



WHAKATANE HIGH SCHOOL

International Student Handbook 2023

Revised May 2022

Welcome to New Zealand and to Whakatane High School

Whakatane High School welcomes you and hopes your time with us will be happy and challenging. We provide many opportunities for the development of inter-cultural understanding and attaining high academic standards – value your opportunities.

New Zealand's natural environment is a national treasure. Its people are known for their friendliness – smile and you will make friends easily.

New Zealand offers a safe political environment for international students. It is a European culture, which has absorbed many cultural elements from the Maori and Pacific Island heritages and now from its multi-cultural immigrant communities.

The capital of New Zealand is Wellington, other major cities are Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Rotorua, Tauranga, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Climate

The climate is temperate with mild, wet winters and warm, dry summers.

Summer: December – February

Autumn: March – May

Winter: June – August

Spring: September – November

Currency

Most overseas currencies are accepted and easily exchanged in New Zealand banks and exchange centers. The New Zealand currency is composed of cents and dollars.

Payments

To pay for tuition and other fees, please use online payment to our bank account. The Whakatane High School Account Number is on the bottom of our invoice. It is the **ASB in the Strand, Whakatane, Name of account: Whakatane High School, Private Bag 1021, Whakatane.**

Bank: ASB, Account number: 12-3253-0046123-50

Swift Code: **ASBBNZ2A**

stating “**Int Student**” and “**Student's Name**”.

Overseas travellers' cheques and credit cards such as Visa, American Express, Bankcard, MasterCard, Diners Club and JCB are accepted in most places. The international direct debit system *Cirrus Plus* or *Wired* is also widely used.

Banks

Twenty-four hour automatic teller machines (ATMs) and banks are located near the school. Most banks are open 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. We have ASB, Westpac, ANZ and BNZ branches here in Whakatane. We recommend that students open an account at ASB while they are here. This makes payments easier as they then can use an eftpos card. Students **cannot** pay with credit cards at the student office for any trips. They can pay with eftpos cards.

Clothing

Whakatane High School has a set uniform. Students will be taken to a uniform shop to fit their school uniform soon after they arrive. You will need to supply your own black shoes. You can

bring them with you or purchase them here in Whakatane. Depending on the timing and duration of your study the clothes you need will vary. In summer time, light clothing and open footwear is sufficient. However, in winter warm clothing such as sweaters and jackets are recommended. Dress is informal on most occasions.

Shopping

Shops usually open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday and from 10.00 am till 1.00 pm on Saturday. Large shops like The Warehouse or Farmers are open every day, including weekends. Supermarkets open early and close late. Whakatane High School is very close to a small shopping center and within 20 minutes (walking time) to the Whakatane Central Business District. When you buy goods in shops the price includes a 15% tax known as “goods and services” tax or GST.

Food

New Zealand has a wide range of local and imported food. New Zealanders generally have a balanced diet of vegetables with either meat or fish in their main meal. The evening meal is usually considered to be the main meal. Most families will welcome the chance to try something different if you would like to offer to prepare the occasional meal. It is OK to say “no thank you” if you are offered a second helping of food and you do not want it. Students can bring a packed lunch or they may choose to buy their lunch from the school canteen.

New Zealand cities and towns have excellent public water supplies; in all cases tap water is fresh and safe to drink.

Transport

Students are placed in homestays as close as possible to the High School

but it may be necessary to catch a school bus depending on where you are living. The school will pay for this service for fee paying students. There is only a very limited public transport system in Whakatane. Taxis are available at a considerable cost. Students may ride a bicycle to school – it is law in New Zealand that you must wear a helmet. Learn the road rules of New Zealand. You must ride on the left hand side of the road. If your homestay lends you a bicycle, you are responsible for replacing it if it is stolen - always lock your bicycle at the bike racks and take your helmet with you. Students enrolled at Whakatane High School have undertaken NOT to buy, hire or drive a motor vehicle during their enrolment – the breaking of this condition may lead to the termination of their contract. Please do not accept a ride from a student who has only the Learner’s license. It is illegal.

