

FAQ (frequently asked questions) about pre-enrolments

Kia ora

Thanks for your interest in our school.

This is a document of frequently asked questions by families about our pre-enrolment process and ballots. Please have a read through as it may help answer your query. As it is an evolving document as new questions are asked, they will be added.

There is more information on our website and this is the most up-to-date place to look.

<https://aotawhiti.school.nz/enrol/>

As interest in the school is greater than the places available, we have to ballot at every year level. We acknowledge the ballot process can be frustrating and distressing for families if they do not gain a place, especially when there are multiple children involved. As a school, please understand we have to follow this process.

Ngā mihi nui

Ao Tawhiti Enrolments

enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz

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Initial enquiries

- I am a family/social worker/support person and have a child urgently needing to go to your school or a student not currently in schooling. We missed the pre-enrolment process and there is a ballot waiting list in place or the student is on the waiting list and needs to start immediately. How do we get immediate enrolment?

Unfortunately we can't help you, schools must follow the pre-enrolment process and work through their balloted waiting lists. The only way to circumvent this is if the Ministry of Education directs a school to take a student. Please talk directly to the Ministry of Education about this process.

Ministry of Education 03 378 7300

48 Hereford Street, Christchurch 8013

- Can we start today?

Unfortunately no, we must follow our enrolment process as we have more interest than spaces available.

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- Which students get automatic right of entry?

We are a special character school so we are different from a regular school. We can not guarantee automatic right of entry to any student. As we have more interest than spaces available we have to ballot at every year level. This includes siblings of current students and those in our home zone.

- I am going to buy a property within your school's home zone so my child is guaranteed a place. Where should we buy?

We are a special character school so we are different from a regular school. We can not guarantee automatic right of entry to any student, including those in our home zone. As we have more interest than spaces available we have to ballot at every year level.

Our home zone encompasses the Christchurch City boundary. You can check if you are in zone by using this tool from the Christchurch City Council website. The Christchurch City boundary now includes Banks Peninsula.

<https://www.ccc.govt.nz/services/rates-and-valuations/rates-and-valuation-search/>

- We are primarily interested in enrolment in a future year. Are we too soon or is it ok to go through the process now?

Families are welcome to attend a tour and register any time. On the registration of interest form put down the future year you are interested in and we will be back in contact then. We need to ballot at every year level. Please re-register your interest if your contact details change or the year you are interested in.

- My child is one-year-old and I don't want to miss out on your school. Can I get them on the waiting list now?

You can register your interest at any time. This does not mean you are on the waiting list though as we have a pre-enrolment process to follow which includes a ballot and waiting list. What it does mean is if you register your interest, we will be in contact with you by email the year before your child is due to start to continue on with the process.

- We have lots of questions about your school and want to know if it is suitable for our student?

Please book a tour which our Senior Leadership Team will take. There will be a presentation, tour plus the opportunity for group and individual questions. Unfortunately, we are unable to work outside our tour dates because of the huge amount of interest in our school. We just do not have the infrastructure to support other tours or meetings. This is the link to the webpage to book a tour <https://aotawhiti.school.nz/enrol/>

- Can we start the pre-enrolment process if we are living overseas?

Yes, please still register your interest.

- Is there a wait list?

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We ballot every year at every year level. Once a ballot is drawn, the available spaces are allocated in the order of drawing and the remaining draws form a waiting list which stays in place until exhausted or until the end of the year that it is drawn for.

- Can anyone go to your school?

Our school's enrolment scheme is subject to the selection procedure specified in the s204(9) of the Education and Training Act 2020. We are a designated character school established under Section 156 the Education Act 1989 and the only students who are eligible for enrolment are those whose parents accept the designated character of the school as set out in the New Zealand Education Gazette notice of 4 April 2013.

By attending a tour, you will see how our special character operates. There is also a lot of information on our website when the tours are not operating.

- I have a student turning five mid/end year next year. Do we register our interest for next year or the year after? And do you do another pre-enrolment process mid year so should we wait?

We run one pre-enrolment process for the following year, the year before. This means if you want your student to be included for any time next year, you need to register your interest so we can get in touch. We would only run another process if the waiting list was exhausted and places became available.

- When do new entrants start?

We have an intake of new entrants at the start of every term. This means your student starts school at the start of the term after they turn five-years-old. The only exception for this is in the last term where sometimes students can start when they turn five.

- Are we in zone ?

Our home zone encompasses the Christchurch City boundary. You can check if you are in zone by using this tool from the Christchurch City Council website to check the residence the student lives. The Christchurch City boundary now includes Banks Peninsula.

<https://www.ccc.govt.nz/services/rates-and-valuations/rates-and-valuation-search/>

We are not like a regular school where all students in the zone must be offered a space. We are a special character school and because interest is higher than spaces that are available, we must ballot students at all year levels.

- We have questions about your enrolment scheme and are not happy with the scheme itself.

On our website at <https://ootawhiti.school.nz/category/news/enrol/> there is a link to the enrolment scheme.

In terms of enrolment schemes roles and responsibilities, this page on the Ministry of Education has further information which may be useful.

