

# Information Booklet

**Whenuakite**



Early Childhood Education Centre

**2023**



# Table of Contents

Philosophy Statement .....	1,2
Learning Priorities.....	3
About Us.....	4
Teaching Team – Staff.....	4
Management.....	5
Hours of operation and holidays.....	5
Education Programme (Including Excursions and Transitions)....	6,7
Learning Journals/Portfolios.....	8
Starting your child at WCK.....	9
Arrival Time.....	9
Departure Time .....	10
Mealtimes, Bottles & Nappies.....	11
Sleep Time.....	12
Toilet Training.....	12
Medication .....	12
Sickness & Accidents.....	13
Immunisation.....	14
Clothing & Lost Property.....	14
Sun Safety.....	15
Personal Toys.....	15
Birthdays and Celebrations.....	15

# Contents cont'd...

Social Media Photos.....	16
Social and Emotional Competency.....	16
Contacts and Communication.....	17
Car Seats.....	17
Resources.....	18
Fundraising and Working Bees.....	18
Fruit and Vege Co-op.....	19
Siblings at our centre.....	19
Policies and Procedures.....	19
Fees and WINZ Subsidies.....	20
Queries, Suggestions & Complaints Process.....	20
Supplement: Fees Schedule GMA3, Appendix 2 v1.3	
Contact details.....	Back Cover



# Philosophy Statement

*“Tangata ako ana I te kāenga, te tūranga kit e marae, tau ana”.*

*“A person nurtured in the community  
contributes strongly to society”*



At Whenuakite Country Kids we provide an environment where tamariki, whānau and Kaiako feel loved, secure and affirmed as individuals. The heart of our centre is built upon strong reciprocal relationships within our community. The very whenua that our centre is built upon was generously donated by our neighbours, for the benefit of our community. We have enormous gratitude for the many whānau and friends who have given their services to our centre over the years. We honour the wealth of knowledge and experience which everyone in our learning community brings to our centre.

Relationships and partnerships based on trust, respect and open communication are central to our provision of a safe and inclusive environment. We extend Manaakitanga to all and celebrate growth alongside tamariki on their learning journey. We acknowledge the dual heritage of Aotearoa/New Zealand and honour the spirit and intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, fostering an environment where tamariki experience the language, values and traditions of our bicultural heritage. Being welcoming and inclusive of the diversity within our centre and community is intrinsic to our practice.

We believe it is important to uphold the Mana of each child. Tamariki are supported to develop a strong sense of belonging and are empowered to lead their own learning. We provide an environment where every child is nurtured to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to strengthen their social and emotional competencies. Our Kaiako are passionate educators who enjoy working within an inclusive and creative, play-based curriculum.

Our centre is a place where the needs and interests of tamariki are met through responsive interactions and meaningful experiences. We highly value the lens through which tamariki view the world and provide time and space for tamariki to explore and generate their own working theories. We incorporate a range of natural and open-ended resources, sourced from our local community.

We aim to support and nurture the hauora of all tamariki, whānau and Kaiako in our centre. We acknowledge the holistic nature of each child's learning journey and consider the Taha hinengaro /mental and emotional, Taha whānau /social, Taha Tinana /physical, Taha wairua /spiritual aspects to wellbeing.

Our curriculum provides tamariki with regular opportunities to build an awareness of the environment and issues of sustainability. A respect for Papatūānuku is promoted with tamariki throughout all aspects of our practice. Our regular excursions into our natural environment encourages tamariki to nurture their hauora/well-being while also strengthening connections within our local community.

# Learning Priorities



Relationships/Manaakitanga and Connection with whānau



Celebrating our bicultural heritage in partnership with whānau and iwi



Upholding the Mana of all and empowering Tamariki



Developing Kaitiakitanga, being respectful and protecting our environment.



Celebrating what is happening in our community within our centre.



Kotahitanga, lifting each other up, identifying as one, promoting the concept of togetherness.

# About Us

Whenuakite Country Kids was opened in July 2002, as a licensed and chartered nonprofit Community owned centre. It is situated opposite Whenuakite School, in a rural setting, 25 minutes' drive south of Whitianga and 15 minutes' drive north of Tairua.