Sport and Recreation

Many students join a local fitness centre (“gym”) to keep up their fitness. Whakatane High School is located in the Bay of Plenty – an area known for its beautiful beaches and bush walks as well as its closeness to Tauranga and Rotorua cities. Join in whatever recreational events your host family and friends invite you to – it is the best way to involve yourself in the ‘Kiwi’ culture. Ask your homestay or International staff to help you find an activity that interests you. Let them help you to make arrangements to attend. The school offers opportunities for all students to participate in a variety of sports codes. These may be seasonal and a uniform fee may be required, but if you wish to commit yourself to practice and games and are prepared to go by the rules of ‘fair play’ you are most welcome to be part of the team.

Religion

Most Christian denominations have churches in Whakatane. New Zealand observes most Christian holidays.

For students who have special dietary religious requirements, the school and homestay families can ensure that these are respected. Students need to advise the Homestay Coordinator of their special preferences when enrolling.

Holidays

Apart from national holidays, Whakatane High School is closed on Saturday and Sunday. The main school (and family) holiday period is from mid-December to the end of January. Schools are also closed for two weeks in April and July and September/October. Check our website for details.

Television/Radio/Newspapers

There are several free to air television channels and a range of pay channels available in Whakatane. New Zealand has many national and regional AM/FM radio stations. A bi-weekly, local newspaper, the Whakatane Beacon is available.

Electricity

Electrical appliances need to be adapted to the New Zealand voltage of 240 volts, 50 hertz with a specific plug.

Orientation Programme

You will be met by a WHS staff member and your host parents at the Whakatane airport or shuttle meeting point (usually the WHS campus), or you may be taken directly to your homestay by the airport shuttle if arriving from Tauranga. You are then orientated with Homestay guidelines and introduced to your host family.

The host family will familiarise students with procedures to help them

in the home – knowing what to call each other, using the telephone, bathroom, expectations at mealtimes, household chores, lunch preparation, times to be home.

We recommend that students purchase a New Zealand sim card to put into their cell phone or alternatively buy a cheap pre-paid NZ cell phone. We need to get hold of students easily and they want to keep in touch with all of their new friends and host parents. Good communication about their movements is essential to a successful relationship with everyone.

Once school starts, students are familiarised with the school layout (map and tour), personnel (administration and support staff) and systems. We go over school rules, procedures, counseling, and support systems.

Students are given language and mathematics assessment tests (if they choose to take mathematics). These will determine the initial class placements. Students will work with the Director of International students or deans to plan their individual course and timetable.

Students may change their timetable for a period of up to two weeks. The process is paced so that students feel confident in their new environment.

From time to time, everyone needs some information, advice or a listening ear. Always ask if you have questions or do not understand.

On orientation, we will discuss in detail how to do the following:

Who do I see if I want to find out about:

- *Course/subject selection*
- *General school problems*
- *School transport – bikes, buses*
- *Lost or found property*
- *Getting more help with my school work*
- *Selecting extra-curricular activities*
- *Joining a sports team*
- *Taking a trip*

Who do I see/What do I do:

- *To report damage to school property*
- *If I feel sick at school*
- *If I need to leave school during the day*
- *If I arrive late to school*
- *If I need to pay money for any school activity*
- *If I don't have correct uniform*
- *If I think I may be being bullied or sexually harassed*
- *If I can't find my class*
- *Borrow books from the library*

Who do I see if I want to:

- *Buy stationery*
- *Give a note to explain an absence*
- *Find out what sports and clubs are available at school*
- *Learn a musical instrument*
- *Do some photocopying*
- *Make a phone call at school*
- *Use the internet*
- *Get help with a personal problem*

Whakatane High School

The Director of International Students is your main contact person. The Director will help with all course placement, school, extracurricular, administrative or homestay related concerns. An interpreter can be used to assist with understanding.

At Whakatane High School, the International Director is also the Homestay Coordinator, who places and monitors students in their homestay. The Homestay Co-ordinator meets the students at the Whakatane airport or at the shuttle drop off point, orientates them with homestay rules and then introduces them to their host families. The Co-ordinator is available for regular meetings at the school and also by telephone/office contact.

Guidance Staff, a Doctor, a nurse and various health professionals are also available for personal or health issues. Appointments need to be made for the use of these services at the student office.

High School Hours

Classes are from 8.30 until 3.00 Monday to Friday. All students stay on site during this time and are not permitted to leave the grounds unless they are going on a school trip.

