



TIMATANGA

Community School



2018 Prospectus for Interested Parents

Te Take Motuhake o Timatanga

Timatanga's Special Character

Timatanga is a state integrated open plan alternative primary school with students from year one to year eight. It is a secular, parent co-operative school, where parents have input into the day to day running of the school.

Timatanga has adapted and applied the educational philosophy of AS Neil and John Holt and Playcentre, with the emphasis being on education and learning that is child centred and where possible child initiated.

The children, parents and teaching staff are involved in establishing and facilitating natural areas of interest of the individual child to enhance self-management and self discipline.

The school operates in a village like atmosphere, surrounded by Timatanga Community, in which learning is a normal, integral and continuing element of life, not something that occurs separate from other elements. As an important part of this, parents, whanau, community members and teachers are all welcome teacher-learners. Regular meetings and coordination through the principal ensure that continuity, connectedness and clear direction is maintained at the school.

The school has a maximum roll of 21 students, which is set by MoE. The school has a family feel and the children get to know each other and each other's families over time as extended family or whanau.

This special character is approved by the Ministry of Education, forms the basis of our charter and is the core philosophy of the school. It cannot change and is the reason why the school is able to operate.

The key components of our special character:

1. All learning at Timatanga is child centred
2. Much learning at Timatanga is child initiated
3. We are a secular school
4. We are a parent co-operative
5. We operate in relationship with Timatanga Community

History of the School

Timatanga School was set up to provide a supportive environment for children and parents who were interested in the process of learning for life.

Originally the school was financed and run by a group of professional people who brought their interests and skills to bear to enhance the state school curriculum.

Each child was given the care and understanding so that they would develop their own learning style and progress at a rate in harmony with their own growing confidence.

Students were encouraged to take part in the activities provided, listened to, and given the opportunity to find the way that suited them best.

—Gerry Reid, Founding member of Timatanga Community and School

The school has been operating for 40 years. At first it was private Free School where the parents had the sole responsibility of funding and teaching their children. Many of these parents at the beginning were trained teachers. The children lived and went to school on the property. There was little separation between home and school.

Since the school's State Integration in 1999, students now come from many different parts of Auckland, and parents, teachers and children are all teacher-learners contributing to the school. Some learning activities are compulsory but personal choice and creative expression is maximized to keep learning genuine for each child.

Te Matakite o Matau/ Our Vision

Through a stimulating, happy, challenging learning environment where children are respected and valued, personal choice is maximized, many decisions are democratically made and a high degree of self-management is expected, we will support our children to be self motivated, independent, life-long learners, and self responsible, caring members of society.

Nga Matua/Our Parents

Parents are the backbone of the school, performing many supportive functions. Their input is essential. Seeing their parents regularly at school helping them and helping other children re-enforces the concept in the children that school and home are a continuum.

Parents sign a contract agreeing to the following conditions of enrolment:

1. Provide weekly "Parent Help"
2. Pay school fees and donations
3. Help with fundraising
4. Attend school working bees
5. Help to clean the school
6. Attend school meetings
7. Follow our communication protocols
8. Commit to learning about how we teach and learn



There are many ways to assist with the running of the school and you won't be expected to do anything that is not comfortable for you. Please advise the Principal of your preferences and skills, and she will try to accommodate these.

These responsibilities are explained in full in our Guide for New Parents, which you receive as part of the Expression of Interest package, should you wish to take a further step towards becoming part of Timatanga Community School.

Getting more involved

If you would like to consider Timatanga Community School for your child(ren), we invite you to take the following steps (in order):

1. Contact us to arrange time for an initial visit
2. Pick up an "Expression of Interest" form and fill it out.
3. Return your "Expression of Interest" to school. The school whanau and the Board of Trustees will read this. The Principal will contact you when a space becomes available for your child
4. Visit the school with your child
5. If, after 5 visits, you wish to enroll your child and the Principal feels that Timatanga is the right environment for her or him, you will be invited to meet with the Board of Trustees to discuss enrollment
6. The Principal will then enroll your child.

