest School through our real-world, hands-on experiences and broad, balanced curriculum.

Extending on the advice of UNESCO, many educational psychologists and researchers believe

that **curiosity, creativity, resilience, and nature connection** are specific qualities that foster the adaptability and problem-solving required for life as an adult. For the purpose of this question, we will expand on these particular dispositions and skills, showing how they are grounded in our school's pedagogical approach and how education will be at our Charter School. The following descriptions will show how The Forest School will equip children for life in the wider society by nurturing these traits.

1. Curiosity

Dr. Alison Gopnik, a developmental psychologist, highlights the significance of curiosity. Her research indicates that children are born wanting to constantly explore and learn. This expands on Jean Piaget's original studies, in which he often described children as 'little scientists' naturally curious, exploring their environments to understand the world around them. According to Piaget, children learn best through interaction with their surroundings, driven by their innate curiosity and need to understand what they experience. Dr. Gopnik says that schools must cultivate this inherent curiosity so students explore new concepts and engage deeply, supporting their overall development.

Elon Musk talks about the importance of curiosity in innovation and personal growth. He says that his own curiosity drives him to explore, ask questions, and learn continuously. Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, also highlights curiosity as integral. He attributes Amazon's success to a culture of curiosity and a willingness to experiment. Both of these innovators believe that being curious and asking 'why' is key to understanding the world and solving problems.

At The Forest School, we help tamariki develop curiosity by providing numerous opportunities to wonder, question, discover, make mistakes, and ask 'why' through our Reggio Emilia approach to learning.

Examples of how children develop curiosity at The Forest School

Child-led inquiry & exploration:

The Forest School is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, which values the child as capable and curious and encourages them to explore their environment through their own inquiries. Children can follow their interests, investigate nature, and ask questions about what they discover. Teachers facilitate deeper learning through our cycle of inquiry, allowing children to take ownership of the learning process and nurturing their natural curiosity.

Nature-based problem solving:

In line with Reggio Emilia's principles, The Forest School promotes curiosity through nature-based play and problem-solving, where children collaborate to solve open-ended

challenges. Children can do things like build shelters, figure out how to collect and transport water and make art out of natural materials. This involves working with peers, sharing ideas, and experimenting together. Teachers encourage children to ask questions and find solutions, fostering a culture of exploration and curiosity.

Learning through play (LTP):

The Forest School incorporates unstructured play and Learning Through Play (LTP) so children can take risks, such as climbing trees or investigating the small living worlds of the forest. Inspired by Reggio Emilia's belief that children learn best through experiences, these activities encourage children to test boundaries, explore, and ask questions like 'what if?' Teachers document these moments through photographs and notes, using them to reflect with children, fostering curiosity by allowing them to revisit and expand on their learning experiences.

"I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."

- Albert Einstein

2. Creativity

According to Sir Ken Robinson, creativity is crucial for innovation, and when we nurture it, we enable students to think flexibly and come up with new solutions. Sir Ken Robinson says that creativity is as important as Literacy in education and that schools need to create environments where creativity is encouraged and celebrated. In addition, creativity is not only represented in The Arts, which many people traditionally believe. Creativity is expressed in all domains across all areas of life, from creating new solutions in business to inventing alternative processes in society to solving problems at the government level and out-of-the-box thinking in communities. Nurturing creativity is investing in our inventors and innovators of the future.

The Forest School curriculum allows students to pursue their passions creatively through our child-led inquiry approach. At the emergent level of what you would observe in a Primary School, children are learning to think innovatively and engage with the world creatively through their play and hands-on discovery. Creativity is the foundation of originality and ingenuity, and this is what our curriculum helps children develop. In this way, our school promotes learning in a meaningful way that develops the necessary dispositions that children need to prepare for a life of innovation and inventiveness.

Examples of how children develop creativity at The Forest School

Creative expression:

We provide numerous open-ended materials to foster creativity. Items found by children themselves or sourced by teachers, such as leaves, twigs, clay, and stones, are used in

children's own creative ways, aligning with the Reggio emphasis on '100 languages of children,' recognising that creativity can be expressed through many forms, such as building structures, woodwork and construction, music, opportunities for free creative writing, solving mathematical problems in creative ways, art, or crafting. Teachers facilitate and celebrate the diverse ways children express their ideas.

Inquiry:

Children engage in short and long-term, inquiry-based projects where they are encouraged to ask questions and explore creative solutions, whether it's designing a garden, investigating insects or building an animal habitat. Teachers collaborate with children by documenting the inquiry process, providing provocations to extend thinking, and giving children the creative licence to address real-world challenges.

Storytelling and imaginative play:

The Forest School setting fosters creativity through storytelling, literature and imaginative play. Literacy is structured, and children are explicitly taught the skills required for reading and writing; however, storytelling is a big component of our Reggio-inspired literature component of the curriculum. Imaginative play and storytelling are ways children can be creative by inventing their own narratives, performances, and dramatic plays and using elements from nature, such as turning a fallen tree into a pirate ship or imagining a forest as an enchanted kingdom. Teachers might even model or participate in role-play with tamariki, supporting them in expanding their stories, perhaps orally, in visual art or written form. This helps to develop children's creativity and imagination in a supportive, playful environment.

“Creativity is not a luxury; it is a necessity. If we want to nurture creativity in our students, we must create an environment where they feel free to explore, experiment, and express themselves.”

- Sir Ken Robinson

3. Nature | Environmental Learning

David Sobel, widely known for his work in place-based education, says that environmental learning is crucial because it helps children understand their relationship with the natural world. Richard Louv claims that a lack of connection to nature has negative consequences for children's physical and mental health and overall well-being. According to Dr Peter Gray, play in nature is a natural and vital part of childhood that supports learning, creativity, and emotional well-being, helping children develop critical life skills, such as problem-solving, social competence, and resilience. Recent research conducted by Jonothan Haidt shows that the claims by these psychologists and researchers are consistent with studies of the overdependency of devices and links to depression and anxiety in rangatahi.

The Forest School will balance the digital world by connecting children with nature regularly throughout the day and providing vast opportunities for hands-on learning. As mentioned in our Curriculum Document, we are 'predominantly' device-free. This does not mean The Forest School is 'entirely' device-free. However, our approach is to provide devices as tools for learning, balancing the virtual with the real and showing children that a dependency on screens for learning and entertainment is unnecessary. An educated and research-backed approach to devices is what we will provide. This means devices and technology are used for research, inquiry, and presentations, as well as to make learning visible between home and school. Children will still learn the technological skills they need, but an overreliance will not be our school's approach.

Researchers and psychologists say that children who are connected with nature are more well-balanced, healthier and better equipped to tackle challenges. Overall, they lead more balanced, happier and healthier lives. Learning within nature and in close personal communities encourages curiosity, develops kaitiakitanga, and prepares young people to address environmental issues. Children learn they are part of an ecosystem that goes beyond one's self. Connection with 'place' is developed, which in turn promotes security, strong self-efficacy and a sense of belonging that supports wellness in physical and mental health. When we belong and contribute, we have a purpose, which is integral to well-being. In addition, an innate desire and love to protect the environment is established, which equips The Forest School students to be the changemakers of the future.

Examples of how children develop environmental learning at The Forest School

9(2)(b)(ii)



“The future belongs to the nature smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who can understand and solve the challenges of the planet.”

- Richard Louv

4. Resilience

Dr Angela Duckworth is a psychologist and researcher whose work emphasises the importance of resilience for the future. She defines ‘grit’ as the combination of passion and perseverance in achieving goals and states that resilience (or grit) is just as important as talent and intelligence. Her research shows that resilience helps individuals persevere through challenges, adapt when faced with issues or unexpected situations, and maintain motivation in the face of adversity. These skills are crucial for our tamariki to learn for success in a rapidly changing world.

9(2)(b)(ii)

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

- Nelson Mandela

Conclusion

The Forest School prepares students not just academically but also as well-rounded individuals who are resilient, environmentally conscious, socially capable, creative, curious and equipped with the skills and mindsets necessary for success in the wider world. Our holistic, nature-centred approach ensures that students are not only prepared for the challenges of day-to-day school life but are also empowered to shape a better future for themselves and their communities. If students only focus on acquiring knowledge and not developing their creativity, curiosity, resilience and connection to nature and people, then we are not equipping them to thrive in a world that needs them to think critically, adapt to unpredictable challenges, and contribute to solving problems. In a future that is somewhat unknown, it is the creativity, curiosity, resilience, and a deep connection to the environment that akonga will learn at The Forest School that will empower them to think, innovate, work collaboratively, and lead with empathy.

By nurturing 21st-century skills such as creativity, curiosity, resilience, and a connection to nature, we help students develop as more well-rounded people ready for life in wider society beyond our school setting. These dispositions are just a few highlighted that build a foundation for lifelong learning, but there are multiple others that are developed through The Forest School curriculum. By supporting children in being grounded in as many of these 21st-century skills as we can, The Forest School will help prepare students for life in wider society and beyond so they are capable of navigating the world with confidence and purpose and have the qualities needed for diverse and changing career paths.

Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills at the OECD, once said, "*The kinds of things that are easy to teach, and maybe easy to test, are precisely the kinds of things that are easy to digitise and to automate.*" This reminds us that education should be about more than knowledge and memorising information. Instead of valuing only "knowing," we should celebrate and nurture the "*experience of learning*". By fostering curiosity, creativity, and a love for the environment as a platform for discovery, pushing through difficulties, and having grit, we can prepare an entire generation to succeed in an ever-changing future. Let's move beyond the old system and inspire teachers, schools and communities to embrace this transformative approach, ensuring our children are ready for whatever the future holds.

8. Why would parents/families choose your Charter School over schooling options that are already available to them?

Families will choose The Forest School because they want a high-quality education and a nurturing environment where their children feel valued, happy, and excited to learn every day. The Forest School tamariki are not just students at a school; they are unique individuals whose


ideas, creativity, and strengths are nurtured and celebrated. Whānau will choose our Charter School because they know we foster a love of learning that extends beyond the classroom, and they see how we prioritise their children's well-being, ensuring they grow up with strong self-esteem and the confidence to face challenges.

Our commitment to high academic achievement is reflected in the quality instruction and engaging, hands-on learning we offer, which inspire children to be curious, motivated, and eager to attend school each day. With a strong leadership team and a well-organised, balanced approach to education, we create an environment where students thrive, and parents see the difference. The Forest School is where effective teaching practices, excellent resources, supportive, loving staff and a stunning environment like no other set us apart from the rest.

The Forest School offers a space where childhood is treasured, where children learn to the best of their ability, where play and curiosity are embraced, and where everyone feels a true sense of belonging. A positive, joyful learning experience in Primary School, where tamariki develop a love of learning that lasts a lifetime, lays the foundation for future success. That's why families will choose our Charter School for their child's full-time education - it will be a school where their children truly flourish and thrive.

We have recently canvassed the above question to our parent community; please read some of their answers:

9(2)(b)(ii), 9(2)(a)



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Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Readiness to open

9. Demonstrate your readiness to open for Term One 2025 by showing across the following establishment areas what you will have in place for students to be welcomed in Term One 2025

a) Staffing

*Please refer to the attached document: The Forest School - Response form for Charter Schools Part Three. Operational fitness 9. a) Staffing

b) Finance

*Please refer to the attached: The Forest School - Response form for Charter Schools Part Three. Operational fitness 9. b) Finance

c) Curriculum

*Please refer to the attached: The Forest School - Response form for Charter Schools Part Three. Operational fitness 9. c) Curriculum

d) Roll

*Please refer to the attached: The Forest School - Response form for Charter Schools Part Three. Operational fitness 9. d) Roll

e) Health & Safety

*Please refer to the attached: The Forest School - Response form for Charter Schools Part Three. Operational fitness 9. e) Health and Safety

10. In stage one you listed the physical assets required (e.g, buildings, classrooms, sports facilities) and outlined the plan for acquiring, developing or leasing these assets. Now demonstrate how you will:

- a) **Operationalise the property and infrastructure components of your application, ready to welcome students for Term One 2025.**

Introduction

The following explains how we will operationalise the property and infrastructure ready to welcome students for Term One 2025. ^{9(2)(a)}

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The property is absolutely fit for purpose and has had a great deal of personal investment and development over the years to get it to the stage it is now at. The time and commitment we have already made to the property and infrastructure give us significant insight into how best to develop and operationalise it further and support what is already in place. Our background and understanding of what it will take to operationalise this property to the level required to establish a high-quality Charter School is outlined below. This includes details of the planning, implementation and maintenance phases of operationalising the property and the ongoing upkeep and preservation of investment.

Planning Phase

Our site, 605 Hibiscus Coast Highway, is ideal for a Charter School that meets the criteria for our nature-based, Reggio Emilia-inspired school. We are situated on a property that has the right natural assets and location in relation to access to environmental learning experiences. It is safe and easily accessible to families from our local area and close to motorways for families from across Auckland. We conducted site assessments at many sites in the area before settling on this site and we have not found a better site that meets our criteria since we began operations in 2016. Specifically:

- It is close to a good population; the Silverdale area is undergoing significant land development for residential housing. The population in 2021 was 64,900 in the Hibiscus Coast area. It has experienced an annual population growth of 3.3% since 1996. The population of under-15-year-olds is between 20 and 25% of the population across the Hibiscus Coast. There is increasing demand for education services in our area, reflected in local school population growth.

- Safety is a significant consideration when selecting a site for a school. Our school is private, up a long drive away from the main road, semi-rural and we do not cause noise or disturbances to neighbouring properties. Our property is just over 4 hectares, and neighbouring properties are 2 hectares at a minimum, with most being 4 hectares or more. Being a rural coastal area, there are no dangerous or industrial operations. Additionally, there are not many unknown people on adjacent properties who would be affected by what we are doing. There are environmental hazards such as the beach, an aged pine forest, and steep land, which has experienced some minor slips during significant weather events. These are all environmental factors that are managed by clearly defining places that are safe for our operations, a thorough Health and Safety Management System that anticipates hazards and manages them appropriately, and setting weather limits on operations. These parameters are outlined in our Health and Safety Management System.
- Although most of our current students do not live within walking distance, our site is within 5km of a significant population, which makes The Forest School accessible by car, bus and van transport to a large population. Easy access from the motorway benefits many Auckland-wide families.
- Survey data of our existing community shows that there is a significant appetite for our educational offering as a full-time Charter School. Many current students from our One-day School community have indicated they will enrol, as well as families outside of our community. These include home-educated children who will re-enter the schooling system. At this point, we have received 156 expressions of interest, which exceeds the capacity of the school we are proposing to open.
- We have operated our One-day School on this site since 2016, and in that time, we have developed a positive long-term relationship with our landlord. He has consented to the development of the site that we have done to this point. ^{9(2)(b)(ii)} [REDACTED]

Long term planning

The picture below is a vision map of how we want to develop the full four-hectare site to fit the purpose we have outlined for The Forest School as a full-time Charter School. Although not to scale or graphically exact, the picture outlines areas that currently exist and areas for future development. The plan below shows a mix of learning spaces; some currently already function daily as learning spaces, while others are areas identified as appropriate for future development.



Map showing the significant ecological area at 605 Hibiscus Coast Highway, Hatfields Beach
Auckland. Sourced from

https://data-aucklandcouncil.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/b40f8baea5ce4e348e339a2d7d367b8b_0/explore

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Performance and longevity

Introduction

Establishing a new Charter School focusing on permanence and longevity is critical to ensuring immediate success and lasting impact. Since 2016, we have learned how crucial it is to maintain an organisation effectively, not just to meet and provide for students and the community but to ensure its long-term sustainability. Building an education centre from scratch, liaising with the MOE, Principals and schools across the country, as well as hosting observing teachers and schools from around New Zealand and the world, navigating through Covid, lockdowns, legislation, loss of income, staff restructures, low enrolments and then an economic downturn where you rely solely on parent fees to operate, has meant we very quickly developed strong professional and business acumen and problem-solving skills as well developing our intuition and ability to pivot and adjust when required. These broad experiences have given us extensive experience beyond the regular day-to-day tasks of running a school.

Over the years, we have gained an enormous skill set in running our One-day School, including liaising with all types of students, communities and whānau, the wider education network, businesses, the MOE, Oranga Tamaki, Psychologists, Lawyers, New Zealand and international media, including print, radio, and TV shows. We are well-prepared to enter this next phase, equipped with significant learning, expertise, and capabilities.

By building on our already established solid foundations in leadership, curriculum, culture, and community, we will continue to develop an environment that supports high performance and fosters a legacy of excellence. This legacy means nurturing academically and emotionally intelligent, creative, and resilient children so students at The Forest School are known to make a meaningful and positive impact in the communities and the world. It means being a school that continuously evolves, inspires, strives for excellence and serves as a beacon of quality education for generations to come.

HERO software

The Forest School will use HERO as our School Management System and Student Management software <https://our-hero.com/>. HERO is a comprehensive Student Information System (SIS) platform designed for schools to manage all aspects of student and school operations. It includes features for tracking attendance, learning, and achievement and syncs with our school's Accounting Package XERO for financial reporting and monitoring. HERO facilitates immediate communication between teachers, students, and parents. It provides data analytics to support school performance measures, targets and reporting.

The HERO software will enhance our overall school and student management experience for administrators, teachers, school leadership and whānau by streamlining administrative tasks, fostering a collaborative environment with families, promoting agency in students and a positive attitude to learning and attendance. The Forest School can create tailored 'badges' and school-wide and individualised targets for student achievement and attendance goals. HERO will allow us to identify students at attendance risk, recognise and reward positive behaviours, track student progress and achievement, and generate reports to inform decision-making. By centralising information and improving communication, HERO will help The Forest School create a more organised and supportive educational environment for students, staff, and families.