The centre is licensed for 39 children, ages from birth to 6 years old, and has separate areas for Preschoolers - Kereru Room and Infant/Toddlers Tui Room. We are extremely fortunate, to have 2 large north facing outdoor play areas for our children to explore.

**The following information will assist you to understand the policies, routines, and procedures at our centre.**

## Teaching Team – Staff

At Whenuakite Country Kids the teaching team and staff have been selected for their natural ability and skill with young children. Our dedicated teaching team is friendly, highly knowledgeable, experienced and have a passion for learning. In the foyer of our centre are photo's and qualification details of our individual kaiako and what rooms they work in.



# Management

Whenuakite Country Kids is a licensed and Chartered Early Childhood Education Centre and an Incorporated Society run by a governance committee (consisting of parents and staff from the centre, and local community members). The Centre Manager's role is to oversee the operation of the centre. The Centre Manager is the link between parents, children, staff, management committee, Ministry of Education, other early childhood services, local schools, and the wider community. Please feel free to talk to the management committee about any queries, concerns or suggestions that you may have. A Whānau folder, with all information, is available in the reception.

## Hours of Operation & Holidays

The centre is open from 8am—4pm 5 days a week (Mon-Fri), excluding public holidays. During the school holidays, WCK closes for the first week of the Term 3 July school holidays, reopening on the second week. The Christmas break is approximately 3 weeks long (dependent on dates) each year. Our opening hours, centre closures and after hours contact number are displayed on the entrance door and our website.

# Education Programme

We provide a play-based curriculum within a safe and challenging environment. We are a well-resourced centre with a wide range of resources, equipment, and experiences to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and cultural needs of infants, toddlers and young children. Our programme reflects the goals and strands of Te Whāriki, the Early Childhood Curriculum for NZ. Our curriculum affirms the identities, languages, and cultures of all Children, Whānau, Kaiako and communities from a strong bicultural foundation. We believe the wider world of family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum. Our localised curriculum reflects the day-to-day happenings in our children's lives. We greatly value parents, whānau, and wider community contributions to our programme. An assessment, planning and evaluation system is in place for individual children, which is led by whānau aspirations for each child. Kaiako scaffold and extend children's thinking in areas of interest and developmental needs through a play-based programme. Kaiako work alongside children and their families to develop positive, healthy relationships. Through role modeling, positive reinforcement, mediation, sensitive guidance and support we build effective communication skills. Occasionally we plan centre excursions, where permission is gained from every parent beforehand. Assessment & Management of risk is undertaken, and Adult/Child ratios are determined.

## EOTC - Education Outside the Centre Excursions

We run a programme for our older children to spend time learning together in our local natural environment. This programme has been inspired by the growing trend in nature pedagogy and aligns with our centre philosophy of offering natural experiences and connections with our local environment for children.

On a regular basis, we take a group of children to a reserve at Pukaki/Cooks Beach to explore the area and become immersed in adventure, exploration, and imagination. In the future we would like to extend this programme to make it a full day from 9-3pm to really benefit from the natural surroundings and to build the competencies that support children on the pathway to school. To make this programme financially feasible we will be relying on whānau support to work alongside a kaiako.

**Excursions—Trips outside the Centre** - any activity outside our centre gate is classed as an excursion and will require a parent permission slip. The centre will undertake a risk assessment that will be shared with you.

**Transitions into and within the Centre** are an important part of children acquiring successful learning journeys. We like all children to have a minimum of 3 visits prior to starting at our centre and we will work with families to create a personalised transition plan for each individual child. We follow the same process when children transition from the Tui side to the Kereru side.

**Transition to School** – When your child is preparing to transition to school, we will once again discuss an individual transition plan with you. We work closely with our local schools, to ensure the transition runs as smoothly as possible. The process may include organised group visits to the school with other 4 year olds at the centre, and Whanau Information evening's run in conjunction with the schools to help answer any queries you may have.