<https://www.education.govt.nz/new-zealands-network-of-schools/about-enrolment-schemes/>

The Ministry of Education's contact details are 03 378 7300 or 48 Hereford Street, Christchurch 8013.

The Board of Trustees contact details are bot.secretary@aotawhiti.school.nz

- Do you have a prospectus?
We don't have a prospectus, all the information about the school is on our website.
- We are from the United States of America or Australia and don't know what year level to register our interest at.
This table may help as a guide.

New Zealand year level	USA or Australia equivalent grade level	Student Age (Years)
<i>Primary - Years 1 to 6</i>		<i>5 to 10</i>
<i>Intermediate - Year 7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Intermediate - Year 8</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Secondary - Year 9</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Secondary - Year 10</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Secondary - Year 11</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Secondary - Year 12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Secondary - Year 13</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>17</i>

- Do you take international students?
We don't have the infrastructure within the school to take international students so we do not take international students.

Under the Education Act, a domestic student is a person who is -

- a) A New Zealand Citizen or*
- b) The holder of a residence class visa granted under the Immigration Act 2009 who satisfies the criteria (if any) prescribed by regulations made under subsection (4) or*
- c) A person of a class or description of person required by the Minister, by notice in the Gazette, to be treated as if they are not international students.*

More information is available on the Ministry of Education's website.

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/legislation/definition-of-domestic-student/>

- Do you take adult students?

We have not taken adult students because we have more interest than spaces and ballot at every year level to create waiting lists. Adult students would be treated as out of zone students and be balloted after younger students.

More information on adult students is available on the Ministry of Education's website.

<https://education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/education-circulars/latest-circulars/circular-202009>

Step 1 Register your interest and attend a tour

- Do we need to attend another tour, we attended one last year?

You do not need to attend another tour.

- Do we need to attend a tour, we are a current family or current staff member?

You do not need to attend a tour.

- Do we need to attend a tour, we are a past family or attended one on your old campuses?

You do need to attend a tour if you have not been on one at our city campus as it is very different from previous locations.

- We can't make your scheduled tour dates, can we arrange a separate appointment?

Unfortunately because of the interest in our school we do not have the resources to accommodate individual meetings and tours.

- I want to book an appointment with the Principal to discuss our child's special circumstances.

Unfortunately we are unable to work outside of tour dates because of the enormous volume of interest. We do not do meetings, visits or tours outside of the tour dates.

- How do I change the day I come on a tour? How do I cancel a tour

You don't need to apologise or cancel your tour, simply rebook another one.

- How has COVID-19 changed your tour and pre-enrollment process?

During the COVID alert levels at times we are unable to run tours.

- I made a mistake on my registration of interest form, how do I correct this?

Please email enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz or if a pre-enrolment process has not started, re-register your interest.

- How do we withdraw our registration of interest?

Please email enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz and we can do this. If you have registered to start in a particular calendar year and don't respond to our communications as we are working through that year, we will automatically withdraw your interest after we have made contact with you.

- We have attended a tour but we did not register our interest for this current round of the pre-enrolment process or registered our interest for previous years but have not been notified of the current enrolment process. My child has missed out, how do I fix this?

The school uses the registration of interest form as a basis for the next steps in the process. If you have not registered we can't contact you to notify you of the next steps for the year you are interested in. If you registered for previous years, you will not be contacted for the current process. The next step is to fill in a new registration of interest form.

- What happens on the tour?

Whānau check in at reception and then usually gather on the stairs. The Senior Leadership Team then meet with whānau and then go through a presentation which covers

- *our history*
- *our special character and guiding principles*
- *our special character in action*
- *who are successful students at the school*
- *myths about the school; how the pre-enrolment process works*

After this whānau have a physical tour of the school which ends with everyone gathering on the stairs again for group questions and answers.

The Senior Leadership Team then stays for any individual questions that whānau have.

Step 2A Pre-enrolment and ballot information - Reference

- My children are home educated, usually a current school fills in their education reference, who does this?

The school would like a person to fill in the student's education reference who is not a family member and who knows the student. This may be someone the student works with or perhaps someone from the home educated association you are associated with.

- What is the cut off day for the reference to be completed?
- What happens if the school doesn't fill out the reference form before the interview?

The school needs the reference as part of the pre-enrolment process and is unable to ballot students when one is not supplied.

- Is there any other pre-enrolment information other than the reference required before the interview?

The school just requires the reference however if you have further information, you wish to share please email this to enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz

- How will we know if the school has not received a reference?
The school will be in touch with you prior to the interview for you to follow up with your contact if the reference form has not been completed if you have filled out a the whānau family caregiver information form
- How is the reference submitted?
We send a link to families who have registered their interest and this can be onset to the student's school or early childhood educator.
- My child is not old enough to go to school, do we need to do the reference?
Yes, please send this to the student's early childhood educator.