Facilities Whakatane High School offers:

- Three computer suites with learning resources/laptop computers
- Library
- Modern Technology Suites
- Well-equipped specialist science laboratories
- Art and photography facilities
- Outdoor education program
- Wide range of sporting codes
- Gymnasium with a climbing wall
- Music suite and practice studios
- Careers and Transition areas
- Canteen
- International Office

Program of Study

The Year Level put on your Offer of Place document is a PROVISIONAL

one. On arrival at the school, we will give you our assessment tests – if we find the initial course placement to be inappropriate we reserve authority to change your course.

If you indicated a need for English language support (ESOL), we will make arrangements for this to happen. Students who start courses after the beginning of an academic year may not be able to enter for external examinations.

A staff member will issue you with a printed timetable once your program has been created. Make several copies of this timetable – leave one at home, one in your homework diary and another in a pocket of your bag and photograph it.

Medical Insurance

A condition of enrolment is that you have a comprehensive medical/travel insurance policy – this is to cover you against accident, illness, theft, loss of or damage to your personal property and possibly the loss of fees through the unexpected termination of your course. Most students are not entitled to publicly funded health services while in New Zealand unless you are:

- A resident or citizen of Australia; or
- A national of the United Kingdom in New Zealand; or
- The holder of a temporary permit that is valid for two years or more.

If you do not belong to one of these special categories and you receive medical treatment during your visit, you will be liable for the full costs of that treatment. A comprehensive policy provides the necessary protection against this. The procedure is to pay any medical bills yourself first- make sure you keep the receipt for your payment - and claim the amount back from your insurance

Student ID Cards

Soon after arrival students will have their photos taken for ID cards and school records. The ID cards are optional for students but are of benefit to international students. They are used for borrowing library books and identification for exam entry; age verification; discount rates on transport, the movies and for some purchase deals. There is a small charge for this card.

Classroom code of conduct

We must all accept responsibility for our actions, students are expected to:

- Be on time and attend school every day.
- Have the correct equipment and stationery as directed by staff.
- Keep the school environment safe and healthy for everyone.
- Respect the rights and property of others – show consideration to others wishing to learn and to your teachers. Do not take anything which does not belong to you.
- Put forward your best effort every day – sit tests, participate fully in classes, complete homework.
- Wear correct, clean uniform – refer to the uniform regulations published in the Prospectus.
- Students must obey the laws of New Zealand and the school rules and the rules of homestay. Students who break the school rules in a serious fashion will be dealt with under the Education (Stand-down, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion) Rules 1999 and the Rules of the Code of Practice for International Students, see:
<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/>

Vandalism, graffiti, violence and theft are unacceptable at Whakatane High School. We do all that we can to keep our campus smoke and drug free.

Attendance

You are expected to be punctual and attend all timetabled classes. If you are absent or are going to be late, you must notify the school. In cases of sickness, a medical certificate is required if the absence is going to extend beyond three days.

If you have an appointment in school time, for example with the Doctor or the Dentist – bring your appointment card or a letter from your host family to the Student Office first thing in the morning and an Exeat Pass will be issued. Sign out at the Student Office using your Leave Pass and report back to the Office on your return.

Those who do not maintain at least a 90% attendance record, or whose work habits are poor may not be eligible for qualifications. Such students will have written warnings sent to them and their referral agencies/families and New Zealand Immigration Service will be notified.

You will have course assessments spread throughout the year, not only at exam time. You should not ask for leave to go home during term time. If you ignore this regulation you will not be protected from losing marks in assignments or tests and your absence will be included in any New Zealand Immigration attendance checks. You or your parents must contact the Director of International Students if there are special reasons for leave during the school year.

If you are absent from the school for more than 20 consecutive school days without a good reason, then you will be taken off the roll and the New

Zealand Immigration Service will be notified. Full details of visa and permit requirements, advice on rights to employment in New Zealand while studying, and reporting requirements are available through the New Zealand Immigration Service, and can be viewed on their website at <http://www.immigration.govt.nz>

When you choose to finish school, bring a letter from your family/referral agent to your Form Teacher. You will be given a Leaving Form that you must take to your teachers for them to give you clearance signatures. You must bring back everything you have borrowed from the school: textbooks, sports uniforms, library books, and must clear any debts. The Leaving Form must be completed and handed to the Student Office so that final documentation can be released.

