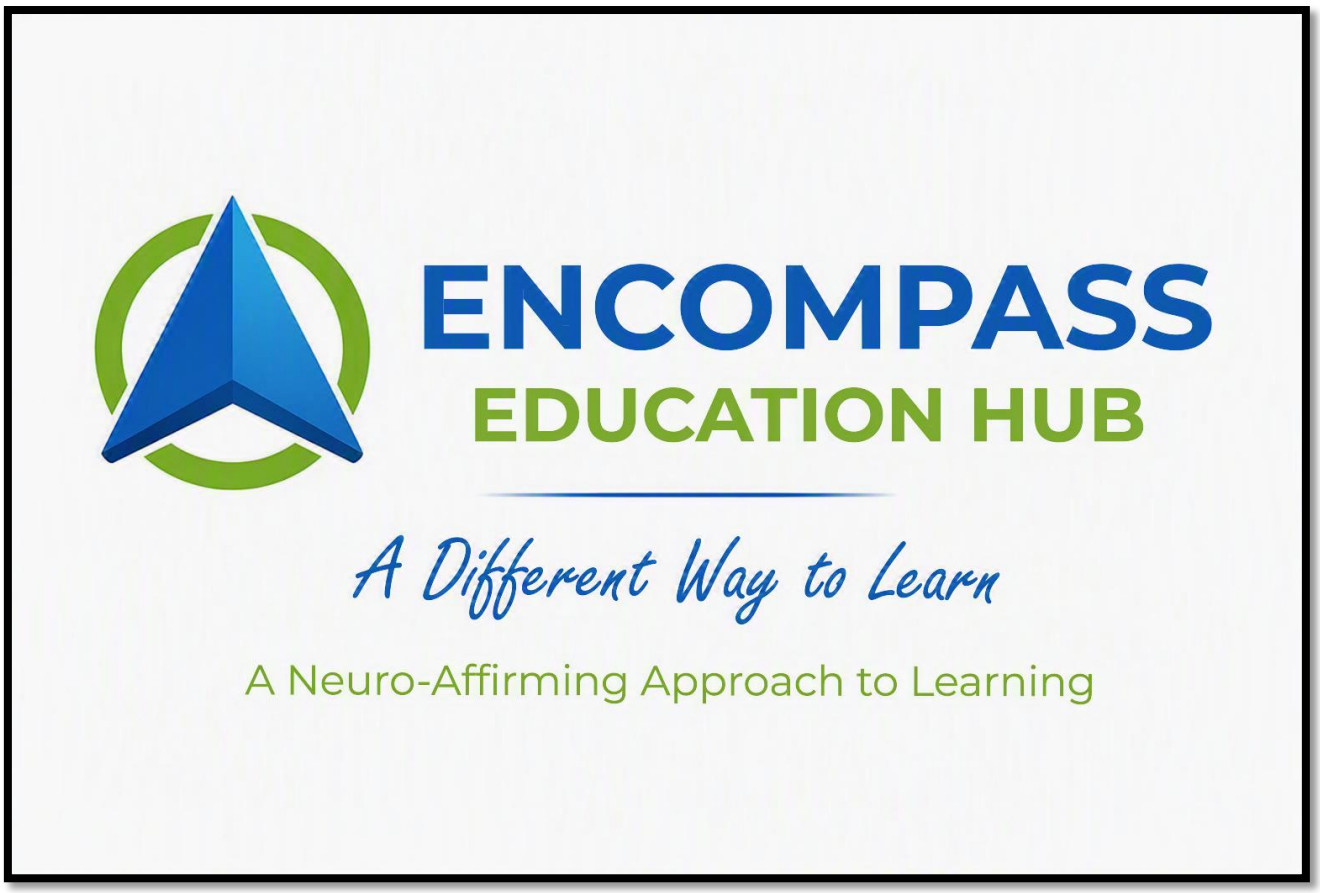


Our Vision

To be a place where every autistic and neurodivergent* ākonga (student) is understood, valued, and empowered to thrive in learning and in life.

Our Mission

To deliver bespoke, neuro-affirming, kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) education in partnership with ākonga and their whānau, cultivating a calm, interest-led environment grounded in relational safety and whanaungatanga. By prioritising emotional safety and meeting individual sensory, emotional, and academic needs with expertise and understanding, we support ākonga to re-engage with learning, grow in confidence, and develop the knowledge and skills to shape their own futures.