11. Noting the performance management framework, outline your performance management strategy including:

- **Outcome 1. Attendance** - Regular attendance at school - 80% of learners regularly attending (more than 90% of the term)

a) **How the strategy will enable and support monitoring against each performance measure:**

High-level Strategy 1:

- Our comprehensive strategy includes implementing school-wide preventative measures while simultaneously using HERO as our school's electronic attendance and tracking register.

High-level Strategy 2:

- The Forest School's strategy to ensure high attendance rates is establishing a positive attendance culture, which includes clear expectations, parent and community education and involvement, support systems for whānau, an engaging, high-quality learning environment, and quality attendance tracking software: HERO.

HERO - To support our school in monitoring attendance

This software generates various reports using student attendance data. Parents and caregivers can record absences daily through the app, and the school is notified of any unexplained absences. Whānau are contacted either by an automated text message or directly by the school office to justify the absence. The software also supports monitoring student movement throughout a school day, including late arrivals and early leaves.

Using HERO to support our attendance strategy generates daily reports for the school, enabling ongoing student attendance monitoring. The software can identify consecutive or separate unjustified absences, and if these reach our school's predetermined threshold, it will alert the school for intervention. The data collected by the software is also used for regular internal self-review to assess the overall success in fostering a positive attendance culture and informing long-term strategic planning to uplift student attendance.

Avoiding low attendance rates from the outset

Strategy 1: Positive attendance culture and clear expectations

From admission enquiries to enrolment, we will communicate our school expectations regarding a positive attendance culture. The importance of being present at school is communicated, valued and vigorously promoted, whereby parents and whānau will be key supporters of this culture at the child's home. Our school enrollment agreement highlights regular attendance as an expectation and part of the unique character parents agree to for our school. Teachers, office and support staff, and the children will advocate for this school culture.

We will establish a nurturing, highly engaging environment where children anticipate and are excited to attend school daily. The learning environment will be positive, where children are valued, engaged, supported, and offered various exciting offerings. Children will be eager to attend school to be immersed in captivating and authentic learning experiences, have strong and loving connections with peers and teachers, and have exposure to meaningful input from trusted adults in the setting.

Strategy 2: Parent involvement and communication with whānau

Grounded in our philosophy of openness and transparency, we will regularly have conversations with whānau to explore the integral factors of emotional connections and student attendance in contributing to their child's achievements and holistic development. Infographics, posters, and parent information seminars are tools we will use to educate and highlight critical research information and explain the advantages of consistent attendance at school. Our school community will be well-educated and actively involved in promoting regular attendance.

The Forest School actively fosters a culture of whānau involvement in which parents contribute their expertise or time in assisting with the learning experiences in our school community. We will continue cultivating close relationships and a strong sense of belonging within our community by making whānau feel welcome on the grounds and active school members. This school culture leads to enhanced attendance accountability and increased participation in their child's school life.

Strategy 3: Engaging learning environment

Regular extracurricular events, field trips, excursions, EOTC, child-led inquiry, parent involvement, special guests, connection with local community organisations, and our active outdoor (and indoor) learning areas make up a diverse and engaging daily curriculum. This wide range of offerings will position our school as a dynamic, vibrant, fun and diverse learning hub that actively participates in the broader community.

These engaging and motivating opportunities will become a compelling factor for our students to want to attend school every day. They will develop a rapid understanding that education extends beyond the classroom and that schooling is a desirable experience that is relevant, empowering, and fun! Students will eagerly anticipate each exciting school day when we offer a varied and interesting curriculum, enhancing attendance. There will be an intrinsic desire to engage with their peers in such a vibrant learning community.

Strategy 4: Support systems

Aside from utilising HERO as our primary monitoring and reporting tool, we will have other data collection methods to assess potential student attendance risks. Regular parent surveys, student engagement self-assessment, and teacher observations are a few diagnostic tools we will use to prevent and early identify low attendance. Should a child face a barrier to attendance, our school will have the necessary support systems to assist.

These support systems could be a home visit from a teacher or Principal, arranging transport to school through carpooling with another family or arranging to help around the house for health or family issues. It could also be in the form of home visits with external agencies to explore the underlying challenges to regular attendance, devising strategies to overcome these and engaging with community support groups to provide appropriate assistance. Due to our solid and close connections with each family in our community, we are confident our parent network and close-knit community will actively work together to support students in overcoming barriers that arise. These interventions and support systems will differ depending on each situation. Provided no highly confidential information could breach privacy, we will unite as a community to provide support where required.

Strategy 5: Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

While we acknowledge the role of extrinsic motivation as a strategy to promote regular school attendance for some students, the significance of intrinsic motivation for others is essential. The Forest School will use the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) to learn about each child and their motivation. This tool will support class teachers to understand student motivation as well as to inform school policy in strategic planning for improving attendance. It is well established that students' motivation directly impacts their attendance and achievements. We will strive to offer a balance of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation once we gain a comprehensive understanding of each child. The Forest School uses the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) to measure and understand intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI) to help us understand and measure each child's engagement levels.

b) How will you manage the early identification of issues and risks and what preventative measures will you take to address these?

- *For clarity, we have separated question b); our preventative measures above, and our identification of issues, risks and intervention programme is below.*

Our school goal is to be proactive rather than reactive to irregular attendance, so we have a clear approach to avoiding low attendance rates from the outset, as listed above. However, we will proceed with interventions as soon as possible if student attendance becomes an issue.

Regular attendance is critical to student engagement, learning, achievement and sense of belonging. At The Forest School, we manage the early identification of students who are at risk of irregular attendance or absenteeism by flagging students in the HERO software who are "at risk of being at risk" (three days absence in a term) and those who are flagged as "at risk" (four days absence in a term).

The intervention measures we apply are progressive, regularly reviewed and tailored to each family. No two families are the same; therefore, we must be flexible and responsive in our approach to lifting attendance, making continual necessary adjustments. We follow the resources listed in the Ministry of Education document - School Attendance - Quick Reference Guide (2024). We use resources and information provided by Attendance Works, Turnaround for Children, Every Day Counts, and Attendance Matters.

The Forest School's goal is that every student attends regularly with no less than 90% attendance, equal to fewer than five days of absence across a term.

Attendance Improvement Programme

We are still developing a complete school-wide process called the Attendance Improvement Programme. The improvement programme includes an Attendance Management Flowchart to support the process and a risk assessment and implementation guide. We have provided the first draft of our flowchart below. We apologise that the Attendance Improvement Programme is not finalised; there just hasn't been enough time to consult with our Advisory Board to do this in the short four weeks of preparing this second-stage application.

The school will implement the Attendance Improvement Programme if a child is considered 'at risk' or at risk of being at risk' or unexpectedly does not meet the attendance rate due to failure in our preventive strategies or for any unforeseen reason falls below attendance expectations. This school-wide programme is how we will detail and implement interventions to improve attendance. This will be specific for each child and family, as no two are the same. The Attendance Improvement Programme will be collaborative and transparent in consultation with the leadership team, teacher, student, whānau and Advisory Board. The culture of improving attendance at our school will be considered a shared responsibility. We will investigate the barriers to regular attendance, set appropriate goals and expectations, and organise a support system.

The Attendance Improvement Programme includes:

- Establishing an attendance intervention team responsible for developing the Attendance Improvement Programme, risk assessment, and implementation guide addressing possible attendance issues, and designing and implementing interventions.
- Utilising Attendance Matters: Guidelines for implementing an effective attendance management plan to guide school processes and initiatives, as well as other resources, tools, and programmes available internationally.
- Seeking student and family perspectives. Students and families can offer important knowledge and information (i.e., insights into culture and an understanding of attendance barriers)
- Examining quantitative data via HERO and monitor attendance to help identify patterns and trends
- Implementing qualitative data gathering tools such as strategies, resources and programmes from 'Turnaround for Children', Every Day Counts, Attendance Matters and Attendance Works.
- Developing school-wide questionnaires for students and parents to gather information on potential barriers to attendance.
- Making observations and anecdotal notes.
- Developing strategies aimed at investigating the root causes of non-attendance.

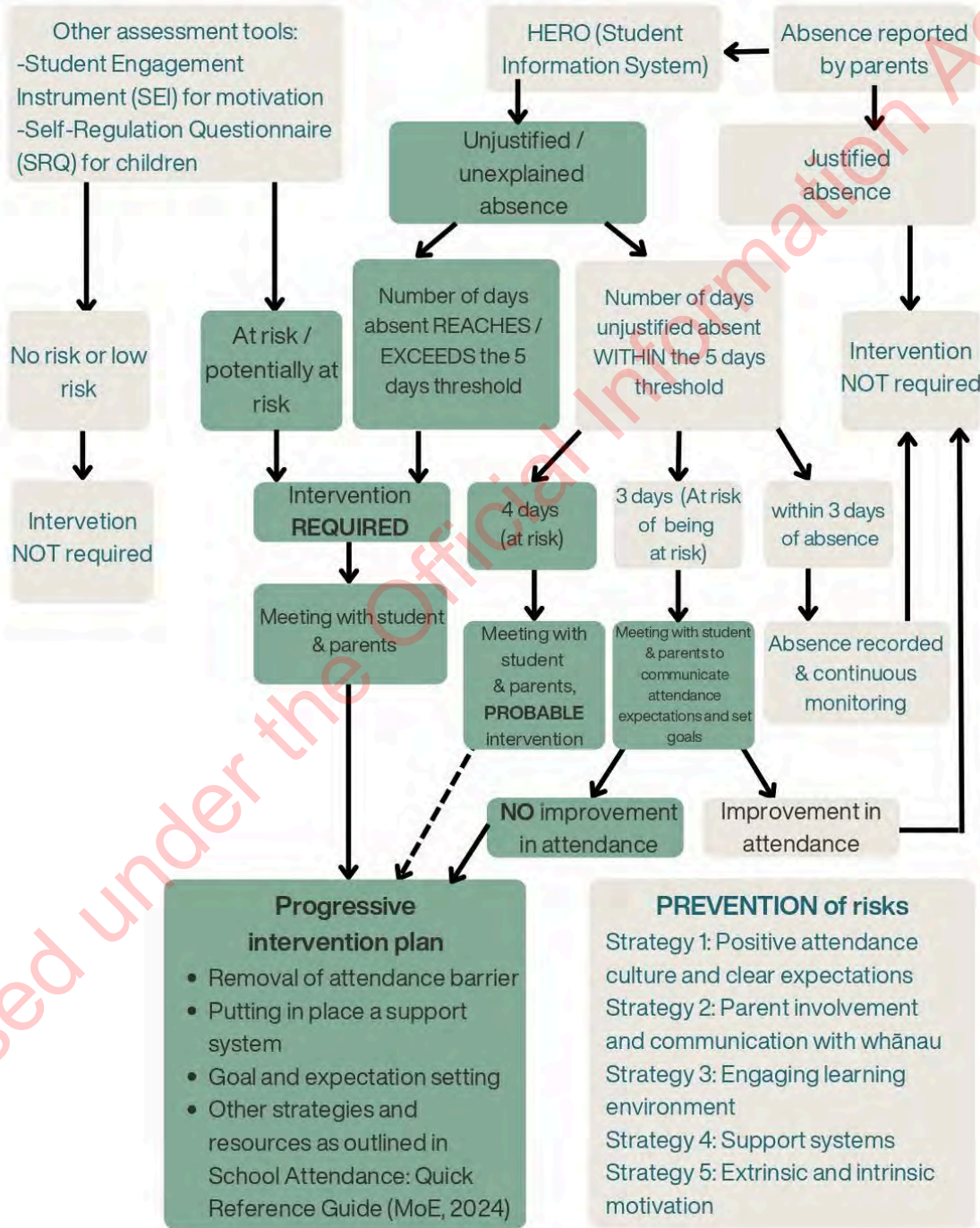
- Developing a school-wide policy for parents.
- Developing student support and mentorship programmes.
- Reflecting on our own practice as a school, staff, and leadership team.
- Developing a policy and reflection process that investigates what impact our school and/or specific teacher/s may have on the child and how this is impacting the child's attendance. Make changes accordingly.
- Creating incentives

Please see DRAFT flowchart "Attendance Management Flowchart" below

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Attendance Management Flowchart

IDENTIFICATION of risks



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- **Outcome 2. Achievement** - Primary: Years 3 - 10 in Reading, Writing and Mathematics 80% of learners are at or above the expected curriculum level.

a) How the strategy will enable and support monitoring against each performance measure:

High-level Strategy 1:

- The Forest School creates an engaging, personalised learning environment where children feel welcome, have a sense of belonging and are eager and excited to attend school every day. High achievement happens when children are highly engaged. Children are highly engaged when they don't face barriers to attending or learning and want to be there. They want to be there because their needs are met, teachers provide high-quality instruction and meaningful learning, they are respected, excited, and motivated to learn, and their interests are valued and encouraged.

High-level Strategy 2:

- Our approach involves implementing school-wide strategies to prevent academic underachievement, followed by precise and regular monitoring to ensure early identification and intervention when needed. We use various assessment tools to track achievement levels and take an adaptive teaching approach, where teachers adapt processes and interventions based on knowing each child well. This adaptive approach is more responsive and effective, enabling targeted support of underachievement.

First, preventing academic underachievement from the outset is far better than not setting students up for success, later identifying issues, and needing to implement interventions. Our school will deliberately implement strategies to avoid academic underachievement from the outset.

Strategies to avoid academic underachievement

Strategy 1: Cultivate a school culture that prioritises children and their learning and is centred on respect, inclusion, empathy, collaboration, and emotional safety.

Strategy 2: Design learning experiences incorporating a wide range of curricula, pedagogies, and assessments while ensuring a comprehensive understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages, and cultures.

Strategy 3: Respond to children and their learning with expertise and flexibility, adjusting depth and pace to advance student learning effectively.

Strategy 4: Establish and sustain professional relationships centred on student education and well-being.

Strategy 5: Commit to tangata whenuatanga and the partnership principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Strategy 6: Engage in personal inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and professional development to enhance professional skills and positively impact all students' learning and Achievement.

- *Further elaboration on each of these strategies is found on pages 1-8 of our Stage One, Part Three Business plan.*

Second, we must identify academic underachievement early, followed by interventions as quickly as possible. Early identification is crucial in supporting tamariki in improving academically. Teachers will closely monitor each child through our range of assessment methods to know precisely where each child is at, being aware and alert to any changes or challenges children face (educational, social, or personal, as all impact learning and achievement). When we identify gaps, learning disabilities, challenges, or underperformance, we will have a clear strategy to support and intervene.

Assessment - To support our school in monitoring achievement levels

The Forest School has high standards and aims for academic excellence in all areas. We will open in Term 1 2025 with 64 students and double the roll to 128 students for Term 1 2026. In 2027 we forecast our student roll to reach 192 students, so it is of the utmost importance that we have a robust system in place and use a variety of assessment tools to track, monitor and continue to raise achievement. This will ensure a consistent and high-quality holistic curriculum to serve our community.

Assessment is an essential tool to support and monitor teaching and learning at our school. The outcomes of our formative and summative assessments inform strategic curriculum planning and Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) and identify any issues or potential risks that may impact student achievement. Through assessment, class teachers and leadership gather information about what needs adjusting so that every child can achieve. Schools and teachers must remember who they are assessing for - the children. They are the primary owners of the assessment information. It is for them and their learning. Teacher judgments and results from assessment tools about progress and achievement across the curriculum are to inform the teaching team so they know the next learning steps for each child. Results are also shared and reported to whānau, school leaders, the Advisory Board and the Charter Schools Agency.

Assessment methods to identify underachievement

In Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, we use formative assessment within “The Code” (Literacy) and “Numicon” (Numeracy). These programmes use assessments to monitor students' progress throughout their learning journey, help teachers identify individual strengths and areas of difficulty, and adjust instruction accordingly.

Our school-wide high-impact assessment tool, E-asTTle, assesses Literacy and Numeracy skills. Teachers also have the autonomy to use additional tools found online (<https://assessment.tki.org.nz>) and create their own personalised assessment tools that work for them, such as goal-setting rubrics, to help them further guide the next steps in learning, but this is at each teacher's discretion. The Forest School requires all teachers to use E-asTTle every June and December to monitor and report on every child's progress and achievement.

School-wide assessment and achievement monitoring, including PLP goals, are uploaded to HERO. Whānau and students have daily access to this, which maintains home-school communication and partnerships. This way, there are no surprises for parents at student conference time, and whānau can regularly participate in the teaching and learning process. Goal tracking and assessment are also on HERO. The goal is always to maintain the assessment for learning approach and remember that a shift from what teachers teach to what students learn is crucial to assessing and raising achievement.

Much of our assessment in Inquiry, integrated cross-curricular learning, and Learning Through Play (LTP) involves observing learning processes and documenting them using the "Notice, Recognise, and Respond" model. This model is used to observe and document students' learning and development. It involves three key stages: noticing what children are doing or saying, recognising significant learning moments or skills, and responding by supporting or extending their learning.

We also implement “The Floorbook Approach” created by Dr. Claire Warden a world-renowned thought leader in nature pedagogy and child-led inquiry, The Floorbook Methodology is an educational approach that emphasises collaborative learning, reflection, and documentation that provides real-time feedback to students and helps inform emergent curriculum planning.

