

## ***Enrolment and Maintenance of Special Character Policy for Wā Ora Montessori School***

Wā Ora Montessori Area School's special character is built on the authentic Montessori experience of its new entrants and enrolments. Only 10% of ākonga in the area school can be non-preference. This policy defines preference and non-preference and the way new ākonga can be admitted into the school.

### **Definitions (in alphabetical order)**

**'Admission Priority' - Preschool** - Admission priority is applied to pre-enrolled tamariki (child/ren) for an available space in a particular cohort in the following order:

1. Siblings of current ākonga (students) attending Wā Ora Montessori preschool or area school, who are intending to stay for the full programme through to 18 years.
2. Children of past ākonga (students) who attended six years or more from 3 years of age, who are intending to stay for the full programme through to 18 years.
3. Tamariki (child/ren) with previous authentic (see definition below) Montessori experience equivalent to at least 20 hours per week since three years of age, who are intending to complete the programme through to 18 years.
4. Tamariki (child/ren) of past ākonga (students), who attended for between 3-5 years at Wā Ora Montessori School and are intending to stay for the full programme through to 18 years.
5. New applicants intending to stay for the full programme through to 18 years.
6. New applicants intending to stay for the full preschool programme.

For tamariki (child/ren) where everything else is equal, preference is given to length of time on the waiting list. For tamariki (child/ren) who have been on the waiting list the same amount of time and where everything else is equal, preference is given to those who have attended playgroup for at least two terms. *Please note that pre-enrolling tamariki (child/ren) does not guarantee placement.*

**'Area School'** - For the purposes of this document, the area school is the primary school and the high school.

**'Authentic'** - For the purposes of this document, a centre or preschool will be deemed to be authentic when it uses only Montessori philosophy to determine its programme and where the child's classroom head kaiako (teacher) (with the child the majority of each day) has specialist Montessori qualifications for the age group they teach with a face-to-face component of more than 160 hours (3-6) and 320 hours (6-12) plus supervised practice and teaching

practice in Montessori classes as defined in Montessori Journey to Excellence (MJ2Ex).

**'Non –Preference' – Area School** - Applications from whānau (families) who do not meet either of the criteria for 'preference' will be classified as 'non–preference'.

**'Preference' - Area School** - Preference is given to pre-enrolled whānau (families) for an available space in a particular cohort of the area school if they meet one of the two following criteria:

- Whānau (families) whose tamariki (children) have been continuously enrolled at Wā Ora Montessori, since the age of three, for five days a week (including 9am–3pm from the age of 5 years).
- Whānau (families) who have enrolled tamariki (their children) aged 6 years and older in an alternative authentic Montessori school, where they have attended continuously, five days a week since the age of 3 years, including 9am-3pm, from the age of 5 years.

### **Admission and Selection into Wā Ora Montessori Preschool**

Enrolment in the preschool happens around a child's third birthday and is for a 'place' which is for 31.25 hours. 20 hours is covered by the '20 ECE funding from the Ministry of Education.' The remaining 11.25 hours is covered by fees paid by whānau (the parents). The responsibility for paying for this place remains with whānau (the parents) whether or not they choose to use it entirely. The minimum attendance is five full mornings, from 8.45am to 1pm. Tamariki (children) must be attending five days per week, 8.45am–3pm, by 5 years of age.

Where a child is absent for more than three weeks, Ministry of Education funding is no longer available to fund the place. Except in the cases of illnesses, where an exemption may be applied for, the loss in funding from the Ministry of Education will need to be covered by whānau (the parents) in addition to their school fees or the place will be forfeit.

A restriction on the number of preschool places available is based on statutory and early childhood kaiako (teacher) / tamaiti (child) ratios.

### **Selection and admission into Wā Ora Montessori Area School**

If there is room within the area school's roll cap, children of whānau (parents) whose applications meet the criteria for preference will be placed. Selection for the primary and high schools for ākonga (students) of non-preference whānau (families) is secondary and is also subject to a limit of 10% non-preference ākonga (students) in the school at any one time to meet Wā Ora's *Integration Agreement*. Please note Wā Ora is not required to have 10% non-preference ākonga enrolled in the school at any one time.

### **Entrance into the High School Programme**

At Wā Ora, high school starts at Year 8. This means whānau (parents) of Wā Ora Year 7 ākonga (students) need to decide where their child will attend high school. There are several options for whānau (parents) at this time.

1. Ākonga (students) staying for the whole adolescent programme (Y8-10) may enter the high school at the beginning of Year 8 unless they are intending not to attend the Odyssey in Year 8, in which case they will attend Year 8 in the 9–12 programme.

2. Ākongā (students) not staying for high school have a few options to consider. They can for example -
- Stay at Wā Ora until the end of traditional primary (Year 8) spending that year in a 9-12 year class.
  - Leave at the end of Year 6, attend an intermediate school for two years and then go on their chosen high school.
  - Leave at the end of Year 6 and attend a Year 7 – 13 high school.
  - Leave at the end of Year 7, attend intermediate for one year and then go on to their chosen high school.

Younger siblings of ākongā (students), who have spent one year in the high school programme and then left, will not be given a place in the programme at Year 8. The entry point to the high school programme for these younger siblings would be at Year 9, after completing Year 8 in a 9–12 year class.

There may be limited opportunity for entry into the high school by external ākongā (students) dependent on the number of available spaces in the cohort. Preference criteria will apply. Barring exceptional circumstances, non-preference ākongā (students) will not gain entry into the high school, however if they do, they will remain non-preference for the remainder of their schooling.

#### **Notification of Withdrawal**

Whānau (parents) with preschool children must give one full calendar, school term's notice.

The intention of this condition (also laid out in the Enrolment Agreement) is not to unnecessarily restrict whānau (parents), but rather to allow Wā Ora Montessori School to plan with confidence. The school relies on whānau (parents) contributions and cannot budget efficiently if insufficient notice is given. Special circumstances, as always, will be considered if the Board/Council receives a request for dispensation in writing.

If ākongā (a student) leaves Wā Ora and then later wishes to return, he/she must do so within six term weeks of his/her last day of attendance, otherwise there is no guarantee of the place still being available. If ākongā is away from Wā Ora longer than the 6 term-weeks period and his/her place is forfeit, he/she can go on to the waiting list for consideration for re-entry into the school at the time of the next annual consideration for placements for the following year. Their application will no longer qualify as preference.

The bond is non-refundable if the last tamariki (child) of a family leaves before completing Year 7.

*Cont. Over*

## Disenrolment

If whānau (a family) wishes to take their tamariki (children) out of school to attend a family holiday during term time, they must notify the Principal in writing of their intention and trip details. The absence from school should be no more than six (term time) weeks. If ākonga (the student) is away from Wā Ora for more than 30 consecutive school days, his/her place will be forfeit and ākonga will be disenrolled accordingly. He/she can go on to the waiting list for consideration for re-entry into the school at the time of the next annual consideration for placements for the following year. Ākonga (the student's) application will no longer qualify as preference.

Wā Ora Montessori Area School and preschool reserves the right to dismiss ākonga (students) from the school. Such action will only be taken if it is deemed by the Principal and the Wā Ora Montessori School Board of Trustees and Council that the best interests of the school or ākonga (student) will be served by doing so.

The following procedures exist:

- Essential elements for Montessori education
- Enrolment, Admission, Withdrawal and Disenrolment
- Classroom Observation

Signature of Chairperson, Wā Ora Montessori School \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_