Our Kaupapa is rooted in the belief that strong, authentic relationships and a stable foundation of well-being are the prerequisites for all growth.

*Encompass has been designed with autistic learners in mind but will also cater for neurodivergent ākonga with similar needs, who would thrive in an environment that accommodates sensory sensitivities, differences in social communication, and a strong need for predictability, relational safety, and consistent routines.

Our Foundations: A Commitment to Every Ākonga

At Encompass, we believe that learning becomes possible only when a young person feels safe, is free to be themselves, and is in control of their own life. "We believe every ākonga should have the opportunity to thrive as their authentic and legitimate self, without needing to mask, hide, or change who they are in order to belong."

We do not expect our ākonga to fit into a standard system. Instead, we have designed our school to adapt to them. We believe that wellbeing is not just an outcome of learning—it is the very foundation that makes learning possible.

To support this, our approach is guided by two powerful frameworks that shape every decision we make.

1. Te Whare Tapa Whā: Wellbeing as Our Structure

We view every ākonga as a whole person, not just a "mind ready to learn." Te Whare Tapa Whā helps us understand wellbeing through five interconnected elements:

- **Taha Tinana (Physical):** Supporting physical and sensory wellbeing.
- **Taha Hinengaro (Emotional):** Supporting emotional and mental wellbeing.
- **Taha Whānau (Social):** Building positive relationships, belonging, and connection.
- **Taha Wairua (Identity):** Honouring identity, meaning, and purpose.
- **Whenua (Environment):** Creating environments that support safety, wellbeing, and participation.

If an ākonga is overwhelmed or distressed, we do not see this as behaviour to be managed. Instead, we see it as a signal that one or more aspects of wellbeing may be under pressure. Our role is to understand what is happening and strengthen the conditions that support the learner.

2. Mana Taiohi: Honouring Inherent Mana

Our relationship with our ākonga is based on a simple truth: every young person carries inherent mana. They do not need to prove their worth or earn their place to be valued and have agency in their own lives.

We honour this by:

- **Recognising and valuing them for who they are**; their values, beliefs, skills and talents.
- **Valuing their whakapapa,** history, connection and belonging.
- **Recognising their world,** their people, big picture influences, their perceptions, and things outside of their control.
- **Prioritising whanaungatanga** and reciprocal relationships
- **Equipping ourselves with adequate training** to support a safe learning environment.

- **Empowering participation,** partnering with them in decision-making, rather than treating them as passive recipients of support.
- **Diversifying our knowledge**, being willing to learn from a wide range of perspectives.

What This Means for a Student

Our goal is to create an environment where every young person can thrive. When you join Encompass, you can expect a school where a student will:

- **Feel Safe:** We reduce sensory load, unpredictability, demands, and expectations so the nervous system can relax.
- **Feel Understood:** We listen to the "why" behind behaviour and respond with care.
- **Be Themselves:** We celebrate individuality and identity.
- **Build a Meaningful Future:** We focus on growth that aligns with who they are.
- **Enjoy Learning:** We believe that when the foundations are stable, curiosity and academic success naturally follow.

We don't just teach the curriculum; we build the environment that allows your child to engage with it on their own terms.

myPlan



myPlan acts as the learner's personal learning ecosystem, bringing together wellbeing, learning, future aspirations, support people, and progress in a single living plan that evolves alongside the learner.

We have incorporated this commitment to safety directly into the development of myPlan, our deeply individualised approach to learning. myPlan is a living, evolving learning document collaboratively designed with our ākonga. It ensures the environment adapts to the ākonga, rather than expecting the ākonga to fit a standard system.

myPlan brings together three interconnected areas: myself, myPath and myLearning.

mySelf: Safety and Wellbeing

mySelf identifies the conditions each learner needs to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe. Through the individualised planning process, learners explore their sensory profile, triggers, communication preferences, and regulation needs. Together with staff, they collaboratively design strategies that help them maintain regulation and a sense of safety.

mySelf becomes the learner's personal plan for safety: a set of built-in supports, self-chosen tools, and de-stressors they can use to maintain regulation, reduce stress, and signal their needs across different environments.

myLearning: Personalised Learning

myLearning describes what and how each learner is developing across academic, cognitive, and creative areas. Through myPlan, ākonga identify the skills and capabilities they want to build, and teachers shape pathways using the five Encompass learning streams.