Passport

The school will keep a photocopy of your main passport page and visa details. International staff will help with renewing passports. Be aware of the expiry dates for your visa and get it re-issued in plenty of time.

Contact Details

If any information on your application for enrolment form changes, you must inform the Director of International Students of the changes – parent contact address, telephone numbers, health record, etc.

Reports

The school reports twice during the year on student progress using the academic counselling process. Host parents are invited to discuss details of the student's progress and goals with the mentor teacher who collects information from all the teachers of the student. Each International student is given a formal report at the end of the

school year and/or just before they are leaving.

Personal Safety

Do NOT:

- Walk alone at night
- Carry a lot of cash or keep a lot of money at home
- Wear overly expensive jewellery
- Share your PIN numbers

Keep with you:

- Your student ID card
- Your homestay address and telephone contacts
- The contact details for International staff
- Your insurance card

Do:

- Keep your money in the Bank
- Keep your wallet in your pocket, not in your school bag
- Keep your air tickets and passport safe
- Look after your cell phone

Accommodation

Students enrolled at Whakatane High School are required to be in homestay accommodation with local families as sourced by our International staff member in accordance with the Code of Practice guidelines. Should your family wish to designate a caregiver, this must be made known to the school on enrolment and at that time, consideration would be given to approve this request.

Where the school has guaranteed the accommodation of a student in the Offer of Place, the student will only be permitted to move from one family to another with permission from the Director of International Students.

Flatting (living with only other students) is not permitted.

Withdrawals and Refunds

All refunds of tuition fees to the parents of withdrawing students are administered according to the rules and regulations set out in the "Refund Policy, Schedule Three" signed by your parents as part of the enrolment contract.

Homestay Fee Refunds

The placement fee is not refundable. The balance of homestay fees not used will be refunded, less any fees due to lack of notice (usually 2 weeks) and any expenses incurred prior to departure that have not been paid for.

Internet

Free computer and Internet access for email are available for student use at school. Students must agree to use the computers with due respect to the hardware, software and other users. An agreement outlining the conditions of use, the Cybersafety document, needs to be signed during orientation. Most Homestays have internet availability. You may bring your own electronic communication device to school and hook into the school's Wi-Fi. We advise you to bring your own laptop or chromebook to NZ to use at school.

Telephone

At school, students have access to a landline at the Student Office. Cell phones must be switched off during class and assembly time. Whakatane High School accepts no responsibility for the safekeeping of cell phones. In an emergency after school hours, contact your homestay family first, then an International staff member.

Study and Homework

Study includes doing your ordinary homework and preparing material for essays, projects/assignments and exams. Study away from noise and other people – in a room with good

light. Work when you concentrate best – make your time quality time. Homework includes: reading; completion of work started in class; learning vocabulary; revising for tests; preparation and background research for projects or assignments and learning important facts. If you are having difficulty with your homework, check with your subject teacher first. Maybe other students in your class can help you. If you are still having difficulties talk to your mentor teacher or the International Student Director.

Health and Safety

In some cases we are unable to guarantee the health and wellbeing of the student, because the student has issues relating to mental and physical health that were not disclosed prior to enrolment or have arisen since arrival. In such cases, the Principal reserves the right to return the student to their parents and home country, at the expense of the parents.

The Code

The Education Code of Practice for International Students 2021, details the way the NZ Government and its agency, NZQA, directs NZ schools to look after International Students, provides Pastoral Care. You find the document here:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/>

Grievance Procedures

If you have a concern with regard to your coursework or school systems, speak with your subject teacher, mentor teacher or the Director first. If it is a matter concerning the homestay arrangement, speak with the host family and international staff. If a solution cannot be found, the matter is then discussed with the Director of International Students, the Deputy or Assistant Principal or the Principal in order to get a satisfactory outcome. If

it is a serious discipline issue, the Board of Trustees will be involved. Parents and agents are informed of a situation if it is of a serious nature. If parents are unhappy with the decision of the Board of Trustees, there is a final appeal to the International Appeal Authority that is operated by NZQA according to the guidelines published in the Education Code of Practice for International Students 2021. You find the link here:

<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/tertiary-and-international-learners-code/>

CONTACTS:

Principal:

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Director of International Students:

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Homestay Coordinator:

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