Although we utilise various assessment approaches, E-asTTle is our selected high-impact tool for assessing and reporting to the Charter Schools Agency on Achievement Performance Management. E-asTTle will be used for all learners from Years 3 - 6. We have chosen E-asTTle for assessment as it can generate school-wide reports and provide personalised learning insights and detailed data on individual student progress; this allows teachers to tailor instruction to meet each student's specific needs and abilities. It also allows teachers to track

students' progress across different learning areas long-term, enabling a better understanding of development and growth. The teaching team can conduct effective evaluations of teaching and learning and respond accordingly in their strategic planning. Reporting to the Charter Schools Agency will be seamless using E-asTTle, and in addition to its high versatility, teachers can devise their own assessments and use them promptly. The results are then presented visually, facilitating learning conversations with tamariki, whānau and relevant stakeholders.

With the effective utilisation of formative and summative assessment processes and tools like E-asTTle, Student Engagement Instrument (SEI), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Resilient Youth (a student well-being measurement survey), The Floorbook Approach to making learning visible and ongoing assessments in our structured Literacy and Numeracy programmes, we have comprehensive ways for the early identification of low student achievement. Our approach is proactive and regular, so as a school, we can recognise and identify children who display signs of academic underperformance and intervene promptly.

b) How will you manage the early identification of issues and risks and what preventative measures will you take to address these?

Strategy 1: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

This pedagogical approach involves teachers designing learning to meet the diverse and variable needs of all students in their classroom. It is a way to connect every student to the learning experience. For example, specialised literacy techniques for children with dyslexia are generally suitable for all children. Teachers at our school use this approach to look at fully inclusive learning that promotes success for all learners regardless of ability or learning style.

Strategy 2: Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)

Teachers provide differentiated instruction and individual learning opportunities. This approach means that every child in our school has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). Traditionally, IEPs or PLPs are used only for children with identified learning disabilities or behavioural challenges who require learning support. However, The Forest School maintains small class sizes across every year level of no more than 1:16. This allows the teacher to know every child well, provide greater individualised learning and tailor learning plans to suit each child.

Strategy 3: Cultural responsiveness

We ensure equity and access for all and implement appropriate measures to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for Māori and Pasifika learners, addressing barriers that may hinder participation or success. In consultation with our school cultural lead-

9(2)(a) we provide support services, resources, and facilities to accommodate the diverse needs of our Māori and Pasifika children. Cultural responsiveness and ensuring learning

is relevant and engaging to Māori, Pasifika, and other cultures is integral. Teachers engage in ongoing professional development to tailor teaching practices and materials to ensure they are continually culturally responsive, reflecting on and learning about their students' diverse backgrounds and teaching Māori and Pasifika in a way that sees them thrive.

Strategy 4: Visible learning

Make learning visible by shifting the focus from what teachers teach to what learners learn. This pedagogical shift includes kaiako conducting ongoing observations and reflections as formative assessments. Teachers create learning stories and opportunities for visible learning that encourage collaboration and input from tamariki and whānau. They ensure planning is both emergent and structured as needed. Observations of learning are a way to give direct insight into what learning is happening and are a way to plan forward in a relevant and meaningful way. Children get real-time feedback face to face and via HERO, promoting engagement, purpose and agency. Reflections are a way to make learning visible and establish a classroom culture of student-self-assessment, giving everyone greater insight. These strategies all work together as a way for ongoing continuous improvement.

Strategy 5: Whānau involvement

From the outset, our school clearly outlines our expectations of whānau being actively involved in learning. We provide regular invitations for parents and community involvement and share appropriate anecdotal notes and reflections through open, transparent conversations. Our school does not surprise parents with information that their child is not achieving. Parents and whānau regularly participate in their children's learning and will know as soon as we identify potential gaps or struggles. The culture of our school is one of open communication, reciprocal relationships and collaboration. This whole-school, family-oriented approach keeps tamariki at the centre and ensures no surprises. Early identification of underachievement is integral and expected of our teachers as best practice at our school. Teachers engage with parents and inform them from the outset because of the learning partnerships we have established.

Strategy 6: High-quality assessment

High-quality assessment is crucial in helping our school manage the early identification of low academic achievement. Using reliable and consistent assessment tools, we can gather detailed data on each student's progress and performance across different learning areas. This allows teachers to recognise learning gaps or areas where students may struggle before falling too far behind. Early identification through these assessments enables us to implement timely interventions, provide targeted support, and adjust teaching methods to meet students' needs effectively. By doing so, we can help ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed and that no one is left behind in their learning journey.

Achievement Improvement Programme

Formative and summative ongoing assessments conducted throughout the Literacy and Numeracy curricula we use, as well as school-wide assessment tools such as E-asTTle, will help us manage the early identification of issues and risks related to achievement. The school's Achievement Improvement Programme and risk assessment provide us with a process to follow and strategies for intervention and raising achievement.

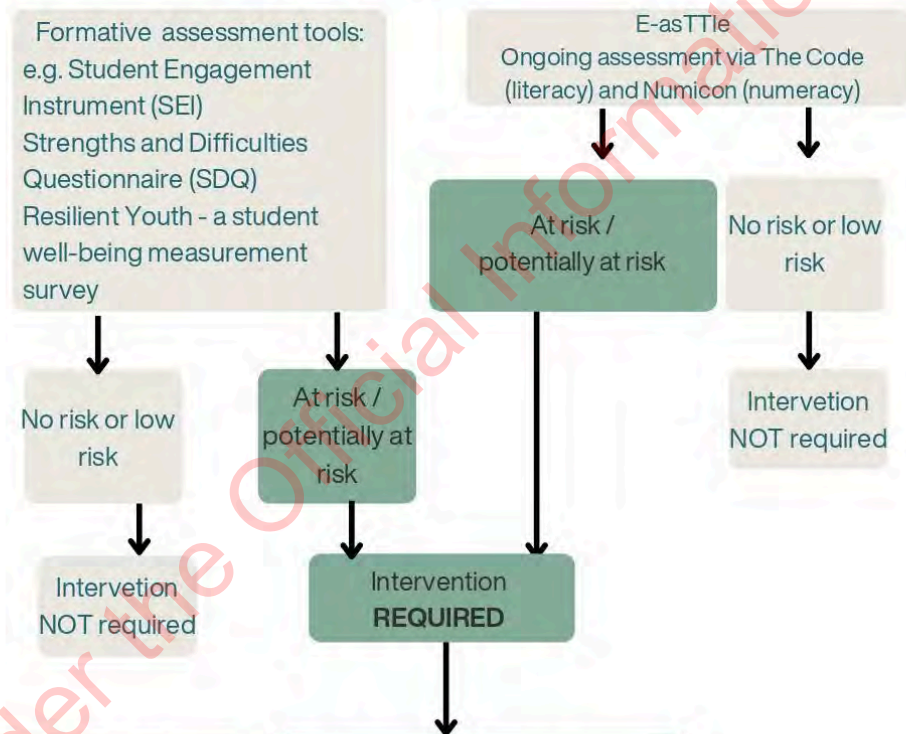
It is important to note that Achievement Improvement Programmes are individualised for each student, so we include all strategies below. As well as this, the needs of neurodiverse students, children with high educational needs, and learning disabilities need to be factored in a careful, comprehensive and holistic way. For some of these learners, achievement is not just academic but also social and emotional; for some with developmental delays, it is physical. When implementing an Achievement Improvement Programme, interventions must be individually tailored. Meeting the specific goals, needs and aspirations of whānau and tamariki is integral.

We are still developing our Achievement Improvement Programme. Included will be the flowchart (below), a risk assessment, an intervention guide, and strategies. We have provided the first draft of our flowchart below, 'Achievement and Progress Monitoring'. We apologise that this is not finalised; there just hasn't been enough time to consult with our Advisory Board to do this in the short four weeks of preparing this second-stage application. The Achievement Improvement Programme will be implemented if a child is considered 'at risk' or 'at risk of being at risk' of falling below achievement levels.

Please see DRAFT flowchart "Achievement and Progress Monitoring" below

Achievement and Progress Monitoring

IDENTIFICATION of risks



PREVENTION of risks

- Strategy 1: Universal Design for Learning (LDL)
- Strategy 2: Personalise Learning Plan (PLP)
- Strategy 3: cultural responsiveness
- Strategy 4: visible learning
- Strategy 5: whānau involvement

Risk management plan

- Strategy 1: early conversations and observations
- Strategy 2: Response To Intervention (RTI)
- Strategy 3: targeted interventions
- Strategy 4: referrals

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Strategies for early identification and intervention

(simultaneously alongside assessment tools)

Strategy 1: Early conversations and observations

When underachievement is identified (early identification is crucial), targeted interventions will be implemented, alongside working with and talking to children and whānau to understand what is challenging and what needs improvement. To ensure early intervention, teachers must act with professional judgment, including early observations, early collaborative discussions with children, whānau and school leadership, as well as using screening assessments.

Strategy 2: Response to Intervention (RTI)

Our school will use the Response to Intervention (RTI) model as a whole-school, tiered approach to support student learning. This model identifies struggling students early but gives them the support they need in a tiered way. This means that observations and data are examined, and programmes are adjusted accordingly. However, RTI also allows struggling students to succeed by implementing interventions before a special education/RTLB or psychology referral. Sometimes, these in-house interventions are all that are required, which is why the tiered model is essential.

Strategy 3: Target interventions

Targeted interventions will differ depending on the area of need. For example, suppose the child requires intervention due to a social-emotional need. In that case, we will begin with the 'Collaborative Proactive Solutions' by Dr. Ross Greene to understand and identify lagging skills. (This model will be a familiar school-wide approach we use to manage challenging behaviour—several of our team members have already completed this training). Then, depending on which skills are lagging, interventions might include social-emotional play therapy or explicit self-regulation strategies to help children understand and express emotions, resolve conflicts, and improve social skills. Teachers could manage this intervention in-house, or it may require a psychology referral, hence leaning on the RTI model.

If an academic intervention is needed, targeted interventions might be explicit 1:1 instruction or more hands-on approaches to mathematics if underachievement in numeracy is the issue. Kaiako could also implement interventions such as multisensory instruction to support literacy skills if underachievement in reading is needed. Again, every situation will be different, and we must consider the tiered RTI model and each child's personality, needs, learning style, culture, and family. These factors will determine the exact targeted intervention approach taken for each child.

Strategy 4: Referrals

Once we have identified, screened, made accommodations for learning, considered all possibilities, and involved the student and whānau comprehensively and collaboratively. If underachievement is still a problem, our school will make further professional referrals. Referrals may be to whichever organisation school leadership and/or the Charter Schools Agency advises we engage with. We also have good access to the psychology, speech and language, and occupational therapy teams at Acorn Neurodiversity to assist us with more advanced interventions and support following a referral to them.

Conclusion

Our school's strategies, range of assessment tools and methods for identifying and addressing underachievement take an adaptive teaching approach. Teachers adapt their processes based on knowing each child well, student diversity, cultural responsiveness, observations and reflections, collaboration with whānau, differentiated instruction, and referrals to external professionals. This adaptive approach creates a more responsive and effective learning environment for identifying and addressing underachievement.

- **Outcome 3. Financial Performance** - 9(2)(b)(ii)

- a) **How the strategy will enable and support monitoring against each performance measure**

Strategy overview

To meet the financial standardised targets on the Performance Management Framework, we will focus on maintaining a sustainable budget through careful planning, monitoring, and transparent financial management. This includes aligning our spending with strategic priorities, optimising resource use, and ensuring prudent cash flow management. By setting clear financial goals and regularly reviewing performance against these benchmarks, we aim to ensure long-term financial health and stability for the school. This approach will enable us to consistently meet performance measures while supporting the school's educational and community objectives.

Strategy 1: High quality people

Robust and capable leadership and governance are essential for a school to thrive. They ensure effective decision-making, foster a positive school culture, and drive continuous educational and operational performance improvement.

Strategy 2: Diversify funding sources

Additional funding sources are available that are operated as separate entities but will support the Charter School. These include the private One-day School, Holiday Club, and, new for 2025, the Enrichment Club, which will be an optional after-school programme. We will build on our already established Parent Committee to assist with school fundraising initiatives such as raffles, art exhibitions, school fairs, and events.

Strategy 3: Strong financial oversight and accountability

Our newly appointed Finance Manager (Alistair Owens) is on our Advisory Board and is also part of the staff leadership team. Alistair is responsible for establishing the school's robust financial oversight methods, including audits, clear reporting procedures, and a solid framework to ensure transparency and accountability. He will maintain oversight and accountability of school budgets, accounts payable and receivable and all aspects of payroll and school financial management and audits. He is a highly skilled and experienced Chartered Accountant (now retired) who, due to his long-standing professional career, will minimise the risk of financial mismanagement and ensure compliance with all requirements.

Strategy 4: Rigorous planning

Our school-wide strategic plan will be developed with the Advisory Board when we know if we are successful in our Charter School proposal. This plan will be monitored throughout the year at regular intervals at each meeting with the Advisory Board. The initial key strategic planning areas are school financial sustainability, raising academic achievement, and increasing student attendance.

For further explanation of the strategies above, please refer to our application: *Round One: Financial Sustainability h) Describe strategies to ensure long-term financial sustainability, including plans for financial oversight and accountability.*

Detailed Budgets are Contained in Appendix A

- *Please refer to this document for further information*

Financial Health

9(2)(b)(ii)



9(2)(b)(ii)



Enrolment Variance

The following student roll numbers are anticipated for Term 1 in each of the following years:

| Enrolment Numbers | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 64 | 128 | 192 |

Clearly, the attainment of these numbers is critical and is one of the key risks that the Sponsor will manage. The prior experience in successfully marketing and operating the One-day School gives clear insight into this process.

Financial Probity

9(2)(b)(ii)



Central to the school's financial management will be a detailed monthly budget in concert with detailed monthly financial reporting, each compared with the other monthly so that timely interventions can be made should material variances arise. The advisory board will oversee this.

Appropriate policies, including sensitive expenditures, will be implemented and monitored through the Advisory Board. Effectively, the school will be self-audited each month for compliance with these key indicators of financial performance.

Alistair Owens - Finance Manager for The Forest School | Chartered Accountant (retired)

a) How the strategy will enable and support monitoring against each performance measure

- **Outcome 4.** Standard Minimum Compliance (SMC)
- **High-level Strategy 1:**
Monitor The Forest School against the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) that are issued under the Education and Training Act 2020.
- **High-level Strategy 2:**
Create a Self-Audit Check and Sponsor Assurance Statement specific to our school and conduct this every June.
- **High-level Strategy 3:**

The Forest School will also ensure that the Sponsor and Governing Members' Fit and Proper Person Declarations are updated and re-signed at each annual self-audit.

National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP)

The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) set out the priorities for education that will ensure the success and wellbeing of all learners. They are statutory documents issued under the Education and Training Act 2020 that direct the government and education sector towards actions that will make the biggest difference to students. The Forest School will ensure we adhere to these statutory documents so we can be a part of strengthening the education system to deliver successful outcomes for all learners.

The NELP and TES priorities help create education environments that are learner-centred, and where more of our learners, and especially more of our Māori and Pacific learners, are successful. They will encourage and guide us as a school to focus on:

- ensuring that children are safe and inclusive and free from racism, discrimination, and bullying
- strengthening the quality of teaching so tamariki develop the skills they need to succeed in education, work and life
- collaborating with whānau, businesses, industries and communities
- taking account of individualised needs, identities, languages and cultures in our practice, and incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into everyday learning.

Self-Audit Check and Sponsor Assurance Statement

As there is currently no Charter School Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist, The Forest School will create its own. It will provide this to the Charter Schools Agency and/or the Education Review Office on request and keep it on file as part of the school's self-audit every June.

We will develop our Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist based on the Standard Minimum Compliance (SMC) listed below, key elements from the Private and Independent Schools review that ERO conducts [HERE](#), and the Charter Schools legislation [HERE](#).

Combining all of these criteria to create a comprehensive annual self-audit will support The Forest School in monitoring closely against Standard Minimum Compliance.

DRAFT Self-Audit Checklist for The Forest School:

- **A minimum of 75% of certificated teachers employed**

Has The Forest School ensured that its staffing is suitable for the age range and level of its students?

Has the school got Teacher Registration details of employees?

Has school management ensured that persons without a practising certificate have a LAT?

For persons that the school management proposes to employ, the following checks have been undertaken:

- confirmation of the identity of the children's worker (for example, sighting the required documents or using an electronic service)
- collection and consideration of a range of information about the person, including:
 - (a) a work history,
 - (b) a referee check
 - (c) an interview with the person
 - (d) third-party checks with their professional registration body or licensing authority (as appropriate), and
 - (e) a Police vet.

Does the school have a child protection policy?

- **Student enrolment requirements**

Does the school usually provide tuition for 9 or more students who are of or over the age of 5 years and under the age of 16 years?

Does the principal for all pupils attending the school keep accurate admission and daily attendance records when the school is open?

Has the principal ensured that an enrolment record is kept for each student attending the school in a form and containing information and rules specified by the Secretary for Education?

Has the principal given written notice of any suspensions or expulsions, and the reasons for those suspensions and expulsions, to the Secretary for Education in accordance with clause 16, Schedule 7 of the Ed & Training Act 2020?

- **School day, hours, and term date requirements**

Does the school have suitable tuition standards, including tuition no lower than that given to students enrolled at State schools of the same class level?

Does the school provide regular instruction? Are the term dates, school days, and times clear and consistent?