# Learning Journals / Portfolios (Storypark)






Each child in the centre, has a Learning Journal which captures their learning experiences and ensures their individual needs and interests are met. A Kaiako will be allocated to each child to establish a relationship with the child, and they will be the person that communicates with this family. The Learning Journal contains written observations, photos of the child, notes on child's interests, examples of artwork, interesting discussions held with the child and anecdotal accounts of events in their lives. Kaiako use assessment to find out what your child knows, can do, their interests, how their learning is progressing and what might be the next step in their learning. We encourage parents to regularly look through these with their children, to create discussion and Parent/Whānau input is greatly valued. Country Kids also offers an e-portfolio platform called Storypark. Storypark is an easy-to-use private online service that helps kaiako, parents and families work together to record, share, and extend children's learning. You can capture a child's development by posting photos, videos, stories, moments, notes and responses. Storypark is 'child-centric' which means any account must be connected to a child's profile. If a child attends another early learning service that uses Storypark, a kaiako can be invited to access the child's profile. Kaiako will invite the child's parent to join Storypark and parents can download the Storypark App to access this. Then you as the parent can then invite family members to be part of the child's profile. Storypark have free webinars to support you to use this platform and we recommend that you use this option to ensure that you get the most of this service.

# Starting your child at WCK

To help settle your child, it is ideal to visit as many times as possible prior to their start date. Please visit and stay with your child to help them feel familiar with the kaiako, children and WCK routines. We welcome you to have a tea or coffee and talk with staff prior to your child's start date to ensure your child's needs will be met and you and your child are happy at WCK. We have a policy that states a minimum of 3 visits prior to your child starting, preferably on the days that they are booked. 1 or 2 of these visits, you will be asked to leave the centre for a short while to help your child with saying good-bye and understand that our parents and Whanau always come back.

## Arrival Time





When you arrive with your child at Whenuakite Country Kids please take the following steps.

-  Help your child find his/her name on the name board
-  Sign your child in, on the iPad using your individually assigned pin number
-  Encourage your child to find their locker and put their bag away
-  Cold food is put in the fridge tray, lunch boxes on the shelf and drink bottles in the drink tray.
-  Settle your child into an activity and ensure that a staff member knows of your child's arrival

**Please note our kaiako/child ratio is based on the enrolment times. Between 8-9am, we have only the necessary staff for the enrolled children during these times, so please advise us if you are going to be early.**

# Departure Time

For safety reasons your child will only be released to those authorised on your enrolment form. Each authorised pick-up is assigned their own individual pin number. When you need to make alternative arrangements, please inform the centre of these ahead of time. When leaving with your child please take the following steps:

-  Speak to a staff member about your child's day and inform them when you are leaving.
-  Encourage your child to collect their artwork, lunch box, bag, coat and shoes.
-  Check the notice boards, your child's pocket (in the entrance-way), and the iPad for any messages.
-  Sign your child out on the iPad.

*\*\*\*Once a week, you will be required to sign the physical attendance register, to confirm your child's hours from the previous week. The register is located on the front desk.*

**Please note our kaiako/child ratio is based on the enrolment times. Between 3-4pm, we have only the necessary staff for the enrolled children during these times. To avoid being charged a late fee please advise us ASAP if you are running late. Please refer to our fee policy for late fee charges. The centre is not responsible for children after hours, once the parent has arrived to collect the child, and while in transit to and from the centre.**

# Mealtimes

Please send along packed food for morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea in a named lunch box. Please also send a named drink bottle for your child. Fresh drinking water is always available to children, and the children are encouraged to use their own drink bottles. Our morning tea Kai is between 9.30 and 10am and our lunch Kai from 11.30-12pm. We encourage healthy food options and follow MOH guidance around reducing food related choking for babies and young children at early learning services. Afternoon tea is around 2.30 pm where the children will finish any remaining food in their lunch boxes.

# Bottles

If your child has a bottle, please ensure that these are named and placed in the kitchen. If the bottles are to be made up by our staff, please advise quantities. Any milk allergies need to be made known to a Kaiako and recorded on our allergy lists.

# Nappies

If your child wears nappies, please supply an adequate quantity of these. A named packet may be left at the centre for your child. We provide wet wipes, and basic nappy creams. Please provide and name any special nappy creams that you wish the staff to use on your child. The use of these will need to be signed for at the time of enrolment.