It functions as a personalised curriculum plan that connects the ākonga's authentic interests with meaningful progress and learning pathways.

myPath: Future Direction and Independence

myPath outlines the learner's direction, choices, motivations, and future aspirations.

It supports ākonga to:

- understand their own needs
- express preferences and make decisions
- advocate for themselves
- apply their skills in real world contexts

myPath builds the crucial capability for self-advocacy, preparing ākonga for life beyond school, on their own terms.

What Will a Typical Day Look Like?

While every ākonga experience is personalised, our days are structured, predictable, and consistent. This is important for providing a sense of safety and routine.

Your child will:

- be part of a smaller class size
- work with familiar kaiārahi (teacher and learning assistant)
- follow a clear daily rhythm
- experience fewer transitions than most schools
- experience learning based in a centre of interest if applicable
- be offered flexibility to meet their needs

Within this structure, the day is shaped through five key learning streams.

The Five Learning Streams

EKE TAHI

EKE TAHI is the beginning- and end-of-day check-in. Ākonga can use this to connect with their kaiārahi teacher, catch up on work, settle themselves in their environment, or regulate and prepare for the day in whatever way works for them. The Eke Tahi groups will be split into consistent small cohorts of approximately 7 to 8 ākonga over the year.

EPIC

EPIC is our deep-interest project pathway, where learning is built around each ākonga's interests and goals. Ākonga are guided to create their own projects, progress at their own pace, and integrate New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) areas and NCEA standards or preparation.

EPIC projects can be set and created through different pathways depending on the ākonga:

Interest-based: The ākonga develops a project around an interest they would like to focus on. They may either work with the kaiārahi to create the success criteria or follow standardised criteria to gain desired qualifications.

Goal-based: The ākonga identifies what they need to achieve to reach their goals, such as gaining certain credits for NCEA, and chooses an interest to fit their project criteria.

Options-based: The ākonga can be provided with a choice of projects and their relevant criteria, as well as examples of the types of topics they could use to meet the success criteria. This can then provide a foundation for them to determine what they would like to spend their time on in their EPIC stream.

Ākonga might spend a week or two researching a topic of their choice and producing an essay or research report; they might spend a term producing a portfolio of artwork; or they might spend a year integrating multiple NCEA standards across topics into a multidisciplinary project.

ESSENTIALS

Essentials builds core literacy and numeracy skills and connects them to each learner's personalised learning so they can progress confidently across their myPlan. This aligns with the foundational skills awards.

EXPLORE

Explore functions similarly to optional subjects in mainstream schools, giving ākonga the chance to opt into specialist subjects offered by teachers.