- **Reporting requirements**

Does the school have regular and appropriate student assessment and reporting systems in place for reporting to whānau and the Charter Schools Agency?

- **Record keeping and data management**

Does the school have policies and procedures for managing personal information under the Privacy Act 2020?

Does the school use appropriate and confidential data and student management software?

- **Insurance**

Has the school ensured relevant insurance, such as public liability insurance, is in place?

Does the school have suitable health and safety policies that enable it to meet its health and safety obligations, including the requirement for regular review?

- **Transport provision requirements**

Does the school provide transport for students, and are the vehicles compliant with all required vehicle and transport legislation?

- **Property**

Has school management ensured that the school premises are suitable for a school of its description and the number of students at the school?

In considering the above, do the school premises comply with the provisions of The Building Act 2004?

- The Building Regulations (the NZ Building Code)?
- Building warrant of fitness (if required)?
- Health and Safety at Work Act and regulations?
- Fire Safety Evacuation of Building Regulations?
- Is the school a Smoke-free environment?

DRAFT Sponsor Assurance Statement for The Forest School:

To: The Charter Schools Agency

From: The School Management _____

Has the school management taken all reasonable steps to meet its legal requirements related to:

| Compliance area | Yes | No | Unsure |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Teachers employed | | | |
| Enrolment requirements | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Term day, hours, dates | | | |
| Reporting | | | |
| Record keeping | | | |
| Insurance | | | |
| Transport | | | |
| Property | | | |

Attestation: The school management and the principal have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal requirements and/or adopt efficient, good practices as identified in the Self-Audit Checklist. Where non-compliance has been identified, measures are being taken to remedy this.

Identified area(s) of non-compliance:

Action being taken to address non-compliance:

Advisory Board/Chairperson Name Signature Date

Principal Name Signature Date

Once our school checklist and statement are complete (the above is a DRAFT only), we would like to submit this to the Charter Schools Agency well before June for feedback. This is so that we know in advance if The Forest School Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist are acceptable and meet the requirements of the Charter Schools Agency before the review, and annual self-reporting is required. We will then be more than happy to amend, adjust and improve our school's Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist in consultation with and at the direction and discretion of the Charter Schools Agency.

- The Sponsor and Advisory Board will also continue to ensure that Fit and Proper Person Declarations are kept up to date and relevant at each annual self-audit.

b) How will you manage the early identification of issues and risks and what preventative measures will you take to address these?

To manage the early identification of issues and risks in Standard Minimum Compliance (SMC) The Forest School will implement a proactive approach so that we can identify risks and issues early, allowing for timely intervention. The following strategies include:

Regular in-house audits and monitoring - The Advisory Board will conduct frequent internal audits and compliance checks at Board meetings to assess and review policies, procedures, and compliance and ensure they align with current regulations.

Risk assessment framework - Establish a risk assessment framework that evaluates potential areas of concern.

Data Tracking and Analysis - Implement systems for tracking important data, such as attendance, incidents, staff details, teacher registration, feedback and safety reports.

Compliance calendar - Use a compliance calendar to stay on track with critical compliance tasks to ensure no compliance aspect is overlooked.

- **To mitigate risks once they have been identified, we will:**

Ensure clear policies and procedures - Update, change and improve policies and procedures so they are clear and aligned with compliance requirements.

Provide training and professional development - Provide training for the Advisory Board and/or staff to keep them informed of compliance expectations.

Keep clear communication - Establish clear communication and reporting channels for compliance-related matters.

Conduct routine inspections and maintenance - Conduct regular inspections of school facilities and equipment to address safety hazards before they lead to issues.

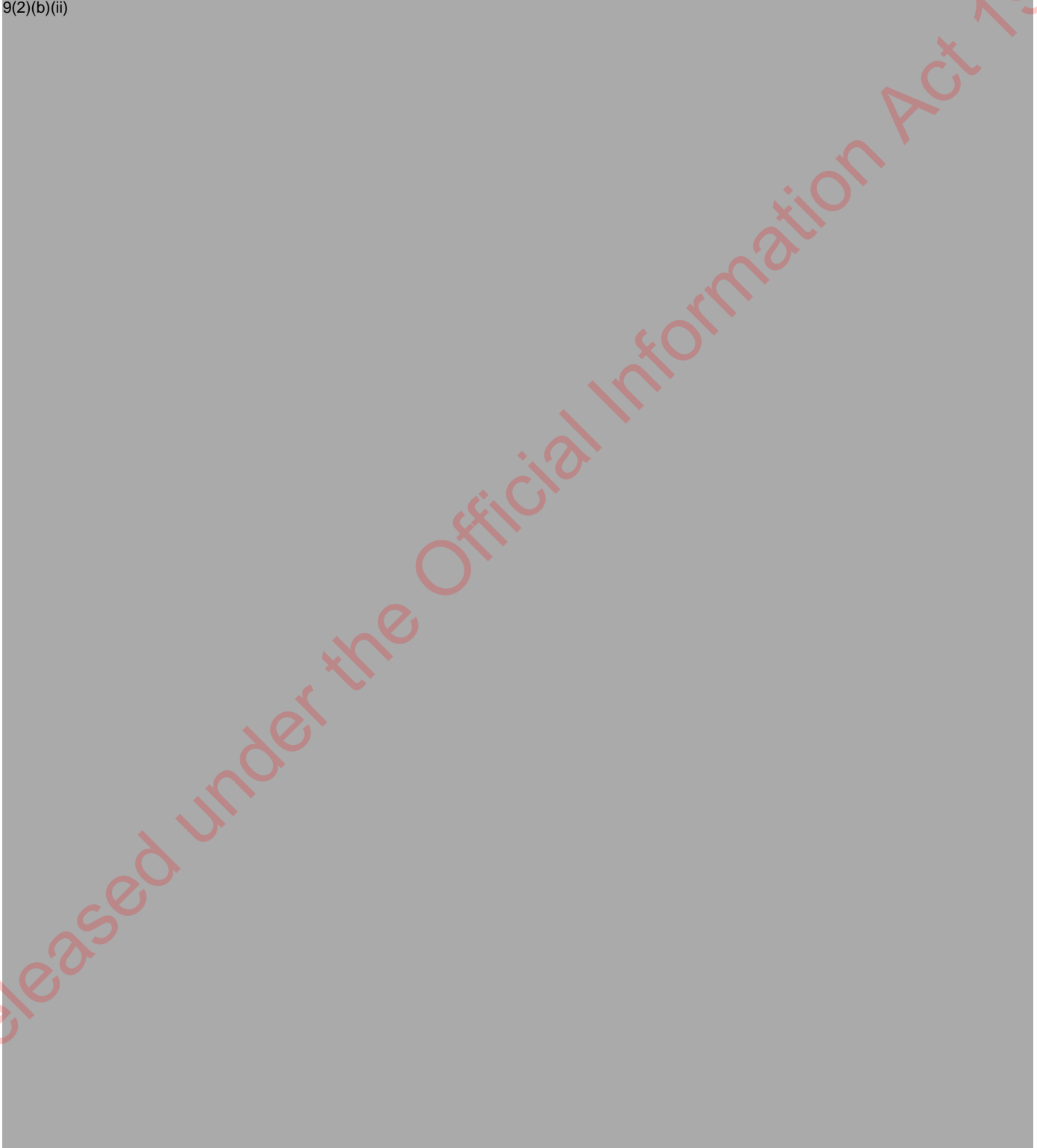
Maintain record keeping - Keep accurate and detailed records for all compliance areas.

Community engagement - Communicate with parents, students, and the community (particularly in newsletters) to foster a shared sense of responsibility for compliance.

12. Tell us in a practical way the reality of a teacher and a student on the ground at the school in a day-to-day setting and how this will endure over the life of the contract.

Map of The Forest School

9(2)(b)(ii)



Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Readiness to open

9. Demonstrate your readiness to open for Term One 2025 by showing across the following establishment areas what you will have in place for students to be welcomed in Term One 2025

9. a) Staffing

Introduction

The Forest School was established in 2016 and since then has been led by Gavin and Tennille Murdoch, both highly experienced, registered teachers. Together with their well-qualified and professional Advisory Board, they will lead this next phase as a Charter School. Along with the Advisory Board, The Forest School is overseen by Goodwin Turner Commercial Lawyers, who have been engaged with The Forest School since 2020, as well as the accounting firm Complete Accounting. The Forest School is also a member of the Auckland Business Chamber and has access to all its advisors, including HR, finance, legal, and other professionals, as required. The Forest School has engaged with HR personnel to support staff recruitment. The Forest School is equipped with expertise across various industries and professions.

Contracted professionals

Legal firm: Goodwin Turner Commercial Lawyers

Paul Turner has been the lawyer for The Forest School since 2020. He is a commercial lawyer with broad experience across many commercial, corporate and property law areas. Paul's practice includes advising on business and share sales/purchases, commercial leasing, corporate structuring, commercial property transactions, and negotiation and preparation of various commercial agreements. Paul has worked in a variety of roles, in private practice and

in-house, for leading law firms, financial institutions and other organisations in New Zealand and overseas (including in-house legal counsel roles in the UK for Barclays Bank and the NYSE Euronext Stock Exchange Group). The breadth of his experience means he can give practical and commercially focused legal advice across various areas.

Accounting firm: Complete Accounting

9(2)(a) [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]

Human resource: Pure Recruitment

9(2)(a) [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]

Health and Safety: Ignite Safety, Safe365 & Adventure Mark

Since starting our One-day School, we have been engaged with Ignite Safety. 9(2)(a) [Redacted] is our consultant, and we initially contracted to him to develop our current safety processes. He will continue working with us continuously as we develop and grow our school. In preparation for 2025, we have also engaged with Safe365 as a Health and Safety monitoring tool and with Mike Pennefather CEO at Adventure Mark who will further audit and certify our Health and Safety systems and processes.

School staff

| Position | 2025 Staff | Registration No. | Full-time/Part-time |
|---------------------|------------------|---|---------------------|
| Principal | Tennille Murdoch | 260928 | FTE |
| Deputy Principal | Gavin Murdoch | 345685 | FTE |
| Management Teacher | Paul Bricklebank | 244934 | FTE |
| Management Teacher | Crystal Ku | 383344 | FTE |
| Registered Teachers | 2x TBC | We have received 10 expressions of interest for staff for 2025 but have not yet begun our | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------|
| | | official recruitment strategy. We will not commence this until the Charter School Agency offers a contract. | |
| Office Administrator | Natalie De Haas | N/A | FTE |
| Property Manager | TBC | N/A | FTE |
| Finance Manager | Alistair Owens | N/A | FTE of 0.5 |
| Visual Art Specialist | James Hutton-Ashkenny | Specialist teacher - LAT required. TBC once we know if we have a contract offered. | FTE |
| Teacher aides | TBC - as required | N/A | FTE of 0.5 |
| Volunteers | TBC - as required | N/A | As required |

Leadership team

The Leadership Team meet weekly on Monday mornings at 7 am. This team includes the Principal and Deputy Principal, Management Teachers, and Finance Manager. The Leadership Team is responsible for implementing day-to-day budgets and decisions, reviews, and accountability as directed by the Advisory Board. It is also responsible for making school-wide curriculum decisions and other day-to-day student, community, property, and operational decisions. The Property and Office Manager will be invited to leadership meetings as needed. Likewise, the PTA and Student Council will be asked to leadership meetings as required.

Staff roles and responsibilities

Principal

The Principal leads and manages the school to ensure effective teaching and learning while fostering a positive and inclusive environment for students and staff. Responsibilities include overseeing curriculum delivery, staff management, budgeting, and financial management, ensuring that student pastoral care is paramount in the school, and ensuring compliance with education standards and policies. The principal is also responsible for building strong relationships with whānau and the school community and promoting continuous school improvement to achieve high academic and social outcomes for all students.

Finance Manager

The Finance Manager oversees the school's financial operations, ensuring that budgeting, forecasting, and reporting align with the school's goals and compliance requirements. This includes managing daily financial transactions, such as payroll, purchasing, invoicing, and preparing annual budgets and financial statements. The finance manager works closely with the Principal, and since he is also on the Advisory Board, has excellent oversight to ensure sound financial planning, maintain financial probity, and monitor resource allocation to support teaching and learning outcomes effectively. Our Finance Manager is essential for maintaining The Forest School's financial health and long-term sustainability.

Deputy Principal

The role of our school's Deputy Principal is to support the Principal in managing the school and programmes to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. This includes assistance in overseeing day-to-day administration and curriculum development. Particular areas of responsibility are HR and staff professional development and management, overseeing the Property Manager and being the main First Aid person in the school. The Deputy Principal is also head of outdoor learning, leads EOTC and actively supports teachers on excursions, community-based learning, adventure days and in the STEM Lab.

Management Teacher

Our Management Teachers (senior/lead teachers) play a key role in enhancing the school's teaching and learning quality. They have their own classes and also provide mentorship and guidance to other teachers, helping to improve practices and supporting the teaching team to be united, collaborative and aligned with the vision and mission of our school. They will also be critical in our school development as a new Charter School, contributing to detailed curriculum design, systems, processes, and teaching methods, ensuring that high standards are maintained in line with our philosophy and pedagogies.

Office Manager

The Forest School Office Manager oversees the day-to-day administrative functions of the school, ensuring smooth operations and friendly, efficient communication. She manages enrolments, maintains student records, handles correspondence, maintains office supplies, orders resources, coordinates timetables and schedules, and supports the Principal and leadership team. The Office Manager serves as our school's first point of contact for parents, staff, and visitors, playing a critical role in creating a welcoming and organised environment.

Registered Teachers

It is crucial we take our time when hiring teachers. We are engaging with a recruitment specialist to find only the best teachers who are kind, empathetic, creative, hard-working and committed to the profession. Teachers will be responsible for planning, delivering, and

assessing learning and achievement to meet the educational needs of students. They must be dedicated to our unique approach and pedagogy and create an engaging and supportive learning environment that promotes student development, both academically, socially and emotionally.

Teacher Aides

We are unsure how many teacher aides we will need to support students and classroom teachers, and these roles will vary significantly depending on the needs of the students and school. This means we will need people who are flexible and compassionate and who can assist with various tasks to enhance student learning and ensure the smooth running of a classroom. This includes providing individual or small-group support to students, particularly those with additional learning needs, preparing teaching materials, and working closely with teachers to support student achievement and well-being.

Visual Art Specialist

We are unique because visual art is a key component of our school curriculum and is integrated daily into teaching and learning. Our large atelier is a shared space for all students. Our visual art specialist is responsible for communicating closely with teachers and supporting them to develop and deliver engaging art experiences, fostering creativity and self-expression through various artistic techniques, mediums, and projects. Additionally, our art specialist organises art exhibitions and contributes to school events, showcasing students' work and enhancing the school community's appreciation for the visual arts.

Property Manager

The Forest School Property Manager will initially work closely with the Deputy Principal to gain a thorough understanding of the property. The Property Manager is then responsible for maintaining the school's buildings, grounds, and facilities to ensure a safe, clean, and functional learning environment. The role will be to oversee repairs, maintenance, and gardens, manage contractors, and ensure compliance. The Property Manager plays a key role in asset management and the long-term planning for property upgrades and improvements.

Volunteers

In addition to whānau being active contributors to our school daily, we partner with Aotearoa Cultural Volunteer Exchange (ACVE) and have international volunteers at our school to contribute to our students' lives in an engaging, inclusive, and globally-minded way. We also partner with Queens University in Canada and host teachers for an alternative practicum each year in March. All volunteers are highly valued team members, and we greatly appreciate them.

- For further information on our staff recruitment strategy, please refer to our **Round One application Part three: Business plan** - *1) Highlight qualifications and experience*

needed for key positions and m) Outline recruitment strategies to attract high-quality staff.

Payroll

We are currently set up with Xero and have been using it for our accounting and payroll for a number of years. However, advice from our Finance Manager has suggested we also invest in **iPayroll**, a cloud-based payroll solution that integrates with Xero. iPayroll is an easy-to-use system with additional features to Xero that will help us streamline payroll solutions.

For staff, it will make it much more efficient for us to run each pay and manage leave, tax, and employee records. Employees will be able to view their payslips, pay history, and tax summaries and apply for leave using the Employee Kiosk feature. iPayroll stays updated with legislation, so we won't have to worry about ensuring we are on top of compliance. It calculates and manages all deductions plus completes Inland Revenue filing in accordance with payday filing.

Since iPayroll and Xero systems seamlessly integrate, investing in iPayroll will help us to improve process and business efficiency. Both systems work together to cut processing times and improve effectiveness by reducing time spent on accounts. iPayroll can send General Ledger Postings directly into Xero as authorised accounts payable invoices. Once the payments have been debited from the bank account, these invoices can be reconciled to the payments using Xero's Bank Reconciliation. iPayroll will track payroll costs in our chart of account codes and assign tracking categories to codes, overall ensuring much more productive use of accounting and payroll processing time.

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Readiness to open

9. Demonstrate your readiness to open for Term One 2025 by showing across the following establishment areas what you will have in place for students to be welcomed in Term One 2025

9. b) Finance

Introduction

The Forest School is fully prepared to open for the 2025 academic year, with key personnel, financial measures and structures in place to ensure sustainability and accountability. We have established a detailed financial plan that includes a thorough funding breakdown, establishment requirements unique to our school, and assumptions and projections based on the calculator provided by the Charter School Agency.