## Sleep Time

Children are ready for a rest after they have spent a busy morning engaging in exciting educational activities. After lunch we encourage children to rest or engage in quiet activities whilst giving the children who need to sleep the opportunity to do so. We try and follow infants home sleeping patterns where possible. Kaiako will discuss individual requirements with parents during your transition visits

## Toilet Training

This is a natural process that all children go through at different ages. Kaiako will work with parents to support the child with this developmental stage. Please let staff know when you are starting this process at home so we can continue it at Whenuakite Country Kids. Remember to bring lots of changes of clothes and underwear too!

## Medication

When your child has been issued medication from a doctor, details must be written in the Medication Register and signed by the caregiver. The medication must be handed to a staff member and not be left in the child's bag. The staff member will sign next to the time the medication was issued. Please refer to our medication policy for further information.



# Sickness

Due to the risk of infection spreading throughout the centre, we are unable to take care of sick children. Children will need to be kept at home when they are ill and causing concern or:

- Have no interest in activities or play
- Have little energy, want or need sleep for long periods
- Cry easily, are irritable or in pain
- Constantly wanting to be held and comforted
- Have a fever
- 48 hours from last incident of diarrhea or vomiting
- 24 hours from first dosage of antibiotics

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you so that you can collect your child as soon as possible. Please refer to our Infectious/Illness policies for further information.

# Accidents

Accidents do happen and we are prepared. At all times there is a certified First Aid kaiako at the centre and we are equipped with First Aid equipment. All accidents are recorded in our accident book and parents are advised of all accidents and incidents. Parents will be required to sign the incident form and take a copy of the white page with them. All serious accidents are reported to the Centre Manager and investigated.

# Immunisation

When enrolling your child, you are required to produce your child's immunisation records where applicable. We encourage but do not enforce immunisation and take no responsibility for any disease your child acquires that would normally be preventable by immunisation. We will advise unimmunised children's families of any contagious diseases that occur and ask them to exclude their child from the centre until we have notification that the disease is not present in the centre anymore. Parents will be asked to bring along updated immunisation records when their child has further vaccinations.

# Clothing

Your child is going to be busy, painting, dancing, eating, doing indoor activities, and playing outdoors. For these reasons we encourage children to wear suitable clothes for the appropriate weather conditions. Please also include at least two spare sets of clothes in their bag, and a few spare pairs of underwear. We also encourage children to wear shoes that they can get on and off on their own with ease. **Please make sure that everything is named**, including accessories, e.g., shoes, hats, etc.

# Lost Property

All unnamed lost property is placed in the lost property basket by the front door, and regularly displayed at the centre entrance for parents to collect. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity if not claimed after 1 term.

## Sun Safety

In summer (term 4 and term 1) it is our policy to wear a sun hat when outdoors, unless advised in writing. Please ensure that your child has a named hat in their bag. We also expect your child to arrive at Whenuakite Country Kids with sunblock already applied. The centre provides sunscreen, and if your child is with us all day, we will reapply sunblock after lunch. If your child has an allergy to any sunscreen or if you prefer a specific brand, please name and supply this.

## Personal Toys

At Whenuakite Country Kids we have a wide range of exciting and educational toys for your child to interact with. Personal toys brought from home can easily be misplaced or damaged and we cannot assume responsibility for them. If your child has a special toy for sleeping with, we are happy for this to accompany them at sleep time otherwise we kindly ask that you leave personal toys at home or in the car. Please encourage items of interest for news, e.g., insects, postcards, photos, books, or verbal news.

## Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays are a time for us to celebrate with your child. At the centre we celebrate birthdays by all joining together for a birthday mat time. A special card is made by the children, and we also make a playdough cake. You are always very welcome to join us for this celebration.

# Social Media Photos

Parental permission must be received, prior to uploading to social media, or publicly sharing any photos taken of children whilst at our centre or at centre related activities. Please refer to our Digital Citizenship and Technology policy (located in the office) for further information.

