

CANDIDATE BRIEFING

Tumuaki | Principal

Tapawera Area School

Te Kura ā Rohe o Tapawera

Years 1–13 · Tasman District, Aotearoa New Zealand

Commencing Term 1, 2027

BRANNIGANS®

Better people make a better world.

Tapawera Area School

MIHI

Tēnā tātou katoa

Kei ngā maunga

Kei ngā awa

Kei ngā kāwai whakapapa

Tēnā tātou katoa.

Tangihia rā ko ngā Matatini o te Pō.

Ko te pō ki a koutou e oti atu ai

Ko te ao ki a tātou

Tihei Mauri Ora

PARTNERSHIP WITH MANA WHENUA

Tapawera and Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō

Tapawera Area School is fostering a strong and growing partnership with Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō. This relationship is grounded in the values of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, with mutual respect, reciprocity, and a shared commitment to the school community at its core.

A WELCOME FROM THE BOARD

Kia ora, and thank you for your interest

Hello, and thank you for considering the role of principal at Tapawera Area School.

The board and I are passionate about our school, and we look forward to appointing a principal who will work openly and constructively alongside us to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students, staff, school and community.

Tapawera Area School plays a central role in our small rural community. The principal is seen as a leader whose involvement extends beyond the school gates. It is important to us that whoever takes on this role wants to work with the community and be an active presence within it.

Many of our students come from families with longstanding connections to the school. Both the board and the wider community care deeply about its future. We want to see the school grow and move forward while preserving what makes it unique and building on its strengths.

If you would like to discuss the role further or visit Tapawera Area School as you consider applying, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Alex Booth

Presiding Member, Tapawera Area School Board

027 389 8661 · alexb@tapawera.school.nz



Student leaders, 2026

Tapawera Area School

"With FIRE in our hearts, empower, learn and grow."

Nā te hatete i te ngākau, ko whakamana, ko ako, ko whanake.



OUR PLACE

A school at the heart of its community

Tapawera is a rural township in the Motueka Valley of the Tasman District, around 76 km south-west of Nelson and 48 km from Motueka. Sitting beside the Motueka River, it is the gateway to Kahurangi National Park and the Wangapeka Track, with both Tasman's Great Taste Trail and the Tapawera–Murchison Heartland Ride passing through the township. The surrounding valleys are farming country, known in particular for hops and berry growing up the Tadmor Valley.

The school draws its ākonga from the township and a wide rural catchment, served by five free school bus runs. Its three houses – Baton, Motupiko and Tadmor – are named for the rivers and valleys families travel from each day, and many whānau have been connected to the kura across generations.



Ākonga and community planting natives in the valley



Learning beyond the classroom

More than a school

Tapawera Area School is a hub for the whole community. The school pools, community events such as Matariki celebrations, the Spring Show and the Music in the Mountains fundraising weekend all bring families and locals onto the site. The Board has made community engagement a priority, and recent surveys of whānau, staff and students showed strong agreement about the school's strengths, what needs to improve and the qualities wanted in the next principal. The rural setting also gives students authentic, hands-on learning beyond the classroom, within the school and throughout the wider community.

Culture and teaching

The school's culture is built around The FIRE Way – Friendliness, Integrity, Respect and Effort – part of its PB4L approach and a shared language for students, staff and whānau. Staff are a supportive, collaborative team who share ideas, learn from one another and celebrate successes together, so the next principal won't lead alone. Classrooms encourage students to engage, explore and take ownership of their learning, with opportunities to lead and have their voices heard across the school.

OUR KURA

Tapawera Area School

Tapawera Area School serves students aged 5 to 19, from new entrants through to Year 13, with a kindergarten on site. As a Year 1–13 area school, it offers the best of both worlds: the opportunities of a full school with the warmth and connectedness of a small rural community. Facilities have been modernised recently and younger students have access to specialist subject areas and teaching spaces much earlier than they would at a typical primary school. Small class sizes, subject-specialist teachers and a strong learning support facility mean staff know every student's strengths and needs. As the school puts it, it is "large enough to provide for excellence and small enough to support all of our students and community needs."

School type	State co-educational Area School, Years 1–13
Roll	Around 150 ākonga
Ākonga Māori	Around 23% of the roll (ERO, 2024)
Location	48 Main Road, Tapawera, Tasman District
Early learning links	Tapawera Kindergarten on site; playcentre less than 100 m away
Pathways	NMIT and Whenua Iti Trades Academies, and Gateway workplace learning for senior students
Houses	Baton (red), Motupiko (yellow) and Tadmor (green)
Values	The FIRE Way – Friendliness, Integrity, Respect, Effort (part of our PB4L approach)

YEARS 1–6

Primary team

Kaiako build strong relationships with each child and their whānau. Topics are aligned across classes so families with several children share the same learning conversations at home.