Detailed budgets and financial measures are contained in Appendix A

- *Please refer to this document for further information*

Detailed information on property development and capital establishment requirements are contained in Appendix D

- *Please refer to this document for further information.*

In addition to the above financial plan and forecasting, The Forest School's financial readiness includes:

1. Key personnel

Finance Manager (part-time)

Alistair Owens - Finance Manager for The Forest School | Chartered Accountant (retired)

Office Manager (full-time)

Natalie De Haas - Administrator for The Forest School 9(2)(a)

2. School accounting system Xero and iPayroll

Our accounting system is Xero, which is already established. All we need to do is set up a new interface for the Charter School. It will be configured with the appropriate GL structure and integrations with our school management system (Hero), bank, and iPayroll for IRD, GST, and Payroll.

3. Project accounting

Will be set up in Xero to manage the capital programme, including a capital programme budget and reporting regime.

4. Comprehensive budgeting

We have developed a robust budget for both operational costs and capital expenditures, ensuring that all financial needs are covered from day one. We have detailed staffing expenses, budget expenses, CAPEX, and a profit and loss (P&L) that aligns with our long-term goals. These will be prepared and loaded to Xero along with Xero reports written to facilitate monthly reporting against budget.

5. Financial Controls

We have implemented sound financial controls and probity measures, including regular audits, transparent reporting, and the use of accounting software to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations.

6. Cost Management

We are committed to the efficient use of resources, with policies that ensure our school's environmental sustainability approach. This ensures both cost-effectiveness and environmental considerations without compromising on the quality of student learning and resources.

With this in place, The Forest School is equipped and ready to manage its financial performance effectively, ensuring long-term success and sustainability.

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Readiness to open

9. Demonstrate your readiness to open for Term One 2025 by showing across the following establishment areas what you will have in place for students to be welcomed in Term One 2025

9. d) Roll

Introduction

Our Charter School will be a co-educational, non-denominational, culturally diverse Primary School for Years 0 - 6. We had initially indicated in Stage One of our application that we would expand and provide instruction for Years 7 - 8 in 2027. However, the decision has been made to focus exclusively on primary-aged children in years 1 -6, with our growth plan to reach a maximum of 192 students by 2027. We then will establish additional schools across the country, should the Charter School Agency agree.

The Forest School will provide a new choice in education, serving families and children with diverse learning abilities and styles who share our values and educational philosophy of holistic child-centred learning based on deep emotional connections and inquiry, balanced with structured teaching and free play in nature.

Our proposed school will serve children and families from all across Auckland who prioritise a deep connection with te taiao and believe in the importance of nature-based education. We embrace and celebrate neurodiversity, understanding that every child learns differently and deserves an inclusive, equitable and supportive learning environment. Our students come from families seeking something different because they want their children to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We have already received 156 expressions of interest from our current parent database, and this is without public, widespread advertising. Parents want to see their children thrive—not just survive—in their school years. This is what we will offer: a highly engaging school that provides rich learning relevant to children’s lives and meaningful and high levels of pastoral care, which will increase school attendance and achievement.

The Forest School particularly appeals to parents who recognise the importance of play in childhood; hands-on, experiential learning, Structured Literacy and Numeracy, child-led inquiry and an integrated curriculum. Tamariki at The Forest School will be highly engaged, active learners whose creativity and critical thinking are nurtured. Our mixed-age classrooms are across 2-3 chronological age levels and promote tuakana teina, peer learning, collaboration, and community, allowing students to learn from and support each other. This is how society and communities operate, and we intend to mirror the real world of mixed ages, abilities and stages.

Parents with neurodiverse children will thrive in our calming, accepting, and empathetic setting, with small class sizes of 1:16 and opportunities to self-regulate outdoors. Teachers will provide diverse learning solutions, focusing on equity in education and providing tailored accommodations that tamariki need. Families will be part of a nurturing and dynamic environment where their children can grow, learn, and thrive harmoniously with their natural surroundings.

Of the 156 Expression of Interest we have received

9(2)(b)(ii)



Enrollment projections

We have not yet begun the official enrollment process because we cannot do so until we have official confirmation that we are successful with the Charter School Agency. Below is a clear projection, based on our expressions of interest received thus far, of how many students we expect to enrol from Term One 2025, our foundation year, through to Term One 2027, when we

will be at maximum enrolment. The table below shows each year broken down with the corresponding numbers of students in each year level.

We have planned for adequate numbers to support the school's consistent growth and sustainability. We begin Term One 2025 with 64 students and expect that by Term One 2026 (our fifth term), we will be at 128 students. By Term One 2027, the school roll will be at full capacity of 192 students.

Year 1: 64 Students (2025 foundation year)

The goal is to prioritise the enrollment of younger year levels to have larger cohorts to ensure steady, long-term growth as students progress through the school. Although our philosophy day-to-day is to arrange children in mixed-age classes, we have organised these tables into chronological year levels for ease of understanding student numbers.

| Term 1 2025 | Year 1 students | Year 2 students | Year 3 students |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | 16 | 12 | 10 |
| | Year 4 students | Year 5 students | Year 6 students |
| 64 students total | 10 | 8 | 8 |

Year 2: 128 Students (2026 growth year)

By the first term of 2026 (our fifth term), we will have doubled the school roll to 128 students. We will use the students enrolled in the previous year as a base and build on each level, focusing on balanced growth across all year levels. These students will be enrolled prospectively throughout 2025, but attendance and instruction will not commence for new students until Term One, 2026.

| Term 1 2026 | Year 1 students | Year 2 students | Year 3 students |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| | 24 new students | 16 from previous year (+8 new students) - total 24 | 12 from previous year (+12 new students) - total 24 |
| | Year 4 students | Year 5 students | Year 6 students |
| 128 students total | 10 from previous year (+14 new students) - total 24 | 10 from previous year (+10 new students) - total 20 | 8 from previous year (+4 new students) - total 12 |

Year 3: 192 Students (2027 maximum enrollment year)

We have modelled our maximum enrollment year to ensure a balance across year levels, promoting further growth to reach our target student roll. We have carefully made these projections in a way that avoids sudden spikes in particular year groups.

| Term 1 2027 | Year 1 students | Year 2 students | Year 3 students |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| | 32 new students | 24 from previous year (+8 new students) - total 32 | 24 from previous year (+8 new students) - total 32 |
| | Year 4 students | Year 5 students | Year 6 students |
| 192 students total | 24 from previous year (+8 new students) - total 32 | 24 from previous year (+8 new students) - total 32 | 20 from previous year (+12 new students) - total 32 |

Enrolment policy

We are still developing our enrollment policy; however, our roll and enrollment policy will follow the legislation stipulated in the Education and Training Act 2020, particularly the Education and Training Amendment Bill Subpart 6A, which is specific to Charter Schools.

Education and Training Amendment Bill

Subpart 6A—Charter schools/kura hourua

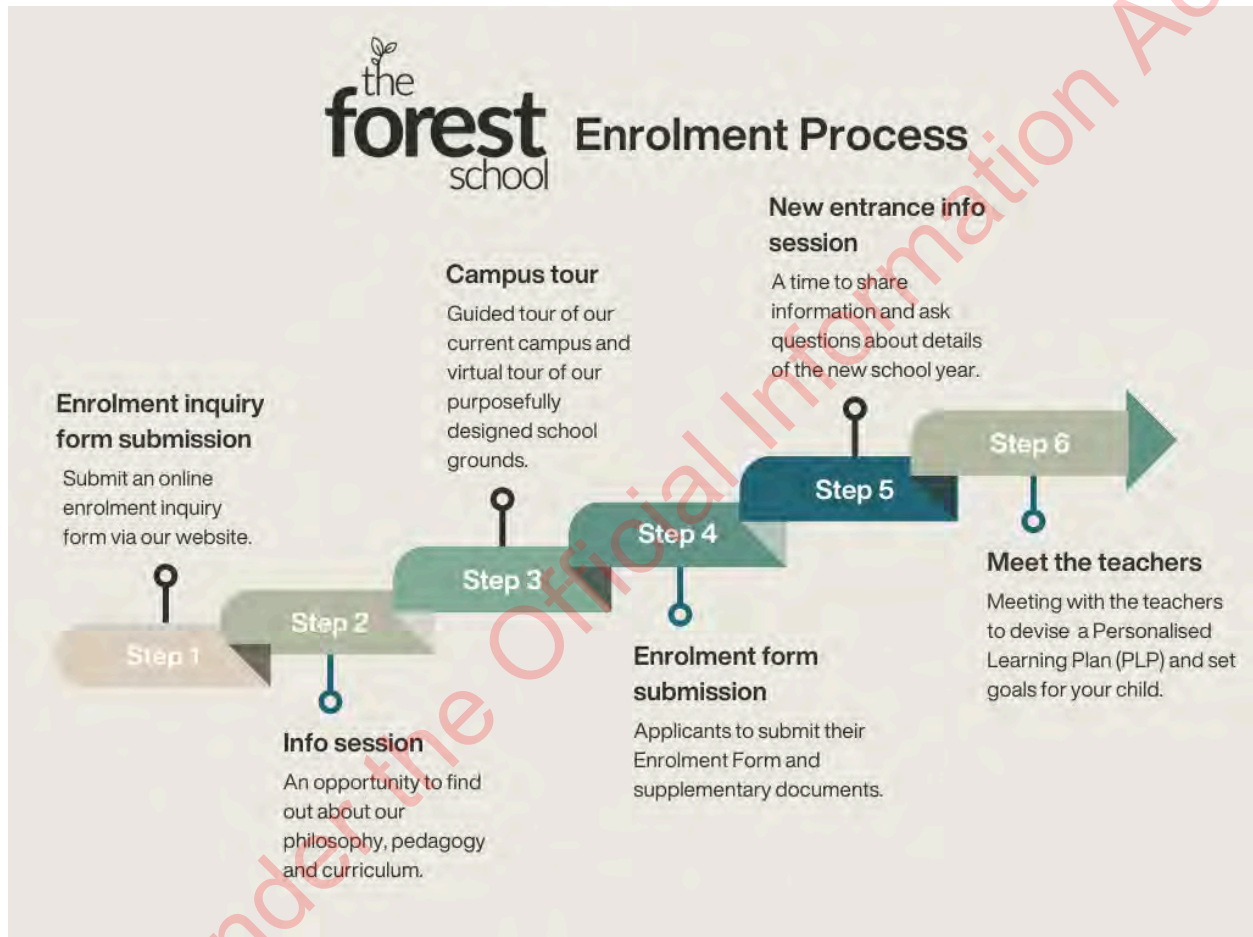
Enrolment in charter schools

- (1) *A charter school must enrol all domestic students entitled to free enrolment and free education under section 33 who apply to the school (up to the physical capacity of the school premises as stated in the charter school contract).*
- (2) *However, a charter school may refuse to enrol a student if a parent, or other person who has accepted responsibility for the education of the student, refuses to accept that the school operates in accordance with any religious, philosophical, or other distinguishing characteristics a character approved by the Authorisation Board and notified in the Gazette under section 212M(2)(e).*

As indicated in our Curriculum Document, page 3, we have some distinguishing characteristics unique to our school's philosophy that we require parents to agree to. This is clearly provided to parents before enrolment, and agreement to these special characteristics is required at the time of enrolment form.

Enrollment process

We have ensured a clear timeline for the enrollment process. Once parents have submitted an enrollment inquiry online, they will be able to select a date and time that suits them for their info session and campus tour. This will ensure all parents receive all the necessary information about our school and get a good understanding of our philosophy and approach before submitting their Enrollment Form.



Enrollment strategy

Although we have already received a large number of expressions of interest, once we know if we are successful in our Charter School submission, we will implement our marketing and enrollment strategy to support us and ensure we enrol the projected number of children.

9(2)(a)

This will begin with launching our new website (still under construction) and then a media release to both print and TV. We will begin a social media campaign and host

open days and community information evenings to trigger the start of the enrollment process, as outlined above.

A copy of our enrollment form is attached in Appendix C.

- *Please refer to this document for further information*

Waitlist

As indicated above in our enrolment projections, we will only be able to enrol a maximum of 64 students in 2025. Therefore, when we reach this maximum, other families will go onto a waitlist. Priority placements will be given to those children who fit the criteria as stipulated in the Charter School legislation below, and thereafter, children will be chosen by ballot.

Subsections (4) and (5) apply if a charter school receives more applications than there are places at the school.

(5) For all other charter schools, the order of priority is as follows:

- (a) first priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a current student of the school:*
- (a) second priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a former student of the school:*
- (b) third priority must be given to all other applicants.*

(6) For the purposes of subsections (4) and (5),—

- (a) if there are more applicants within a priority group than there are places available, applicants must be selected by ballot; and*
- (b) if 2 or more siblings apply at the same time, their applications must be treated as a single application for the purpose of the ballot.*

Conclusion

Thorough planning for student roll and enrolment from the outset is critical to the long-term success and sustainability of The Forest School. We have spent a long time modelling several different scenarios of enrollment growth and believe these projections are best for the school's steady growth and the consideration of families, children, and staff.

We have ensured balanced class sizes, steady progression through year levels, and optimal resource allocation. We aim to build a strong community foundation, focusing on being student-centred for long-term academic achievement. We have planned effectively to reduce the risk of overcrowding or under-enrolment in specific year levels, ensuring continuity in the learning environment without interruptions. This overall roll strategy is in place from the beginning to set our school up on a solid trajectory for ongoing success, preparing the school to adapt as it expands.

Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Three: Operational fitness

Readiness to open

9. Demonstrate your readiness to open for Term One 2025 by showing across the following establishment areas what you will have in place for students to be welcomed in Term One 2025

e) Health and Safety

Introduction

The Forest School has been operating outdoor learning programmes since 2016. In that time we have developed an approach to Health and Safety management that is legally compliant, practical and manageable for our small team. Across our staff, there are qualified registered teachers; in addition, there is a range of additional relevant skills, experiences and qualifications that are utilised to deliver highly engaging and stimulating learning experiences. High standards of health and safety are the enablers of these experiences and are central to supporting The Forest School in delivering these rich learning experiences.

Currently, 30 children per day attend either our One-day School programme or Holiday Club. For our next phase, beginning 2025, we intend to expand our educational offering to a full-time Charter School with an after-school Enrichment Club three days a week. With the new expansion, there will be 128 students in 2025 & 2026, up then 192 children in 2027 enrolled in the Charter School and 16 children attending the One-day School programme daily. Although the increase in numbers on site will mean more activity, the robust, tested systems we have in place will continue to support high-quality learning at The Forest School. To further improve the standards of Health and Safety we have in place, we are currently undergoing a complete review. All systems are being examined through fit-for-purpose lenses evaluated and improved where identified. Some of the areas of improvement identified are detailed below; also, our upcoming audit process will likely provide further insights and inform future improvements in our systems.

Statement of intent

The Forest School is dedicated to using the natural world as a platform for learning. It provides child-led forest, shoreline, ocean, and beach learning experiences that take place over regular sessions. The opportunities that are provided are meaningful and hands-on, and promote high-level engagement. The programme is facilitated by kind, passionate, highly experienced New Zealand teachers. The Forest School is committed to keeping all workers, learners and others who come into contact with our work, safe, both physically and emotionally. It will undertake to provide all resources required to reduce the risk to their safety to as low as is reasonably practicable. This includes;

- Complying with the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) and relevant regulations made by virtue of the Act;
- Communicating the objectives of this policy to all workers, learners, and others that may come into contact with our work;
- Ensuring that all activities undertaken will be in line with our educational outcomes and include all reasonably practicable measures to manage and minimise risk to our workers, learners and others who may be a part of our operations;
- Consult with, and provide information, instruction and supervision to our workers (including volunteers) on matters affecting their health and safety;
- Provide and maintain a safe working environment and equipment in line with our risk-benefit model and learning objectives;
- Ensure all workers (including volunteers) are competent to do their tasks and to give them adequate training and refresher training;
- Do everything reasonably practicable to prevent incidents and cases of work-related ill-health (including investigating all reported accidents and near-hits);
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions;

The Forest School Advisory Board and the School's proprietor take their moral, social, and legal responsibilities seriously. They are overall responsible for this policy and will review it annually.

Health and Safety culture

We foster a culture of continuous improvement in health and safety by ensuring that all staff, children and volunteers share responsibility. We achieve this by employing skilled and experienced professionals who bring their lifetime knowledge and expertise to our Health and Safety systems and processes. We are committed to high standards. This is supported by training programs, regular internal and external safety audits, and open communication channels that encourage staff, students, volunteers and whānau to actively participate in identifying, reporting and mitigating risks. By prioritising collaboration and ongoing professional development, we ensure that our Health and Safety practices are not only compliant with

regulations but also exceed industry standards, creating a safe and supportive environment for our students and staff.

Policies

Our policy framework is aligned with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. This includes clear policies on Risk Management, Emergency Procedures, and Health and Safety responsibilities for all staff and volunteers. The Forest School policies are living documents, regularly reviewed and updated to reflect new insights and legislative changes.

It is critical for our school, governance, and staff to have a thorough understanding of policies that are meaningful to our approach and relevant to our unique setting. We have engaged with SchoolDocs to help us develop our policies as we move into 2025. However, there is not enough time to ensure that every policy is relevant and meaningful to our new Charter School by Stage Two of the Charter Schools application, due for submission on October 11th. We are working with SchoolDocs to review our current policies and upgrade those that are necessary, so they are applicable to a full-time Primary School for next year. Engaging with SchoolDocs ensures we have a thorough and entire Health and Safety system in time for opening in Term One 2025. It is not feasible to have these policies at the standard we desire by the earlier date.