## Social and Emotional Competency

We believe that children and adults are always treated with respect and dignity in our centre. To ensure the safety and well-being of our children and staff we provide positive guidelines for all to follow. Our centre is committed to enhancing and expanding the social and emotional competencies of all children enrolled here. The ability to interact with others, regulate your emotions, and communicate with others is essential for life learning. As kaiako we will provide the environment, resources, and strategies for these competencies to develop. Staff and parents will be provided with professional learning and resources to support them to use developmentally appropriate strategies with children. From time to time with reoccurring behaviours, we will need to seek support from outside specialist agencies. Parent's permission will always be sought.

# Contacts and Communication

Please advise us if you change address, email, or phone numbers. This is important in emergency situations and centre closures. When enrolling your child, you are required to give details of authorised persons to collect your child and an alternative contact in case of an emergency when the parents cannot be contacted. Please make sure you notify us if there are changes to these. Centre communication will be posted on Storypark, emailed, placed in your child's pocket or via an alert on the iPad. The centre publishes a monthly newsletter, which will be sent to you via email. This is also posted on Storypark and available for downloading on our website: [www.wck.co.nz](http://www.wck.co.nz). A paper copy is available for viewing at reception.

## Car seats

Please ensure that your child travels to and from Whenuakite Country Kids in a current NZ Transport approved car seat. From time-to-time, we realise that parents/Whānau travel arrangements change, and that a car seat is required. For this reason, Country Kids have a small number of NZ Transport approved car seats available to borrow for emergencies only. We ask that you sign for these in the register and return to the centre as soon as possible for other parents to use.

# Resources

There is a constant demand in the centre for wood off-cuts, cardboard tubes, small boxes, ribbons, wrapping paper as well as natural materials such as eggshells, leaves, pinecones, shells, and wool etc. We gratefully accept resources, but due to health regulations we are unable to use toilet rolls and soap powder boxes. If you are unsure, please ask one of our staff.

## Fundraising and Working Bees

As we are a not-for-profit centre, the funding provided by the government does not always cover the cost of running and maintaining a high-quality early learning service. Therefore, from time to time when we have a big project that we need to complete, it is necessary to hold fundraising events to cover any extra costs outside our budget. We do need parents support to run these events, and always welcome new whanau who wish to join our fundraising committee.

The centre also run regular working bees to tidy-up and maintain the gardens and outdoor areas. All offers of help are appreciated.

# Fruit and Vege Co-op

Families and community members are invited to share excess produce, plants, and seedlings with us. Extra produce from our gardens and orchards will also be added to our co-op table in the foyer.

We believe this engages children and families in the cycle of growing and harvesting food as well as encouraging healthy food choices.

A koha/donation will be greatly appreciated, and the money raised will contribute to the costs of our nature-based learning programme.

## Siblings at our Centre

Please note that any child not enrolled at the centre on a particular day, that is siblings (including school age children) are the responsibility of the parents, whanau and not the centre. If your sibling has an accident at our centre, please report this to one of our kaiako.

## Policies and Procedures

The centre's policy and procedure manual is always available for you to view in the office. From time-to-time, you will be invited to review our policies and consult on any changes.

# Fees and Subsidies

The centre is reliant on Parent Fees to continue to operate. To assist with payment of fees, many families may also be eligible for a childcare subsidy from WINZ.

A copy of our current fees schedule is on the following pages. Please communicate with us if you wish to discuss our fees, the childcare subsidy application process, or our absence policy.

## Queries, Suggestions & Complaints Process

We are a community-based centre and we greatly value parent input. If you have any queries or suggestions, please speak to the staff about these or talk with our Centre Manager. From time to time, we have parent surveys where we encourage parent input on the daily running of our centre. We strongly encourage you to respond to these surveys so that we are meeting our family's needs.

If you have a complaint, please refer to our complaint's procedure located in the foyer area. If you are not satisfied after speaking with the Centre Manager, please put your query/suggestion in writing or email and send it to:

Management Committee  
Whenuakite Country Kids,  
1052B Tairua-Whitianga Road,  
RD 1  
Whitianga 3591



# Fee Schedule

## GMA<sub>3</sub> Appendix 2

This fee schedule shall be reviewed as necessary, normally early in the calendar year with a view to implementing any changes on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year.