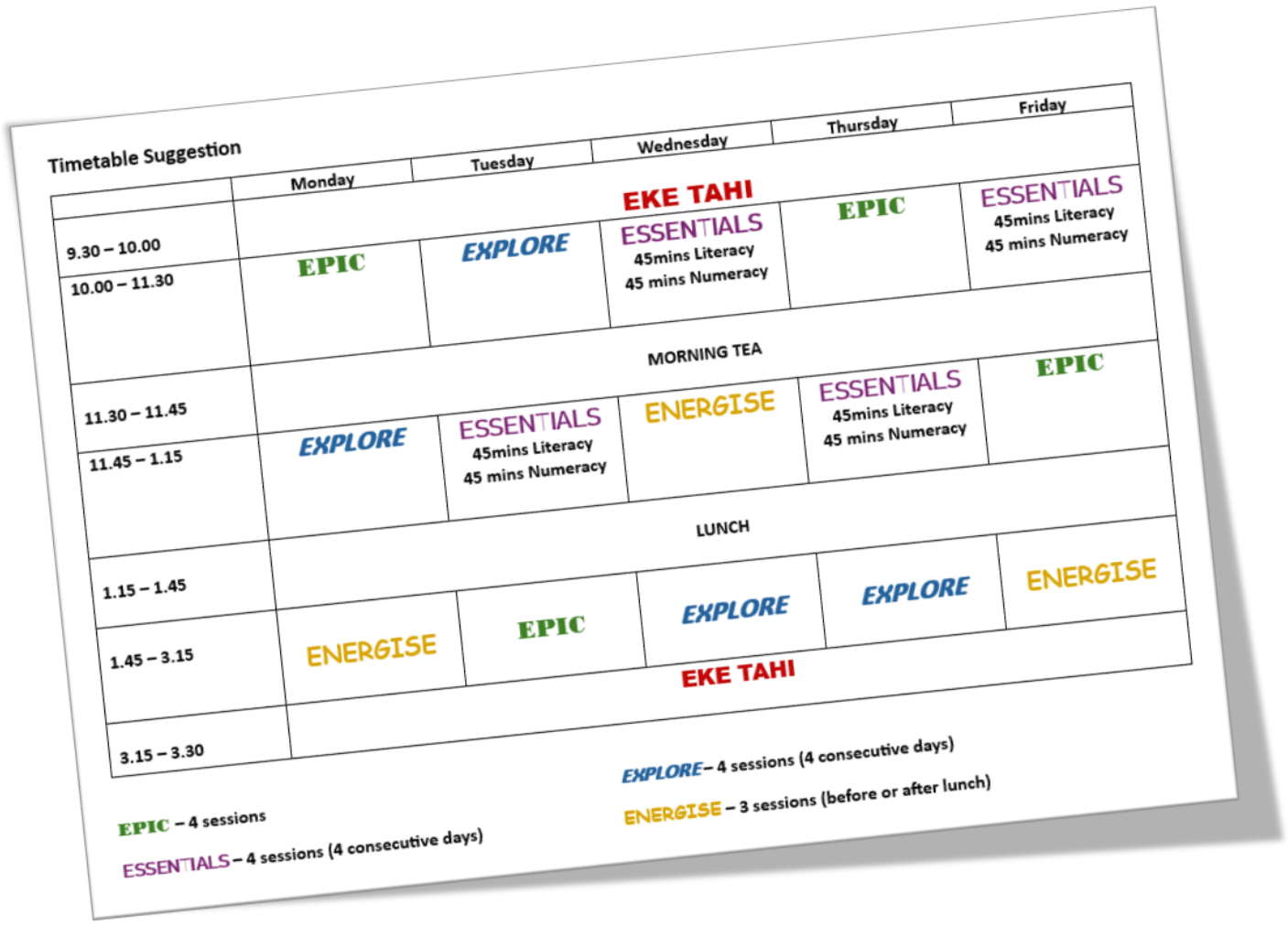
Ākonga will choose from a range of available topics, for example:

- Digital Design
- Creative Arts
- Visual & Music Production
- Science Exploration
- Coding/Robotics
- Outdoor Education
- Social Sciences

ENERGISE

Energise gives ākonga the option to take their learning out of the classroom through opportunities for community involvement, field trips, and physical activities. For example, ākonga with an interest in history may be offered the opportunity to visit a museum during this stream, or ākonga interested in politics may be given the chance to meet a local politician. Again, ākonga will have choices, and these may change across the week.

An example of a timetable



Timetable Suggestion

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.30 – 10.00	EKE TAHI				
10.00 – 11.30	EPIC	EXPLORE	ESSENTIALS 45mins Literacy 45 mins Numeracy	EPIC	ESSENTIALS 45mins Literacy 45 mins Numeracy
11.30 – 11.45	MORNING TEA				
11.45 – 1.15	EXPLORE	ESSENTIALS 45mins Literacy 45 mins Numeracy	ENERGISE	ESSENTIALS 45mins Literacy 45 mins Numeracy	EPIC
1.15 – 1.45	LUNCH				
1.45 – 3.15	ENERGISE	EPIC	EXPLORE	EXPLORE	ENERGISE
3.15 – 3.30	EKE TAHI				

EPIC – 4 sessions

ESSENTIALS – 4 sessions (4 consecutive days)

EXPLORE – 4 sessions (4 consecutive days)

ENERGISE – 3 sessions (before or after lunch)

How Does A Student Progress Academically?

We understand this is a key concern for many whānau. At Encompass, learning is individualised and paced according to the needs of the student.

Our ākonga may work toward:

- NZ Curriculum (Years 9 to 10)
- NZCE / NZACE pathways (Years 12 & 13)
- NCEA Level 1-3
- Foundational literacy and numeracy requirements
- Vocational pathways
- Te Kura partnerships where required
- University entrance pathways where applicable

Progress is based on:

- understanding
- skill development
- meaningful application

Important: Ākonga are not compared to others. Progress is personal and meaningful.