Any questions contact the Principal on:

Ph 4166000

email eve.tonkin@timatanga.school.nz

Curriculum

Timatanga School embraces Te Whariki Early Childhood curriculum for Years 1-2, and the current New Zealand Curriculum for Years 3-8. Teachers support students to learn the curriculum areas, competencies and values in the context of their own interests and wonderings, so that learning is a journey of discovery, managed by the student as much as possible. Underpinning this is our informed opinion that it is more meaningful to teach our students **skills** (being able to read, or spell, for example), **competencies** (being able to think creatively, or manage one's own learning, for example), and **values** (understanding why we should persist at something, or solve problems democratically, for example), than it is to teach specific **content knowledge** (understanding about the solar system, for example).

Over our 40 years in operation, we have found that children are more engaged when they can follow their own interests. Also, they are more likely to retain what they learn. And today, with information on almost anything at all very close at hand, there is less need for teachers to make sure that their students know about a lot of "stuff". Rather, it is more important to learn how to seek and use information well.

This said, we do understand that people often "don't know what they don't know", and so the Principal works with the parents to make sure that our students are given as wide a range of opportunities as possible throughout the year, to expose them to things that they might not seek out for themselves, and potentially to stimulate new interests.

As well as being responsive to the students, our Curriculum is integrated as much as possible. Additionally, we group tamariki into leveled groups, which meet regularly to develop their skills in reading, spelling, handwriting, and numeracy.

Much of the learning that happens at Timatanga is social and occurs in the children's "realm", for example in their fantasy-play, their physical games, and the sandpit. These activities form a large part of their day. Meetings help facilitate the social and emotional processes triggered by the interactions in their child initiated activity. Children of all ages learn and play together, and children regularly teach each other to a high level without adult involvement.

Things you may notice about learning at Timatanga:

- It's often based on children's discoveries
- It starts with children's own goals, questions and purposes
- Investigations often take longer time periods than in a regular school
- Creativity and personal expression is fostered
- The learning environment has less external structure than most schools, and expects a higher level of self-management from students



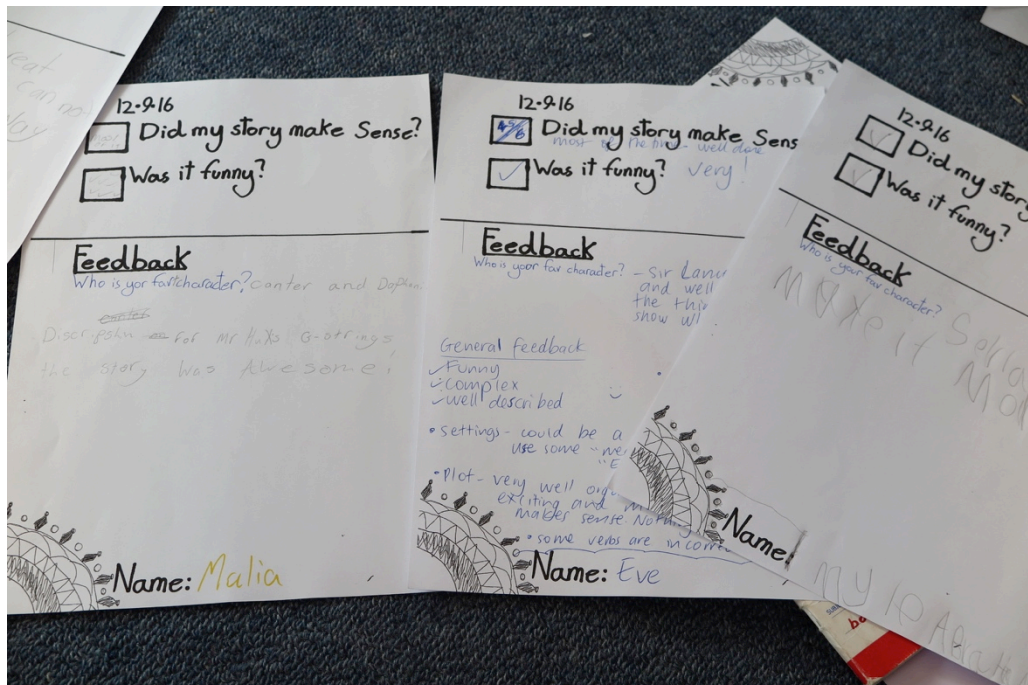
Assessment

Throughout the year, the teachers and Principal track the progress of each student, to make sure that they are learning all the necessary skills, competencies and values. Just like at other primary schools, teachers at Timatanga use selected government approved testing tools to assess students at the beginning and end of each year to see how they are progressing academically. All formal testing is done in a relaxed manner and seen as a way to get information on one's personal learning journey.