This overview is not exhaustive of what our Health and Safety will look like in 2025 because we are continually improving and investing in this. Still, it provides a good summary of what we currently have in place for our One-day School and how we will take the systems we have and expand them to be appropriate for all operations of our Charter School. We want to assure the Charter School Agency that we work to the highest standards. Every Advisory Board member and staff member must be consulted before signing off on School Policy and Health and Safety Management Systems. This will take more time than we have right now.

Our Policies are living and active documents that are regularly accessed, referred to, and updated as new information or processes are identified. This ensures that we maintain the highest standards and provides the Charter School Agency with the confidence that we are committed to excellence.

SchoolDocs www.schooldocs.co.nz

The Forest School has engaged with SchoolDocs to support us in developing policies and procedures that are legally compliant and best practice. SchoolDocs is widely used by New Zealand state and private schools and provides an online policy and procedure service tailored to New Zealand's needs. SchoolDocs offer a comprehensive set of core policies and procedures, which will be personalised to The Forest School and regularly reviewed and updated by us with input from experts and the school community. This service will help us ensure that The Forest School maintains compliance with the latest legislation and best

practices and receives expert guidance. SchoolDocs make the policies they provide for schools easily accessible to staff, Board members and parents. This transparency and easy access support a collaborative and efficient approach to school governance and Health and Safety.

Health and Safety Management System

Over the eight years that we have operated The Forest School as a one-day school and holiday club, we have developed a comprehensive health and safety management system with the assistance and support of an external company: Ignite Safety. We still regularly seek input, advice, and guidance from this company on all aspects of Health and Safety for our school so that our educational approach and processes fit our environment and the community we work with and are also reviewed by industry experts. In anticipation of 2025, we have also recently engaged with Adventure Mark in addition to our work with Ignite Safety.

A proactive approach to risk management and an ethos of continuous improvement support our staff, students, and visitors' well-being. This system involves regularly identifying potential hazards, conducting thorough risk assessments, and implementing effective control measures. We continuously monitor and review these measures to ensure their effectiveness. We have developed activity-specific risk management plans for all activities where we have identified that there is risk exposure to children. For any offsite experiences, we undertake thorough planning, risk evaluation and management and have an activity and site-specific safety plan. Our staff receive comprehensive induction and ongoing training, while students are educated on safety protocols and encouraged to take an active role in maintaining a safe environment. We also have robust emergency plans, promote overall health and well-being, maintain detailed documentation, and engage the wider school community in our health and safety initiatives. Through these efforts, we create a safe and supportive environment that enables students to thrive while learning and exploring the natural world around them.

Our proactive approach to risk management involves:

- **Identifying Hazards:** Regularly identifying potential hazards such as uneven terrain, water bodies, weather conditions and any changes in the environment, these are discussed in daily staff briefings, and specific hazards are noted in Safe365.
- **Risk Assessment:** Conducting thorough risk assessments to evaluate the likelihood and severity of potential incidents. This process takes place before an activity and during as a 'dynamic assessment'. Knowledge gained informs debriefing and future planning.
- **Control Measures:** Implementing control measures to mitigate identified risks, such as providing appropriate safety gear, developing and delivering appropriate training,

establishing clear boundaries, ensuring adequate supervision, and having emergency response procedures in place in case an accident does occur.

- **Monitoring and Review:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of control measures and review them periodically to ensure they remain effective. This begins with daily morning meetings and daily afternoon debriefs, which may highlight where a new hazard or potential hazard is identified and whether further action or reporting needs to occur.

Ongoing training and upskilling

All staff members receive a comprehensive induction as well as ongoing training on Health and Safety practices, including first aid, emergency response, and the specific risks associated with the experiences provided by The Forest School as well as learning about the environment and conditions we operate in. Students are educated on safety protocols and encouraged to take an active role in maintaining a safe environment. A specific example of this is the Tool Licence process, where students can become qualified in using a number of different hand tools once they show that they can identify, use the appropriate safety equipment and understand the purpose of the tool and how to use it safely and effectively. Students are encouraged to create their own signs if they identify a hazard or if there is an activity that they perceive others need to be warned about. This process draws children into the safety conversation and encourages them to take ownership in keeping The Forest School safe. Some examples are children making signs that give advice around slippery ground or advice about being safe around the fire.

Preparation for the unexpected

Emergency plans are in place to take care of possible accidents that require response:

- **Emergency procedures:** We have clear procedures for responding to emergencies such as injuries, severe weather, or missing students.
- **Communication plan:** Our communication plan ensures that parents and emergency services can be quickly informed in the event of an emergency.
- **Regular drills:** We conduct regular emergency drills to ensure that staff and students are familiar with the procedures.

Health and well-being

Promoting the overall health and well-being of students and staff is crucial. This includes:

- **Physical health:** Ensuring access to clean drinking water, educating children and parents about healthy food, providing advice and support to bring and wear appropriate

clothing for outdoor activities, and educating children about changing clothing accordingly as the activity or environment changes.

- **Mental health:** We support mental health by providing a caring, respectful environment centred on strong emotional connections and trust. We also provide access to counselling services if necessary and other mental health specialists through our association with Acorn Neurodiversity and the clinicians there. We promote a positive, inclusive school culture.
- **First Aid:** We ensure that first aid kits are readily available, staff are trained in basic first aid procedures, and children know that they can ask a teacher for help or first aid and that they will be supported and cared for.

Documentation and reporting

The Forest School maintains accurate records of all Health and Safety incidents. This includes:

- **Incident reports:** We document any incidents or near-misses to identify patterns and prevent future occurrences.
- **Risk assessments:** We maintain detailed records of all activity-specific risk assessments and control measures.
- **Training records:** We keep a record of all training sessions attended by staff and students.

Our systems are currently being migrated to **Safe365** to enable more timely and detailed documentation. At our meeting last Friday, all staff participated in staff training on how to use Safe365. We have decided to migrate to Safe365 so all staff can immediately report any concerns or changes regarding Health and Safety. This maintains our high standard of continual improvement and allows all Health and Safety data to be easily accessible by the whole team and updated immediately in digital form, promoting a culture of shared responsibility and accountability.

Community Involvement

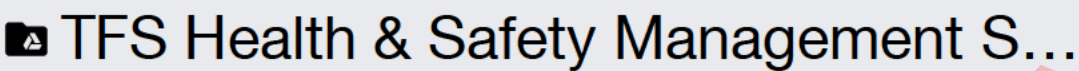
Engaging the wider school community in our Health and Safety initiatives is an important element in enhancing the effectiveness of our school system. This involves:

- **Volunteering:** We have a strong volunteering culture at our school, which includes whānau and the wider community. We encourage school whānau to volunteer to support school experiences and this includes safety measures. Parent volunteers regularly support our offsite activities and contribute to helping provide supervision for The Forest School. All training is provided on how to use equipment safely and how to supervise children appropriately.

Our aim is to create a safe and supportive environment that enables students to thrive while learning, exploring, and engaging with nature. We aim to achieve this aim by implementing a comprehensive Health and Safety Management System.

Our current Health and Safety Management System can be accessed by this link:

- Please note this is evolving and changing daily now that we are using Safe365



The Risk-benefit philosophy

The Forest School advocates for the importance of a balanced approach to risk in outdoor play and has consistently enabled the concept of Risk-benefit analysis as a lens to assess whether to enable activities and experiences. This approach is deliberate about ensuring that children have access to enriching and challenging experiences and can access the benefits of these experiences while managing the potential risks in a sensible manner.

Instead of striving for a zero-risk environment, which can stifle children’s development and learning, a Risk-benefit approach encourages thoughtful consideration of both positive outcomes and potential hazards. The table below is a summary of how some of the regular experiences at The Forest School are assessed through the Risk-benefit lens.

Risk-Benefit Table for regular experiences at The Forest School

| Activity | Potential Risks | Potential Benefits | Risk Management Strategies | Risk Level | Age-Appropriate Considerations |
|--------------|---|--|--|------------|--|
| Beach Visits | Drowning, sunburn, cuts from shells, jellyfish stings | Physical exercise, sensory experiences, learning about marine life | High level of supervision with walkie-talkies, sunscreen, first aid kit, clear boundaries, teacher in water with students, | High | Be informed on every child’s swimming ability; less able children stay in shallow water; older /taller/more able children can explore deeper |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--------|--|
| | | | jellyfish awareness | | areas with supervision |
| Estuary Visits | Slips, water contamination, getting stuck in mud | Exploration, understanding ecosystems, physical activity | Supervision, appropriate footwear, knowledge of tides, first aid kit | Medium | Children stay on marked paths, high level of supervision with walkie-talkies. |
| Fire Building | Burns, smoke inhalation, uncontrolled fire | Learning survival skills, teamwork, responsibility | Supervision, fire safety training, designated fire area, water bucket nearby, the ground underneath the fire is wet before lighting fire | High | Unkilled children can gather materials; more skilled children can assist with building and maintaining the fire, learning skills over time. High level of supervision with a teacher present at all times. |
| Bushcraft | Cuts, insect bites, getting lost | Problem-solving, creativity, connection with nature | High level of supervision with walkie-talkies, roving teacher at all times, first aid kit, clear instructions, clear boundaries, insect repellent | Medium | Younger/less skilled children can participate in simple tasks; older/more skilled children can take on more complex activities. |

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| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--------|--|
| Bike Riding | Falls, collisions, getting lost | Physical exercise, balance, coordination, risk assessment, independence, resilience | Helmets, supervision, clear track boundaries, first aid kit | Medium | Younger/less skilled children should use smaller bikes on flat tracks; older/more able children can use larger bikes on varied terrain |
| Tool Use | Cuts, bruises, improper use leading to injury | Fine motor skills, responsibility, confidence, self esteem, practical skills | Supervision, safety training, appropriate tools for age, first aid kit | Medium | High level of supervision with scaffolded instructions, clear rules and boundaries. |
| Animal Feeding | Bites, allergies, germs | Empathy, responsibility, learning about animals | Supervision, hand washing, knowledge of animal behaviour, first aid kit | Low | Younger/less skilled children can feed smaller animals; older children can take on more responsibility with guidance |
| Surfing | Drowning, collisions, sunburn, jellyfish stings | Physical exercise, balance, coordination, connection with nature | Supervision, life jackets, sunscreen, jellyfish awareness, surfing lessons by qualified instructor | High | Younger/less skilled children should use boards in shallow water; older/more skilled children can use surfboards in deeper water. Scaffold lessons and assessment. |

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| | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------|---|
| Tree Climbing | Falls, scrapes, insect bites | Physical exercise, problem-solving, confidence | Supervision, clear climbing rules, appropriate clothing, first aid kit | Medium | Younger/less skilled children should climb lower branches; older /more skilled children can climb higher with supervision. Clear rules and active teaching on climbing. |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------|---|

The value of this approach enables:

1. **Balanced decision-making:** making informed decisions that balance the benefits of an activity (such as physical exercise, social interaction, confidence and problem-solving skills) with the associated risks (like minor injuries or falls).
2. **Encouraging exploration and developing confidence:** Children are naturally curious and learn best through exploration and play. A risk-benefit analysis supports activities that allow children to test their limits and learn from their experiences, even if it involves some level of risk or small injuries that are normal in childhood play and development.
3. **Contextual understanding:** The approach takes into account the specific context of the activity, including the environment, the children involved and their abilities and the supervision/training and skills of teachers; maintaining our 'learning is not a one-size-fits all' approach.
4. **Proportional response:** Risks are assessed in proportion to their likelihood and potential impact. Minor risks with less chance of causing serious harm are judged to be acceptable if the benefits are visible and warrant the level of risk.

Applying a risk-benefit approach at The Forest School requires several practical steps:

1. **Curriculum design:** Incorporate a variety of outdoor experiences that promote a range of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Such as climbing, balancing, navigating uneven terrain, water and swimming sports that may not be typical in other school settings.
2. **Risk assessments:** Conduct regular risk assessments for outdoor activities, identifying potential hazards and determining how they can be managed. Use of Safe365 enables more regular risk assessments easily accessible to staff. Thoughts and ideas can be recorded with a simple video, voice message or text notes in the moment. The level of

risk of an activity highlights the extra attention required to enable different experiences. This might involve ensuring that climbing equipment is safe and that there is adequate supervision during high-risk activities.

3. **Training for staff:** Educate teachers and staff on the principles of risk-benefit analysis, helping them understand how to balance risks and benefits in their planning and supervision. This training would also cover first aid and emergency response procedures.
4. **Engaging parents and community:** Communicate with parents and the community about the benefits of outdoor play and the school's approach to managing risks. This helps build support and understanding for The Forest school's philosophy.
5. **Monitoring and feedback:** Continuously monitor the outcomes of outdoor activities and gather feedback from students, parents, and staff. Safe365 notifies the Health and Safety manager immediately so that action to manage risk can be taken in a timely manner rather than waiting for annual reviews to reflect and review. Timely information refines and improves risk management strategies reducing the chance of incidents.

By applying this approach, The Forest School creates a safe yet dynamic and enriching learning environment that supports children in taking some ownership of decision-making regarding healthy risk-taking. This supports them to grow and develop the skills required to be competent as adults in assessing risk. Students develop lifelong skills in evaluating risk and learn to make informed decisions about the risk and benefits of any experience.

Safe365 <https://safe365global.com/nz/>

Safe365 is a digital platform that transfers all Health and Safety documentation to an online form so that it is accessible and usable for the team at The Forest School. We have begun using Safe365 in September 2024 and will continue to develop our familiarity with this tool and implement its use to support enabling the rich learning experiences at The ForestSchool.

Safe365 provides a comprehensive, real-time view of health and safety performance, enabling teachers and health and safety managers to identify and manage risks proactively. Its user-friendly interface ensures that even those without extensive Health and Safety expertise can effectively use the platform. By embedding Health and Safety culture into The Forest School's daily operations, Safe365 helps create a safer learning environment for both students and staff. The platform is effective in providing visibility of safety practices, encourages a culture of continuous improvement, and supports compliance with Health and Safety legislation.

The challenge for the application of good quality Health and Safety in a school is physical and psychological separation from the hands-on aspect of day to day operation, with the aspirational practice of continual reflection on the safety of processes and practices. Recording

newly identified risks and hazards in situ, as well as documenting near misses and incidents immediately and in an effective manner, is a common challenge for Health and Safety managers in busy educational settings. Safe365 is a tool that mitigates this challenge by providing the ability to record and document all aspects of onsite Health and Safety and implement change in a timely manner. This supports a culture of individual contribution, shared responsibility, and continual improvement in Health and Safety culture, practice, and policy.

The Forest School submitted our current documentation to Safe365 for review as a starting point for improving and upgrading our systems for 2025 as a Charter School. Our initial online survey of our current Health and Safety Management system and practice has highlighted areas where there is room for improvement. As an accountability tool, Safe365 gives very specific feedback about where and how The Forest School can improve. Safe365 is built on the worldwide industry standard of ISO 31000.

ISO 31000 is an international standard for occupational Health and Safety management systems. It provides a framework for organisations to manage risks and improve performance by systematically assessing hazards and implementing risk control measures. The organisational self-assessment below is based on this standard. The Forest School Health and Safety manager then uses this information to identify areas where systems can be improved so that constant improvement is specific, targeted, and efficient.

9(2)(b)(ii)



The above tables show that on initial pre-assessment, The Forest School achieved 53%, which is ahead of the industry average for education organisations with under 50 employees. An approach of continual improvement measured against the Safe365 tool will help improve daily Health and Safety practices and promote a continually safe learning experience for children, staff and volunteers. This is a starting point as The Forest School readies to open as a Charter School in Term One 2025. There is time and direction to improve systems, processes and communication and maintain our approach to Health and Safety being a living dynamic document and system that continually evolves and improves. This approach and tool will allow us to be well-prepared for Term One 2025.

Reviews and accountability

To ensure effectiveness and compliance, we will conduct bi-annual in-house audits that cover all aspects of the Health and Safety Management System, activities, and staff performance. Internal audits will be conducted according to the <https://www.supportadventure.co.nz/reviews/> framework.

External audits will also be undertaken by AdventureMark which is a leading service provider in New Zealand. We have already engaged with them.

According to the Worksafe Adventure Activity Regulations, an activity provided by a school does not need to obtain a safety audit certificate and be registered under the Health and Safety at Work if the activity is only provided for the purpose of encouraging interest in the activity and the activity is not provided for another purpose such as for commercial reasons, and the activity is only offered to any particular individual on no more than 12 days in any 12 month period. We also currently do not offer any activity deemed as an 'Adventure Activity' according to Worksafe definitions. However, it is recommended that a voluntary external audit be undertaken. The Forest School follows all EOTC Guidelines – Bringing the Curriculum Alive <https://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines> which is consistently in line with The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, The Vulnerable Children Act 2014; and, The Health and Safety at Work (Adventure Activities) Regulations 2016.

In summary

- The Forest School will undertake bi-annual internal audits of Health and Safety Management Systems beginning in 2025
- The Forest School will undertake bi-annual external audits of Health and Safety Management Systems beginning in 2026
- As a registered school The Forest School will not be required to register as an Adventure Activity provider because of the types of activities we provide and according to Worksafe Adventure activity regulations (2016).
- We continue to take advice from Worksafe on any changes to recommendations and changes in regulations to maintain high standards of practice and remain legally compliant.