Step 2B Pre-enrolment and ballot information - Whānau family caregiver information

- Why do we need to confirm our details when we have previously provided these with the registration of interest and tour booking?
Your confirmed, accurate and most up-to-date details are used for the ballot so this is correct and so we can communicate with you after this an offer of place or waiting list place.
- We have been contacted for an interview, do we need to attend?
If the Senior Leadership Team have requested an interview, you will need to attend to proceed through the pre-enrolment process.
- What is the aim of the interview and who should attend?
Bring your student and yourselves. Students are very welcome to bring something to show/share that they are passionate about or currently working on. The interviews is for the parents and students to establish suitability to work in our special character environment.
- Does getting an interview mean a place will be offered or does it then still go to the ballot?
The interview is for both the parents and students to establish your suitability to work in our special character environment. After this is established a ballot is held.
- I have booked an interview as requested but can't make it now, what do I do?
Please contact the person who asked for the interview. If you get stuck email enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz

Results of the enrolment process - decline, offer or balloted waiting list.

- If a place were offered in this year's process is it possible to defer a year?
- As we are aware places are balloted, we thought it best to apply the year before to give ourselves more chance of entry. Is this a correct assumption?
- If we decline a balloted place and want to come in the following year, do we have to go through all the enrolment steps again?

The balloted offer is for enrolment on the date offered and if not taken up does not confer an entitlement to enrol at another time. If you are wanting to attend in another year, then please re-register your interest for that year.

- I have multiple children on the balloted waiting lists and one of them has just been offered a place, do the other siblings now have a higher priority or can they all start at the same time?

Unfortunately they don't, as the balloted waiting lists stay in place for the year they are drawn or until they are exhausted. If places don't come up while they are on the waiting list, you will be contacted to ask if you would like to go in a future ballot and need to fill in the whānau family caregiver information for a re-ballot.

The only difference to this is siblings in the same year level which are balloted together and are offered places together.

- We have been on the balloted waiting list and a place has not come up, do we get a higher priority next year?

Unfortunately being on a balloted waiting list in previous years does not mean a priority for future years. Each year each year level is re-balloted as per the rules in the Education Act and Ministry of Education guidelines.

- We have children in the same year level on the waiting list and want them to start together?

Siblings in the same year level are balloted together and are offered places together.

- Our child has been balloted and is on a waiting list. We feel there are special reasons why our child should be enrolled at your school now. What do we do?

The Board advises that it has no discretionary powers that can be applied where parents feel that there are special reasons why their child should be enrolled other than through the normal balloting process. If you believe that special reasons do exist in your child's case, then you may make an application under Section 11P of the Education Act 1989 to the Ministry of Education. Forms for this process are available from the Ministry's local office. The Ministry advises that this section is used for exceptional cases only. The Ministry expects that specialist medical or psychological or other expert opinion will be supplied in support of an application.

*Ministry of Education 03 378 7300
48 Hereford Street, Christchurch 8013*

- Do you let us know when our child moves up a place on the waiting list?

*No, we would only contact you if we could offer your child a place. The enrolment page of our website does list the changes in the waiting lists.
<https://aotawhiti.school.nz/enrol/>*

- What order do you pull the ballot in?

As per our enrolment scheme the ballot is pulled in the following order:

CATEGORY 1 - HOME ZONE

Our home zone "home zone encompasses the Christchurch City boundary.

1.1 First Priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a current student of the school:

1.2 Second priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a former student of the school:

1.3 Third priority must be given to any applicant who is a child of a former student of the school:

1.4 Fourth priority must be given to any applicant who is either a child of an employee of the board of the school or a child of a member of the board of the school:

15. Fifth priority must be given to all other applicants.

CATEGORY 2 - OUTSIDE THE CITY BOUNDARY

2.1 First Priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a current student of the school:

2.2 Second priority must be given to any applicant who is the sibling of a former student of the school:

2.3 Third priority must be given to any applicant who is a child of a former student of the school:

2.4 Fourth priority must be given to any applicant who is either a child of an employee of the board of the school or a child of a member of the board of the school:

2.5 Fifth priority must be given to all other applicants.

- Who pulls the ballot?

The ballot is pulled by an independent person such as a Justice of the Peace or member of the Police.

- We have children going through the pre-enrolment process in more than one year group. I have just received an email with an offer or ballot outcome for one but not the other children?

Our website will list the date that we will make contact with you after our ballot. Please contact us after that date if you have not heard about your other children. We have an enormous amount of interest in our school and it takes a considerable amount of time to work through this over multiple year levels so the communications are staggered. We do want to get it right, so please don't hesitate to make contact with enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz if you need to.

- How long does the waiting list stay in place?

The balloted waiting list will stay in place until the end of the year it is drawn for or until it is exhausted. If the list becomes exhausted then the school would run a new enrolment process.

- We have just received our balloted place and are devastated as it is so far down the list. I'm not quite sure I understand it and what are the next steps?

It is so disappointing to not get in on the ballot and then go on the waiting list for families. For your child to be offered a place, all the children above will need

to move off the waiting list and a place be available. This can happen if student's above withdraw their interest, or an offer of place is declined or a child in that year level leaves the school. If your child is balloted for they are still on the waiting list when we run a future enrolment process, we will make contact with you

- We have just received our balloted place and believe there is an error?
Please email enrol@aotawhiti.school.nz urgently with the details so we can check.