How Do We Support Different Year Levels?

We recognise that learners develop at different rates. Instead of grouping strictly by age:

- ākonga learn at levels appropriate to them
- pathways are shaped through their individual myPlan
- senior and junior cohorts are supported appropriately

This means your child might:

- extend in areas of strength
- take more time where needed

What this means: They are supported as an individual, not held back or pushed ahead unnecessarily. It is about learning, not age.

What Happens If A Student Is Reluctant to Engage?

This is a common and important concern. At Encompass, we see disengagement differently. We do not view it as defiance or refusal. Instead, we understand it as a signal that:

- something feels overwhelming
- something doesn't feel safe
- the task doesn't connect to the ākonga

What we do:

- reduce pressure
- adjust the environment or task
- offer choices instead of demands
- work with the ākonga to understand what's happening

Our approach is simple: We don't force engagement. We create the conditions where engagement becomes possible.

How Do We Balance Flexibility with Routine?

Many neurodivergent learners need both:

- structure and predictability
- flexibility and choice

We intentionally design for both. What stays consistent:

- the rhythm of the day
- familiar adults
- clear structure

What is personalised:

- how your child begins their day
- how they engage in learning
- some themes in the learning
- the pace of progress

In simple terms: The structure is predictable. The experience within it is flexible.

Working in Partnership with Whānau

We recognise the ākonga's whānau as their extended family, support network, peers, and community. We see education as a shared responsibility. Whānau are a central part of the learning process and of ensuring the ākonga feels cared for and supported. We empower the ākonga to be involved in identifying who is part of their whānau, and from there we work as a team.

This includes:

- involvement in the myPlan process
- ongoing communication
- shared understanding of goals and progress

Teachers and Supporters

Teachers

Teachers are experts in relational teaching and partner with ākonga to plan and collaboratively design learning. They also hold a kaiārahi role alongside support staff, providing consistent guidance, connection, and day-to-day support for each ākonga. Teachers weave in appropriate NZC and NCEA subject learning, support assessment and progress, and help create meaningful pathways as an adventure in learning together with ākonga and whānau.

My Supporters

My Supporters includes any person who contributes to the ākonga's learning and wellbeing, such as teachers, specialists, staff, parents/caregivers and whānau – including extended family, support network, friends, peers, and community. Together they offer insight, guidance, and encouragement as part of the learner's journey.

Pathways Beyond School

Success at Encompass is defined by self-direction. We support ākonga to move into pathways such as:

- tertiary education
- vocational training
- community-based roles

Ākonga leave with:

- confidence in themselves
- the ability to make decisions
- real world experience
- a sense of direction

Their work can form a report of learning, showcasing:

- skills
- projects
- achievements
- creativity

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child stay on track academically? Yes. Learning is mapped to the NZ Curriculum and qualification pathways, and ākonga progress at a pace that supports real understanding.

What if my child has a very specific or narrow interest? We use that interest as a foundation and build outward from it to develop a wide range of skills. We will also help to scaffold a relevant programme if interests are fleeting or not consistent.

Are literacy and numeracy taught? Yes. These are integrated into learning and supported directly where needed.

How do you handle day-to-day challenges? We focus on alignment, ensuring the environment and tasks are right for the ākonga. When this is in place, learning follows.

Will my child be prepared for the future? Yes — the aim of Encompass is for ākonga to develop academic skills, real-world experience, and the ability to advocate for themselves and manage their own learning and life — all key skills to prepare for the future.

How are behaviour and disciplinary processes handled? We understand behaviour as communication. When challenges arise, we focus on understanding what is happening, restoring safety, repairing relationships, providing additional training for staff where needed, and working with the ākonga and whānau on a clear way forward.

How can parents and whānau raise feedback or concerns? Parents, caregivers, and whānau can raise feedback or concerns through their teacher, regular communication, myPlan conversations, or agreed school feedback channels. We will listen, acknowledge concerns, respond respectfully, and use feedback to improve.

How will whānau be included when concerns or challenges arise? Whānau will be included as partners in the process. We will share information respectfully, listen to whānau knowledge of the young person, and work together on next steps wherever possible.

Every young person deserves an education that works for them.

At Encompass, we are not asking: How do we make the ākonga fit the system?

We are asking: How do we design the system so ākonga can thrive?

That is the difference.

Contact: enquiries@encompass.school.nz