As a learning community, we (tamariki, parents, and staff) set goals, work towards them, help each other, evaluate progress, and celebrate achievements together, and this is one of the most rewarding things about being part of Timatanga Community School.

Parents find out about their children's progress in a number of ways:

- By reading their child's learning e-portfolio
- By being part of their child's life at school and observing what's going on
- By being able to talk to teachers at lunchtime and at agreed times
- By being part of discussions at parent meetings
- In bi-annual reports on their NZ curriculum levels



A questionnaire created by a student to find out how well she met her goals

Meetings

Meetings are integral to the smooth running of a participatory school such as Timatanga and everyone is expected to attend them. Decision-making is by consensus rather than by democratic vote (except for on the rare occasion when students decide unanimously to make a decision by vote), so working things out can sometimes take time. But the harmonious community and rich social learning that results makes this well worth it for both children and adults.



Parent meetings

Parent meetings occur once a month, in the evenings at school. Some of these are Child Focus meetings which are structured around each child's strengths, needs and interests, while others are peer learning sessions tailored around particular subjects, like how to set up areas of learning well, how to best support literacy at school and at home, or how to best support outside play, etc. Other meetings are open forums for discussion of current issues in the school. Parent meetings are extremely valuable to parents, because each parent is part of the "village" that is helping to raise each child. It is to everyone's advantage that the children relate harmoniously and feel happy with their learning environment.



Parent Teacher meetings

Meetings with individual parents happen as needed and by request.

School meetings

The children have regular class and whole school meetings as a way to sort out difficulties with their relationships or with school processes. These meetings are an important way in which the wisdom of the older students can be passed on to younger ones. They are also a powerful forum for the younger students, who are able to have a voice and be listened to by older children with respect for their point of view. The teacher's role in school meetings is to support the meeting process by ensuring that everyone is heard and group consensus reached as far as possible. During school meetings, the teacher will consciously empower students to govern themselves but set boundaries for the children's safety and well-being when needed.

Finances

The school is funded by the Ministry of Education in a similar way to state schools. Because the children are taught to be careful of equipment, and because of the high level of supervision, our resources tend to last a long time. Money for highly priced items (such as computers and extra staff) needs to come from an externally fund-raised source.

COMPULSORY COSTS

Parents are required to pay Attendance Dues, which cover expenses to the proprietor. These are currently set at \$150.00 per child per year.

Trips and stationery costs add up to about an additional \$150 per annum.

The annual 3-4 day school camp costs about \$60 a person, and families attend along with staff.

NON-COMPULSORY COSTS

The Board of Trustees asks each family for an annual Special Character donation of \$800 per child or \$1,200 per whanau (whichever is the lesser) to cover the extra staffing that our approach to learning requires. Whanau are expected to fundraise to cover any donation shortfalls, but this rarely happens, as our families greatly value what their donation makes possible for their children.

Two Perspectives on Timatanga Community School

1. ERO REPORT: 4 October 2013

(<http://ero.govt.nz/index.php/Early-Childhood-School-Reports/School-Reports/Timatanga-Community-School-04-10-2013>)

In an environment of mutual respect and valuing of individuality, children are able to make genuine choices about their learning. A particular feature of teaching and learning practice is the way children's thinking is promoted. Children have many opportunities to develop and test their working theories.

The reciprocal relationship between parents and teachers in educating children is fundamental to the school's philosophy. Parents actively support the school curriculum, at school and at home. Teachers, teacher aides and parents provide children with a supportive environment that nurtures their confidence as risk takers.

Responsive planning provides children with meaningful learning opportunities. Children develop deep levels of understanding by continually reflecting on what they are learning. Having enough time to complete work to their satisfaction supports their sense of worth and accomplishment. Teaching practices and programmes are focused on raising student achievement, and are consistent with the school's child-centred philosophy.

2. Conversation on the Nature of her School between Lola (aged 7) and Denny, a visitor

Denny: "So what do you do at school?"

Lola: "Well we have playtime and we have work time."

Denny: "Oh, what's the difference between playtime and work time?"

Lola: "Well at playtime you just run around and do anything you want and work time is exactly the same except that you sit down."