Conclusion

Quality Health and Safety management is central to enabling the team at The Forest School to create and support the rich and deep learning experiences that learning in a largely outdoor setting provides. Nature and experiences in nature provide enormous sensory stimulation. By enabling child-led, play-based learning alongside proven methods of structured learning of core skills, The Forest School enables high engagement in our highly stimulating environment. In John Hattie's meta-analysis of predictors of learning, he isolated high engagement as the strongest predictor of learning and high achievement. Our Health and Safety practice serves to enable this high-level engagement in a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment.

**Application Form for Stage Two
Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua**

Response Form

Part Four. Comments on the draft agreement

N/A

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Application Form for Stage Two Sponsors of Charter Schools | Kura Hourua

Response Form

Part Five. Changes to your stage one submission

The following changes apply to our Charter School proposal.

1. Sponsor name and details change

The new proposed name of the Sponsor is **New Zealand Forest Schools Limited**.

NEW ZEALAND FOREST SCHOOLS LIMITED is a registered limited company with company number 9278847 and NZBN: 9429052368738. It was incorporated on 24 September 2024.

The directors of this company are GAVIN MURDOCH and TENNILLE MURDOCH. The IRD number for NEW ZEALAND FOREST SCHOOLS LIMITED is 9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]

We propose a name and entity change for the Sponsor from what was submitted in round one of our application. The trading name of the School will remain the same. We would be grateful if this could be considered. The proposed change is based on two reasons. First, our expansion plan has progressed from being a consideration to now being an actively developed growth strategy in collaboration with the Advisory Board.

9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]

2. Growth plan

9(2)(b)(ii) [REDACTED]

3. New Advisory Board appointment

Alistair Owens is our newly appointed Advisory Board member. He is also employed as our Finance Manager. He has been appointed because of his expertise and experience as a chartered accountant, and he will ensure sound financial management for our Charter School. His Statutory Declaration is attached in our submission as Appendix E.

4. New service providers

We have added new service providers, such as Safe365, Adventure Mark, iPayroll, HERO, and SchoolDocs. This is after researching the most efficient and quality software and services for managing administration, Health and Safety and payroll for our proposed school.

5. Primary School only

After consulting with the Advisory Board, we will no longer expand to offer Middle School in 2027 and will, therefore, remain focussed on serving Primary school-aged children from years 0-6. This is because our Reggio-Emilia approach is suited to younger ages, and our community has expressed a real demand for Primary School services. ^{9(2)(b)(ii)}

^{9(2)(b)(ii)}

Each class will have its own shared device and interactive whiteboard for research and inquiry instead of going to a different area in the school for this.

7. Proposed roll


Initially, we indicated that our maximum roll for the Charter School would be 128 students. We have now extended this to 192 students. This is because, considering the level of interest we already have, we need to meet the demands of the community.

Part Six. Application Declaration

| Topic | Declaration | Applicants' Declaration |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Application Process, Terms and Conditions: | I/we have read and fully understand this Application, including the Process, Terms and Conditions. I/we confirm that the Applicant/s agree to be bound by them. | Agree |
| Collection of further information: | <p>The Applicant/s authorises the Charter School Agency and the Ministry of Education to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect any information about the Sponsor, except commercially sensitive pricing information, from any relevant third party, including a referee. • use such information in the assessment of this Application. <p>The Applicant /s agrees that all such information will be confidential to the Charter School Agency and the Ministry of Education.</p> | Agree |
| Use of Information: | The Applicant/s agree that information provided as a part of the fit and proper persons test can be shared with appropriate third parties engaged to undertake the necessary reviews. | Agree |
| Draft Agreement: | The Applicant/s accepts the General Terms and Legal Schedules of the Agreement and confirms that they have prepared their application on the basis that no amendments to the General Terms and Legal Schedules will be considered. | N/A |
| Conflict of Interest declaration: | <p>The Applicant warrants that it has no actual, potential or perceived Conflict of Interest in submitting this Application or entering into a Contract to deliver the Requirements. Where a Conflict of Interest arises during the Application process the Applicant /s will report it immediately to the Charter School Agency and the Application Point of Contact.</p> <p>When you sign the declaration, please consider any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest. For example, if you have had any communication or input from the Establishment Board with regard to your application.</p> | Agree |
| Details of conflict of interest: Not Applicable | | |
| <p>DECLARATION</p> <p>I/we declare that in submitting the Application and this declaration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information provided is true, accurate and complete and not misleading in any material respect | | |

- the Application does not contain intellectual property that will breach a third party's rights
- I/we have secured all appropriate authorisations to submit this Application, to make the statements and to provide the information in the Application and I/we am/are not aware of any impediments to enter into a Contract to sponsor a Charter School | Kura Hourua.
- I/we understand that the falsification of information, supplying misleading information or the suppression of material information in this declaration and the Application may result in the Application being eliminated from further participation in the Application process and may be grounds for termination of any Contract awarded as a result of the Application process.

By signing this declaration, the signatory below represents, warrants and agrees that he/she has been authorised by the Applicant/s to make this declaration on its/their behalf.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Signature: |  |
| Full name: | Tennille Lee Murdoch |
| Title / position: | Director - New Zealand Forest Schools Limited Advisory Board & Principal - The Forest School |
| Name of organisation: | The Forest School New Zealand Forest Schools Limited |
| Date: | 10 October 2024 |

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Hon Mark Mitchell
MP for Whangaparaoa

5 August 2024

Dear Charter Schools Authorisation Board,

I am writing to express my support for The Forest School's application to become a charter school. This school is in the Whangaparaoa electorate where I am the MP. I recognize the significant benefits that charter schools bring to children, families, communities, and our nation. I am confident that The Forest School will play a crucial role in enhancing educational outcomes for students in New Zealand.

Since 2016, Tennille and Gavin have demonstrated their commitment to innovative education through The Forest School, a private one-day extension program has positively transformed many children's lives. Their entrepreneurial approach and dedication to holistic education make them invaluable assets to our community.

As a charter school, The Forest School will continue to provide high-quality, student-centred education that emphasizes well-being, nature-based learning, and evidence-based explicit teaching.

I have personally witnessed Tennille and Gavin's passion for education, professional expertise, and unwavering integrity.

The addition of The Forest School will offer families across Auckland more educational choices, allowing them to select the best fit for their children's unique needs and aspirations. This aligns with our government's goal of fostering an environment where all students can thrive.

Yours sincerely

Mark Mitchell
MP for Whangaparaoa

Parliament

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mark.mitchell@parliament.govt.nz
04 817 6897

Whangaparaoa

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National

Authorised by Mark Mitchell, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

13 June 2024

To whom it may concern

I am writing to support The Forest School's application to become a charter school. As a former senior National politician, I deeply understand the benefits of charter schools to children, families, communities and our country as a whole. I believe that The Forest School will play a vital role in enhancing educational outcomes for students in New Zealand.

Tennille and Gavin are capable people who have taken an entrepreneurial approach to education over the years. In 2016, they established The Forest School as a private one-day school extension to mainstream education, and their organisation has significantly impacted and changed many children's lives.

In this next phase as a charter school, I know The Forest School will continue to provide high-quality, student-centred education. The school's ethos is to be nature-immersed, focus on student wellbeing, and provide evidence-based explicit teaching. As a former Minister across a range of portfolios I know that this approach of true holistic education, that balances academics, includes nature connection and prioritises wellbeing will be crucial to the overall success of their students.

I know the founders personally and their passion for education, coupled with their professional expertise, and strength of character gives me great confidence in their ability to successfully establish and operate this charter school.

Furthermore, the addition of The Forest School will provide families across Auckland with more educational choices, allowing them to select the best fit for their children's unique needs and aspirations. This choice is crucial for fostering an environment where all students can thrive.

I wholeheartedly support the approval of The Forest School's charter application and urge the Charter School Authorisation Board to grant this school the opportunity to make a greater, positive impact on our community.

Best regards



Simon Bridges
Chief Executive Officer
Auckland Business Chamber



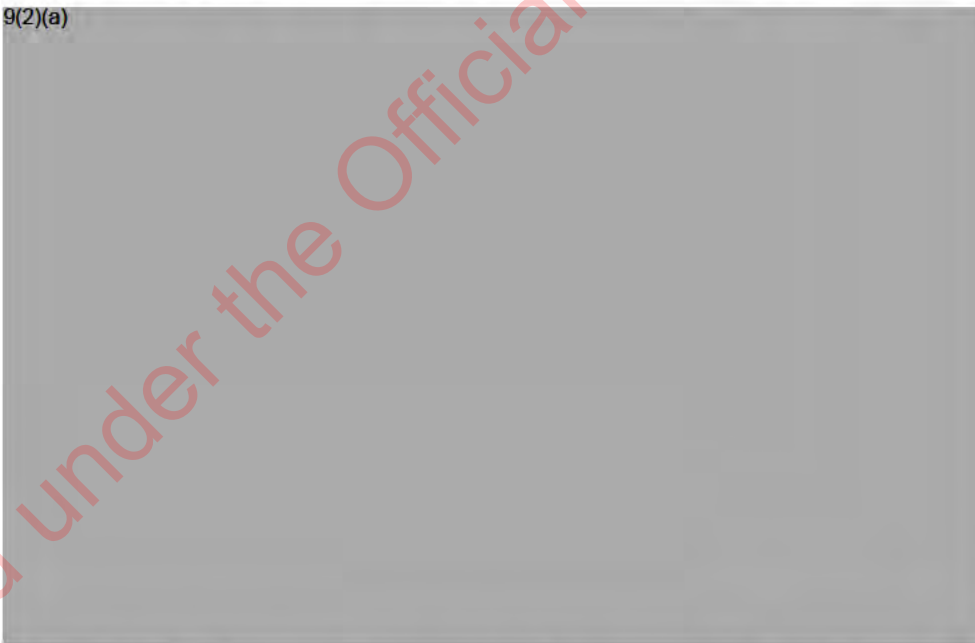
17 June 2024

Tēnā koe,

As the CEO of Acorn Neurodiversity, a charity in Tāmaki Makaurau providing multidisciplinary services to neurodivergent children and their whānau, I know that different learners need different educational opportunities and approaches in order to thrive.

Acorn serves 200 children and whānau a year across the Auckland region. Unfortunately, about one quarter of the children that we serve are not allowed to attend school all day due to a lack of appropriate learning support. Many of our neurodivergent young people have been excluded from school or strongly encouraged to home school due to challenges related to their disabilities. The supports and environments that are conducive to their learning are just not available in the public system.

9(2)(a)



I began to work closely with Tennille and Gavin to support the many neurodivergent learners that were flooding into The Forest School seeking a

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22a Remuera Road, Auckland 1050
09 281 4657
www.acornneurodiversity.com

10/11 Miller Drive, Auckland 0622
09 280 4501
www.acornneurodiversity.com



place to belong and to learn important life skills. We all saw the impact for both the neurodivergent and the neurotypical children of being in nature engaging in hands-on, project based learning. The lesson plans are developed with intention and a deep understanding of how children learn. Their pedagogy is grounded in evidence-based practise and utilises the natural environment to create authentic learning opportunities which engage the whole child.

9(2)(a)

For many reasons, a full time Forest School is an essential addition to the education system. It will provide an inclusive, high quality education that supports not just academic achievement but also social and emotional development. If more children are able to access The Forest School and attend full-time, more young people will have both an appreciation of our New Zealand natural environment and the confidence to strive to reach their own potential.

Acorn Neurodiversity strongly supports the application of The Forest School to become a charter school.

Ngā mihi nui,

Tami Harris, MA

Chief Executive Officer

9(2)(a)

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126a Remuera Road, Auckland 1050
09 251 4857
www.acornneurodiversity.co.nz

14/14 Tapanui Drive, Auckland 0622
09 280 4303
www.acornneurodiversity.co.nz

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

7th June 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the Forest School's application to become a charter school. Restore Hibiscus and Bays (RHB) has had the privilege of collaborating with the Forest School in Hatfields Beach for over four years, and I can confidently attest to their unwavering commitment to environmental education and stewardship.

Our partnership with the Forest School has been both fruitful and inspiring. Over the past years, we have conducted numerous workshops with them, totalling approximately 30 sessions, focused on practical, hands-on ecological restoration activities such as weeding, and water-testing. These workshops have provided invaluable opportunities for students to engage directly with their natural environment, learning essential skills in ecological restoration and developing a deep sense of responsibility for the world around them.

The Forest School's dedication to environmental goals aligns perfectly with RHB's mission. Their approach to education, which integrates outdoor learning and environmental awareness, not only enriches the students' academic experiences but also fosters a generation of environmentally conscious and proactive individuals. The students' enthusiasm and commitment during our collaborative projects have been a testament to the Forest School's effective and impactful educational methods.

Looking forward, RHB is eager to continue our partnership with the Forest School. We are confident that their transition to a charter school will further enhance their ability to provide exceptional educational experiences while promoting environmental sustainability. We firmly believe that the Forest School's charter school status will allow them to expand their reach and positively impact even more students and the wider community.

Thank you for considering our strong endorsement of the Forest School's application.

Sincerely,

Julia Clavel
Restoration Advisor - Schools
Restore Hibiscus and Bays



12 June 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am the CEO of Longworth Education, New Zealand's leading professional development provider specialising in implementing innovative teaching approaches, including child-led inquiry, learning through play and developmentally appropriate practices. As an international speaker, coach, teacher, researcher, and author, I have dedicated my career to promoting evidence-informed, developmentally appropriate practices in educational settings. I am passionate about helping educators implement these practices with fidelity, ensuring that they align with the latest research on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and well-being.

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter in support of Tennille Murdoch and her dedicated team at The Forest School in Orewa, Auckland. The Forest School is at the forefront of innovative educational practices that prioritise child-led learning, meaningful and relevant inquiry, experiential learning particularly in nature, and offer children the opportunity to learn at their own pace through interest-based topics.

The approach taken by The Forest School is deeply rooted in research that underscores the immense benefits of learning through play and child-led inquiry. These pedagogies, especially in natural settings, are powerful catalysts for high engagement and meaningful learning. It fosters a range of developmental benefits, including enhanced social skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and emotional resilience.

Research consistently shows that these pedagogies are not only beneficial but essential for children's holistic development. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, experiential learning, and play, is critical for developing social skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and emotional regulation. Additionally, outdoor play helps children develop physical fitness, coordination, and a deeper connection with the natural world.

The Forest School's commitment to providing a learning environment that supports child-led inquiry, play and experiential learning is in perfect alignment with these findings. By allowing children to engage in self-directed learning and pursue their interests, The Forest School is creating a setting where children can thrive. This approach not only meets the diverse needs of learners but also prepares them for the complexities of the modern world by fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and a lifelong love of learning.

Furthermore, The Forest School is well-equipped to deliver explicit literacy and numeracy instruction, ensuring that foundational skills are competently taught. This will be complemented by integrated literacy and numeracy experiences related to child-led inquiry, allowing children to see these essential skills in action. By combining structured teaching with inquiry-based learning, The Forest School ensures that children develop robust literacy and numeracy skills in a context that is meaningful and engaging to them.



As The Forest School seeks to expand its offerings to a full-time program, it is crucial to recognise the need for different learning environments that cater to all children, particularly those who flourish in settings that emphasise play and interest-based learning. The evidence is clear: all children benefit and thrive when they are given the freedom to engage in experiential learning and explore their interests in a supportive and enriching environment.

I wholeheartedly support Tennille Murdoch and her team in their vision to expand The Forest School. Their work is not only innovative but also essential in redefining what effective and meaningful education looks like. I am available for further questions should that be required via my mobile or email contact details below.

Ngā mihi nui

Dr. Sarah Aiono
CEO, Longworth Education
HundrED Oceania Community Lead
Global Recess Alliance (New Zealand)

9(2)(a)

9(2)(a)

June 11, 2024

Subject: Support for Charter School Funding for The Forest School

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for funding The Forest School as a Charter School. As a parent whose two children have been enrolled in the school's one-day program for several years, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact this school has on its students. The unique approach to education offered by The Forest School makes it a valuable asset to our community, for both general population students and especially for neurodiverse students. The Forest School occupies an important educational niche deserving of government support.

The growth my children have experienced at The Forest School has been significant. The school's emphasis on experiential learning and play creates an environment where their creativity has flourished. Each child has developed crucial social and emotional skills, learning to understand their own emotions and those of others. They also learn how to interact effectively with people of various ages, a vital life skill.

One of the significant features of The Forest School is its commitment to child-led learning and sensory and risky play. These are not extras but an integral part of the curriculum. I saw my children build confidence in the physical sense by exploring and building, but also build confidence in an emotional sense because of the opportunities available to them through play to navigate relationships and conflict.

In order for New Zealand to compete in today's rapidly evolving world, an education centered around play is more important than ever. To me, play is not merely an activity; it is a critical component of 21st-century education, fostering holistic development. I have seen the dedicated teachers at The Forest School provide the necessary guidance and support, ensuring each child is provided with the necessary support for their development. The experienced founders and administrators have a proven track record of supporting students and managing a successful school while continuing to shape and fulfill their vision and goals for the school as an institution.

I believe The Forest School embodies the qualities and values that are essential for the development of well-rounded, capable, and compassionate individuals prepared for a 21st-century world. The school's innovative approach to education, coupled with its dedicated staff and visionary leadership, make it a strong candidate for government funding. I urge you to

consider providing the necessary support to The Forest School so that it can continue to enrich the lives of its students and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

9(2)(a)



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Forest & Bird
TE REO O TE TAIAO | Te Reo Māori | Te Reo English

5/8/24

Ground floor, 205 Victoria Street, Wellington
PO Box 631, Wellington 6140, New Zealand
P 0800 200 064
www.forestandbird.org.nz

Tēnā koe,

I am writing to express my support for The Forest School to expand and increase access to their facility for more children and young people to be able to experience full time.