- All fees are inclusive of GST.
- Fees are charged for a child's permanently enrolled hours and for any extra hours attended.
- All enrolled 3 + year old children are entitled to 20 Hours ECE Funding (up to 20 hours per week, 6 hours per day maximum). Any additional hours on enrolled days \$6.50 per hour.
- All other enrolled children on enrolled days, \$6.50 per hour.
- If space allows casual enrolments (including for enrolled children attending on non-enrolled days) shall be charged \$10.00 per hour.
- For children who are not permanently enrolled, fees are payable in advance.

### **Additional Fees**

- An administration fee of \$1.00 per child is charged for every day that they attend.
- A portfolio/e-portfolio fee of \$40.00 per annum shall be charged bi-annually @ 2 x \$20.00.

Please note, for a child who is receiving 20 hours ECE funding at Whenuakite Country Kids, these are optional charges.

Document Number: GMA <sub>3</sub> Appendix 2	Issue Number v1.3	Date October 2022	Page 1
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## Absences

Sick Leave: We require sick children to stay away from the centre. Child sick leave means that no fee will be charged if a child stays away from the centre because they are sick. If your child is enrolled full time (5 days a week) they shall be entitled to 10 days sick leave per year. If your child is enrolled part-time, they shall be entitled to 5 sick days per year. Full fees shall be charged after this. Families of children who phone in because they have decided to keep their child at home for any reason other than sickness, shall be charged full fees.

### Other Absences:

- If 4 weeks' notice is given of your child's absence, no fees will be charged for up to 3 weeks absence. 20hrs ECE funding and WINZ Childcare Subsidies shall cease if your child's absence is longer than three consecutive weeks.
- If 2 weeks' notice is given of your child's absence, 50% fees shall be charged for up to 3 weeks' absence.
- If less than 2 weeks' notice is given of your child's absence, full fees shall be charged.

## Holding Fee

A holding fee holds a child's place for prolonged absences of 3 weeks or more.

- If 4 or more weeks' notice is given, a holding fee of \$10.00 per day shall be charged.
- If less than 4 weeks' notice is given, a holding fee of \$20.00 per day shall be charged.
- Holding fees are charged in the fourth week of absence.

For unusual situations a holding fee shall be determined and applied at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

Document Number: GMA3 Appendix 2	Issue Number v1.3	Date October 2022	Page 2
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### **Late Penalty Fee**

In accordance with the centre's license and staff rosters, including staff/child ratios, it is imperative that children arrive and leave at their booked enrolment times and do not attend for longer than those hours without prior arrangement. It shall be normal to charge a late penalty fee (over and above a child's normal fees) of \$2.00 per minute. This fee shall apply if their parent/caregiver is more than 10 minutes earlier or later than the child's enrolled hours, including before or after the centre's licensed hours.

### **WINZ Subsidies**

Many families are eligible for a childcare subsidy from Work and Income NZ. Please ask for information from the office. Please note, WINZ subsidies cease for 3 weeks or more of consecutive absence.

### **Financial Hardship**

If you are experiencing financial hardship and struggling to pay fees, you should have a confidential conversation with the Centre Manager to arrange a payment plan.

### **Termination of Enrolment**

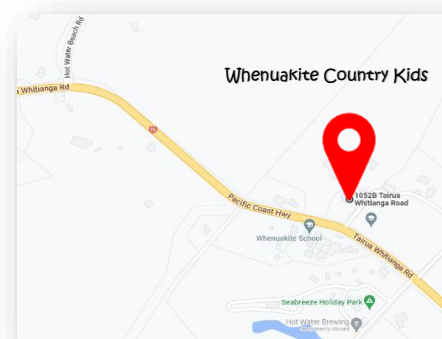
Notice required to cancel an enrolment is detailed in our Enrolment Process, GMA10 Appendix 1.

**END**

Document Number: GMA3 Appendix 2	Issue Number v1.3	Date October 2022	Page 3
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# Contact Us

Whenuakite Country Kids is in the rural area of Whenuakite, on the stunning Coromandel Peninsula. We are located opposite Whenuakite School, on State Highway 25, between Tairua and Whitianga.



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