YEARS 7–10

Middle school

A Year 7–8 composite homeroom with specialist teaching in food, materials and digital technologies and visual art. Years 9–10 learn with specialists in labs, workshops and kitchens.



YEARS 11–13

Senior school

NCEA Levels 1–3 with small classes and tailored programmes, trades academy and Gateway pathways, a senior leadership camp and a Year 11 careers trip to Christchurch.



WHERE THE SCHOOL IS HEADING

Building on real momentum

The next principal will join a school with clear foundations in place and a Board that is ready to work alongside them. Recent priorities and progress include:

- **A new strategic plan.** Feedback from whānau, staff and students is shaping the school's strategic plan for the next two years.
- **Targeted literacy and maths support.** Targeted programmes have resulted in some students making between six months and a year's progress in a relatively short time.
- **Restorative Practice.** The school is embedding a restorative approach in everyday school life, focused on building, maintaining and repairing relationships so every member of the community feels they belong.
- **Timetable review.** The Board supports a proposed move from six 50-minute modules to five 60-minute periods each day to lift engagement and achievement.
- **Property.** Further major facility upgrades are planned.

The opportunity

To lead and build consistent, high-quality teaching across the school, and deepening whānau involvement in the curriculum. This is an opportunity for a principal to lead that work, sustain the gains already being made, and help shape the next chapter for the kura.



Tapawera – 2026 TOSI tournament winners



Representing the school on the court

Recent highlights

- Tapawera were winners of the 2026 TOSI (Top of the South Island) Area Schools tournament.
- Head Student Shakaia was one of only five students from New Zealand's 112 Area Schools and kura to receive a NZASA National Student of Excellence Award.
- Two Year 5–6 teams placed first and third out of 28 schools at the Kahurangi Kiwi Volleyfest.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The person we are looking for

The Board, staff, students and community share a clear picture of the qualities they want in their next principal. We are looking for someone who is:

1

Approachable, visible and relational

Present and accessible – at the gate, in classrooms, on the sideline and at community events. Builds trusting relationships with ākonga, kaimahi, whānau and the wider Tapawera community.

2

Genuinely cares about every ākonga and kaimahi

Knows learners by name and by need and champions the wellbeing and success of every student from Year 1 to Year 13. Values, supports and develops staff.

3

An excellent communicator

Communicates clearly, openly and regularly with the Board, staff, students and whānau. Listens well, explains decisions and keeps the community informed.

4

Firm, fair and consistent

Sets high expectations for learning and behaviour and upholds them consistently and fairly, while preserving relationships in keeping with the school's restorative approach.

5

Follows sound processes

Brings robust systems, planning and decision-making, and works constructively with the Board on governance, employment, financial and property responsibilities.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE

Principalship, and Area School or Secondary School experience

An understanding of the secondary context – including NCEA and senior pathways – alongside the breadth needed to lead a Years 1–13 kura.



THE ROLE AND HOW TO APPLY

Next steps

About the role

As tumuaki, you will be the professional leader of Tapawera Area School. Working in partnership with the Board, you will lead teaching and learning across Years 1–13, lead and develop staff, manage the school's resources and property, and be a visible, engaged presence in the Tapawera community.

Position	Principal (Tumuaki), Tapawera Area School
Start date	Term 1, 2027
Remuneration	Area School Principals' Collective Agreement + Principal Recruitment Allowance (see below)
Location	Tapawera, Motueka Valley, Tasman District

PRINCIPAL RECRUITMENT ALLOWANCE · $50,000 PER ANNUM

The Board has received approval from the Secretary for Education to offer the Principal Recruitment Allowance for this permanent position. An appointee who meets the Ministry's principal eligibility criteria, as assessed by an independent adviser from the National Panel, may receive $50,000 per annum for an initial fixed period of three years, in addition to their salary. The allowance may be subject to conditions, may be renewed for up to two further periods of up to two years, and ends if the principal leaves the role.

How to apply

Please send your CV, cover letter and application form that outlines how your experience and leadership approach match the candidate profile to Rosie Robinson at Brannigans. All enquiries and applications are treated in confidence, and we encourage you to get in touch for an initial conversation before applying.

Recruitment process

23 November 2026	Applications close
Week beginning 23 November 2026	Shortlisting by the Board with Brannigans
Sunday 6 December 2026	Interviews in Tapawera, including the opportunity to see the school
Week beginning 7 December 2026	Reference checks, Police vetting and appointment
Term 1, 2027	New principal commences

ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS

Rosie Robinson

Brannigans

Phone 027 221 2080

Email rosie.robinson@brannigans.co.nz

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Alex Booth

Presiding Member

Phone 027 389 8661

Email alexb@tapawera.school.nz

BRANNIGANS®

Better people
make a better world.

Rosie Robinson

027 221 2080 · Rosie.Robinson@brannigans.co.nz

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