Through working with Tennille and Gavin since 2021 as part of our Pest Free Hibiscus Coast Project, I have been privileged enough to see first-hand the wonderful learning environment provided for children to be a part of. Through our programme The Forest School has established a pest animal control and monitoring network on their site, to protect the forest and the native species that live there. Children at The Forest School are supported to learn about and connect with nature in a truly child-led way, and it is clear to see the vast range of benefits that all ages and abilities get from attending.

The Forest School is a place where the next generation of people who care for our environment can develop a sense of kaitiakitanga, whilst learning all the skills and knowledge they need to make a difference in the world. The more tamariki who can experience this the better, and there are so many for whom being there full time would be life changing. It is an exceptional place led by a highly skilled and passionate team.

We hope to continue working with The Forest School as they work towards the next step in their education journey, please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.

Ngā mihi,

Jenny Hanwell | *MSc Ecology* | *She / her*
PEST FREE HIBISCUS COAST PROJECT MANAGER
FOREST AND BIRD

9(2)(a)





To Whomever it may concern

I am writing as a professional supporter and advocate of the immense importance of the first official Charter School in New Zealand utilising a nature based ethos.

Our company Forest Schools Education Ltd and had the absolute pleasure of not only witnessing the success of their provision and staff working with children, young people and parents in a very unique and diverse manner that has been developed over many years of experience.

They are always looking and learning the newest research and through that, developing the expertise through a wide range of experiences and opportunities suitable and adaptive to the unique needs of each student.

I have been working in the natural environment for over 35 years and discovered for myself how nature based learning and a school centred on social emotional learning is an imperative in developing this innovative progressive educational approach.

The Forest School founded by Tennille and Gavin have invested time, effort and energy to create an environment that is sustainable both in its environmental impact and the peaceful emotional as well as knowledge based influences through utilising the Forest as well as other unique opportunities that the beaches, estuaries and the sea itself engenders such a wonderfully diverse landscape for successful nature based learning.

Forest Schools Education has had the absolute privilege of working with Tennille and Gavin in the capacity of training staff to endure the cultural capacity that runs through this endeavour.

During my time having worked with The Forest School New Zealand and know their history and development of exceptional capabilities and above all the tenacity to achieve a unique dream centred around each special and unique participant. They concentrate through observations and evaluation of the special interest in each attendee and on going parental support, many of whom have moved especially for their child to attend.

Tennille and Gavin are pioneers in New Zealand in this mission to create the most effective, safe, and life changing opportunities possible for those that attend.



My team are overwhelmed with the successes we hear about on an ongoing journey to inspire those that attend.

I can do nothing other than endorse their passion and dream to develop what has proven its successes over and over again.

As a Charter School they can expand their educational programs to touch the lives in a more secure and intense manner than ever before.

I am happy to offer any more information if required to support this application.

I look forward to hearing that this application has been approved without question.

Tennille and Gavin are unique individuals whose mission is to provide a positive service to children and families that are seeking a better educational opportunity in their children's childhood. In fact one that they deserve and have a right to participate in, a nature based educational experience that fulfils their aspirations and personal needs.

Sarah Blackwell
Founder and CEO
Archimedes Earth Ltd
archimedes-earth.com
www.forestschools.com
www.forestschoolskindergarten.com
[Term & Conditions](#)
Registered Office with Companies House
15 Derwent Close
Dronfield
Derbyshire
9(2)(a)



07.08.24

Kia ora,

This is a letter of support for The Forest Schools Charter Schools submission.

The Forest School is committed to the national Enviroschool programme and I am the Enviroschools Facilitator for the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board.

The Enviroschools Kaupapa is about creating a healthy, peaceful, sustainable world through learning and taking action together. The Kaupapa is embodied in five guiding principles that underpin the whole Enviroschool journey:

- Empowered Learners
- Learning for Sustainability
- Te Ao Māori
- Respect for Diversity
- Sustainable Communities

9(2)(a)

The school embraces our Kaupapa and Guiding Principles and has hosted Auckland Council staff for personnel development opportunities. The school offers a unique learning environment with many nature-based learning opportunities, many families are seeking this kind of education for their children.

Noho ora mai,

Tori Christie,

Enviroschool Facilitator.



Email: admin@theforestschool.co.nz | Phone: 09 4211158 | PO Box 808 Orewa 0946

Enrolment Form

Please complete sections A and C of this application form. Section D of this form is to be filled in by the applicant's current teacher or primary learning instructor.

| | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Section A | | Section C | |
| P. 3-4 | Student Information | P. 11 | Parents' Statement |
| P. 5-6 | Medical History | P. 12 | Parents' Agreement |
| P. 6-7 | School History | P. 13 | Parents' Declaration of Partnership |
| P. 7-8 | History of Diagnosis & Interventions | P. 14 | Authorisation and Agreement |
| P. 9 | Other information | | |
| Section B | | Section D | |
| P. 10 | The Forest School Special Characteristics | P. 15 | Teacher Questionnaire |

Checklist for completing your enrolment form

| | |
|---|--|
| Section A completed | |
| Section C completed | |
| Section D (to be returned directly to The Forest School by the person filling this section) | |
| A copy of the latest school report (for students who have attended a previous school) | |
| A passport size photo of the student | |
| A copy of the student's NZ birth certificate, passport or current visa | |
| A copy of the parents' passport ONLY IF the student is not a New Zealand citizen | |
| A copy of the student's immunisation records signed by their doctor | |

The Forest School Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Our vision is to empower students with a strong sense of self-worth, creativity, attitudes, values, and essential academic and social-emotional skills to be adaptable, fully equipped, committed to lifelong learning and ready to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Mission

Our mission is to provide an inspiring nature-immersed learning environment where every student experiences the joy of learning and a profound sense of belonging. We nurture each child to become confident, capable, socially, and emotionally competent. Our balanced and holistic approach ensures students are excited for life, learning, and the future.

Values

Our values are the bedrock on which our school aspirations and goals are built. These values shape our decisions and the culture we want to foster. Our values are implicit in our school ethos and explicitly taught so that they form part of our students' internal compass.

• Connection

At the heart of our school is connection. We embrace, support, and care deeply for children. We build trust and partnerships that support children's growth by fostering strong emotional connections with students, whānau, nature and the community.

• Honouring the individual

We recognise that children learn in different ways, stages, and paces of life. With compassion and empathy, we foster a supportive community for ourselves and others, creating an emotionally safe place for children to explore, develop, and be empowered.

• Awe and wonder

We cultivate a child's natural sense of wonder, curiosity, awe, spirit, play, and imagination. Our curriculum encourages students to explore what captivates them, delve into the wonderful, seek out the extraordinary, and bring their imaginative ideas to life.

• Kaitiakitanga

Being immersed in nature is integral to our well-being. Experiencing the world firsthand is a constant reminder of our inheritance and responsibility of the natural world. The school has an ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability and stewardship.

• Curiosity and growth

We foster a deep sense of curiosity and a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. We nurture each child's intellectual and personal growth, encouraging them to explore, ask questions, and seek knowledge throughout their lives.

*Further school information is available in more details on our website www.theforestschool.co.nz

Section A – Student Information

Student Information

Surname: _____ First name: _____

Preferred name: _____ Gender: Boy Girl

Date of birth: _____ Country of birth: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Iwi affiliation: _____

Residency status: NZ Citizen / resident Others: please specify _____

- Student is a NZ citizen – copy of birth certificate of passport attached
- Student holds a NZ resident class visa – copy of visa and passport attached
- Student holds other types of visa – copy of visa and passport attached

Present school: _____ Present year level: _____

Primary language: _____ Languages spoken at home: _____

Parent/Guardian details

| Parent/Guardian 1 | Parent/Guardian 2 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Surname: | Surname: |
| Name: | Name: |
| Title: | Title: |
| Relationship to student: | Relationship to student: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Phone: | Phone: |
| Email: | Email: |
| Occupation: | Occupation: |

Custodial arrangement

Student lives with: both parents Mother Father

Others: please specify name and relationship _____

Details of legal custodial arrangement, if any _____

Is there anyone not permitted to collect the student? No Yes, please specify:

Sibling Details (if applicable)

Siblings of the student

| Name | Age | Current school | Please tick if you wish for this child to be added to the future waitlist of The Forest School? |
|------|-----|----------------|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Emergency Contact Details

Should the parent or guardian be out of contact at an emergency, please list details of TWO emergency contact persons

| Emergency contact 1 | Emergency contact 2 |
|--|--|
| Surname: | Surname: |
| Name: | Name: |
| Title: | Title: |
| Relationship to student: | Relationship to student: |
| Address: | Address: |
| Phone: | Phone: |
| Email: | Email: |
| Authorised by parents for student pick-up: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Authorised by parents for student pick-up: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Medical History

Is the student up to date with the New Zealand immunisations? Yes No

If no, please explain why:

Is your child on a restrictive or special diet? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Are there specific foods that trigger behaviour? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Does the student have any allergies? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Does the student have any health restrictions or limitations? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Does the student have any chronic health issues? Yes No

If yes, please describe:

Has the student been hospitalised for any reason? Yes No

If yes, please describe reason, dates and name of the hospital: _____

Do you require the student to have medication administered at school? Yes No

If yes, please indicate medication and frequency per day: _____

Is there any history of the student taking medications? Yes No

If yes, please list:

| Name of medication | Dates | Dosage / Time | Prescribing Doctor | Purpose |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|--------------------|---------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Name of Family Doctor: _____ Phone number: _____

Doctor's address: _____

School History

Previous school attended (if any): _____

Dates attended: _____

If the student was home-educated, please state for how long: _____

Preschool or child care services attended: _____

Dates attended: _____

Has the student received any of the following services at school:

Reading recovery Yes No Dates: _____

SENCO support Yes No Dates: _____

RTLB Yes No Dates: _____

Teacher aide Yes No Dates: _____ Hours/day: _____

ORS funding Yes No Dates: _____

IWS Yes No Dates: _____

Please describe any other special support services or accommodations provided by the school or Ministry of Education, if any:

Has the student ever been stood down or asked to attend modified hours?

Yes No

If yes, please specify dates and reason: _____

Has the student ever been excluded from school? Yes No

If yes, please specify dates and reason: _____

History of Diagnosis and Interventions

Diagnosis

Does the student currently have a diagnosis? Yes No

If yes, please specify details:

What is the diagnosis: _____

Date of diagnosis: _____

Clinician/organisation making diagnosis: _____

Contact details of clinician/organisation making diagnosis: _____

Intervention

(only if the student has had intervention / assessment in the following areas. Please provide any assessments completed by the service providers listed and any other assessments or evaluations that may be applicable to this enrolment.)

Speech and Language

Name of service provider: _____

Phone number and email: _____

Dates of intervention: _____

Goals of intervention: _____

Progress: _____

Occupational Therapist

Name of service provider: _____

Phone number and email: _____

Dates of intervention: _____

Goals of intervention: _____

Progress: _____

Counselling or Behavioural Therapy

Name of service provider: _____

Phone number and email: _____

Dates of intervention: _____

Goals of intervention: _____

Progress: _____

Education Psychologist or Therapist

Name of service provider: _____

Phone number and email: _____

Dates of intervention: _____

Goals of intervention: _____

Progress: _____

Other Treatment or Professional Assessment

Name of service provider: _____

Phone number and email: _____

Dates of intervention: _____

Goals of intervention: _____

Progress: _____

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Other Information

Can your child confidently swim 25 metres? Yes No

What are the student's strengths, interests and talents?

Does the student have any community involvement? If yes, please specify.

Does the student participate in any sports? If yes, please specify.

Does the student have any school or club responsibilities? If so, please specify.

Is there anything else that would be helpful for us to know about your child?

Section B – The Forest School Special Characteristics

The Forest School Special Characteristics

The Forest School offers a unique nature-based learning environment where the outdoor classroom is a core space for education through all weather and seasons. As a condition of enrolment, families must agree to the following special features of our school:

Our research-supported belief is that children build resilience, confidence, and self-management through connecting with nature, hands-on experiences, and environmental challenges. We strongly emphasise free play and adventure learning as core components for developing independence and sound decision-making. Children spend at least four hours outdoors every day, year-round, actively growing and learning. This helps children reduce stress and become more regulated and emotionally balanced. To fully benefit, children must be well-prepared for outdoor learning with appropriate clothing and footwear.

Our academic programme prioritises mastery, emphasising deep understanding and skill development rather than rushing through content or simply covering material. We aim for each student to fully grasp concepts before progressing, which fosters meaningful and lasting learning. Guided by the Reggio Emilia approach, we honour each child's individual pace and natural curiosity, nurturing a love of learning in a supportive, pressure-free environment that respects each student's unique developmental journey.

We are a predominantly screen-free school that focuses on hands-on creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. While we use various STEM technologies as learning tools and engage with devices for research and inquiry, we discourage screen dependency. By minimising screen time, we aim to maximise real-world experiences, play, and holistic growth, helping children develop the competencies they need as adults. We kindly ask parents to partner with us in this approach.

Our focus is on providing an age-appropriate education that nurtures children's innocence. We cultivate an environment that safeguards childhood, allowing students to experience their formative years in a safe, secure setting without exposure to complex adult topics. We do not teach gender or religious ideologies, nor do we endorse any specific belief. However, we acknowledge celebrations and festivals equally so that children learn about different cultures, countries and practices. This approach keeps The Forest School's educational content child-centred, allowing each family to guide their children in matters of personal significance.

The Forest School is a community-centred school that thrives on active whānau involvement, which enriches learning and supports student success. Whānau are required to actively contribute, engage regularly, and collaborate in school activities. Consistent attendance during term time is also expected, as it is essential for student's well-being and achievement and the overall success of the school.

By enrolling at The Forest School, parents endorse our special characteristics and agree to uphold these values as a condition of enrolment, ensuring their children fully benefit from and fit into our vibrant, supportive learning community.

Parents' Agreement

We have familiarised ourselves with the vision, values and special characteristics of The Forest School. By submitting this enrolment form, we agree to support the school's principles, philosophy and practices:

- I/we agree to our child's participation in outdoor play and experiences as part of The Forest School curriculum.
- I/we understand that there are risks associated with learning outdoors that cannot be reduced to zero.
- I/we know we can ask The Forest School any questions to gain a better understanding of the activities, learning experiences and safety provided.
- I/we agree to provide appropriate clothing as specified by The Forest School so that our child can fully participate in the learning programme.
- I/we commit to collaborating with The Forest School and its community by volunteering at least one day per term per family.
- I/we take responsibility for our child's punctuality and consistent attendance, recognising that regular attendance is essential for achievement and building meaningful relationships within the school community.
- I/we will seek approval in writing, in advance, from the Principal for leave from school during term time for two or more days.
- I/we support the teaching of social-emotional learning as part of the curriculum.
- I/we agree to partner with The Forest School to discourage screen dependency.
- I/we accept that The Forest School will communicate immediately with us should our child require any medical assistance or treatment. I/we understand that if I am/we are unable to be contacted, the staff will seek further medical advice if necessary.
- I/we agree to update our child's medical and personal details regularly.
- I/we will attend parent-teacher meetings arranged by The Forest School.

Finally, I/we accept that my/our child's learning and development is a partnership with The Forest School. I/we will participate in all communications and discussions regarding my/our child. We have read and understood the above Parents' Agreement and agree to them as part of our enrolment.

Parent signature: _____ Parent signature: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

Parents' Declaration of Partnership

A key component in The Forest School curriculum is collaboration. Parental involvement in the school community is expected to compliment the learning journey of our students. Please indicate below your expertise, passions, connections and abilities that can be contributed to The Forest School. We also accept nomination of one member of your whānau in lieu of either parent.

| | Parent | Parent / Whānau member |
|--|--------|------------------------|
| Name: | | |
| Profession: | | |
| Relationship to student: | | |
| Sports: (e.g. experience in certain sports, professional qualifications etc) | | |
| Cultural: (e.g. knowledge of traditions, language, instruments, crafts etc) | | |
| Trade or technical: (e.g. being in a trade, garden etc) | | |
| Others: | | |

Authorisation and Agreement

Please read carefully and tick all that applies.

- The information we have as part of your child's enrolment is for the purposes of establishing and maintaining appropriate records required to perform our obligations as a safe, supportive school. The information we collect will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020, the Children's Act 2014, the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, and the Education and Training Act, as well as other relevant legislation.
- I authorise The Forest School to contact service providers, teachers and administrators referenced above regarding their assessment, education or treatment of my child.
- I give permission for my child's name, video(s) and/or photograph(s) to be included in any regular school newsletter, bulletin, yearbook or the school website.

Parent signature: _____ Parent signature: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

PRIVACY ACT 1993: THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE SUPPLIED IS NECESSARY FOR THE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE FOREST SCHOOL.

All personal information requested will be held confidentially and not shared with another party. You are welcome to review information pertaining to your child at any time.

Section D – Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be filled in by the student’s current teacher or primary learning instructor (if home-educated). Please return directly to The Forest School via email at admin@theforestschool.co.nz

Thank you for your input in providing more information about the student. We appreciate your honesty in answering this questionnaire, which is kept strictly confidential and information will NOT be shared to the applicant.

Student name: _____ Your name: _____

Organisation / School: _____

Relationship to student: _____

How long you have known the student for: _____

What are the student’s interests and passions?

What are the student’s strengths?

How does the student learn best?

Is there anything else that would be helpful for us to know about the student?

Signature: _____ Date: _____