



New Zealand Centre  
for Gifted Education  
*Empowering Extraordinary Minds*



# MindPlus OurSchool

Guide for parents

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for Gifted Education

[www.nzcge.co.nz](http://www.nzcge.co.nz)  
0800 769 243

# MindPlus **OurSchool** Guide for Parents

## Welcome

**Whāngai ka tupu ka puawai. That which is nurtured, blossoms then grows**

Welcome to MindPlus OurSchool! We are delighted that your child is going to be joining us this year, and we want to make sure that starting with us is as easy as possible for them - and you.

We've put together this Guide to MindPlus OurSchool to answer some of the questions you may have about MindPlus:

- What to expect at MindPlus
- How we communicate
- Our expectations of each other
- All about fees and scholarships

If you have any programme questions, don't hesitate to contact our Head of Programmes Madelaine Armstrong Willcocks on [madelaine.willcocks@nzcge.co.nz](mailto:madelaine.willcocks@nzcge.co.nz).

For any day-to-day administrative questions, our office team is very happy to talk with you on 0800 769 243 or [hello@nzcge.co.nz](mailto:hello@nzcge.co.nz).

Contact details for your teacher and other NZCGE staff are [here](#).

# What to expect at MindPlus

## What is a MindPlus day?

Our MindPlus day starts at 9am, with the classroom being open from 8:30am. We finish at 2:45pm and expect parents to collect their children promptly. Students attend on a specific day, one day a week. In each class, we group together students who we think will work well together. At each unit, we usually have at least one class of older children and one of younger children.

## When does MindPlus start and finish in a year?

We start our MindPlus year in the second week of Term One and end one week before the end of Term Four. This gives children a chance to settle into regular school before they start MindPlus and not to miss out on the end of year activities at regular school at the end of the year. We keep to the same terms as public schools in Term Two and Three.

## What happens during a MindPlus day?

In the MindPlus day, we set aside time for three different focuses:

- **Conceptual Development** - where we explore together thinking skills in relation to a particular universal concept - in 2022 it was patterns and in 2023 it is discovery
- **Talent Development** - where our students go deep into an area they are passionate about, including **MindPlus Clubs**, connecting like minds across our programmes across New Zealand
- **Personal Development** - where we explore ideas around giftedness and neurodiversity and learn together about skills and strategies to navigate personal and social development

Each of our classes develops their own journey across these areas that reflects the interests and skills of the students.

From time to time, our teachers bring in high-quality **specialist tutors** into the class to work with all students or groups of students, usually in an area of talent development. We also add in opportunities to explore outside the classroom together on **trips**, such as to a university or a special exhibition. If a trip is planned, the MindPlus teacher will contact families to ask for permission and often will ask for support with transport or supervision.

MindPlus Clubs, specialist tutors and trips are at no additional cost for MindPlus families. MindPlus Clubs can be accessed at any time and more information can be found on our website [here](#).

To hear one of our teachers, Diana, talk about what goes on during the MindPlus day, click [here](#).

## Do we have MindPlus homework?

No! We don't set homework at MindPlus - although we often find that students choose to spend their own time continuing to explore things they've learnt about at MindPlus and deepening their experiences in their passion area. That's always great to see! MindPlus Clubs are always available and are ideal for that continued exploration.

### **What do students need to bring?**

Students should bring their own **snacks, lunch and drink** with them each day. Water is preferred for a drink – no fizzy or energy drinks please. There are kitchen facilities, including a fridge, kettle and microwave, in most of our classrooms for students to use (with supervision and support as needed). We have a lunch-time supervisor over the lunch break so that our students can stay in the MindPlus classroom if they would like.

Please let us know if your child has particular dietary requirements and/or allergies. **Due to potential allergic reactions, eggs and nuts, or food containing eggs or nuts, are not allowed in MindPlus classrooms.**

Students don't need to bring any **stationery or resources** unless they want to – we provide all of these as part of the programme.

We provide **devices** for students to use at MindPlus but if your child has their own device they are welcome to bring it to MindPlus and use it during the learning programme. As our classrooms use internet provided by the host school, our BYOD policy reflects the conditions set by each host school. Devices brought to MindPlus are at your risk.

We also recommend that **valuable items** like electronic items, money, jewelry and toys stay at home.

### **What do students wear?**

Learning at MindPlus is active! Children should wear comfortable clothing that will allow for painting, gluing, working on hands and knees, building things, etc, and a sun hat for the summer months. We recommend naming clothing – we keep a lost property box in our classrooms for things that are left behind.

### **How do parents get involved?**

We love to see parents at MindPlus and are very happy for you to pop in and see your child working with us, as well as keeping in touch by Hero, email or phone (see the next section on Communications). We do need parent help for MindPlus trips and as support crew at MindPlus events and we'll let you know as these opportunities come up.

### **What happens if my child is sick or has another commitment?**

If your child is going to be absent from their MindPlus day, please let us know in Hero. Click on **Report An Absence** and let us know why your child will be away. If we haven't heard from you by 9:15am, we will be in touch with you and/or your child's school. Please note that fee refunds are not given for days when your child is absent.

### **What happens if my child has a medical condition?**

We need to be aware of any illnesses, allergies or medical conditions a child has, and/or any medications they need to take at MindPlus. We ask for this information as part of the Hero enrolment process but please do keep us up to date if anything changes. If your child needs to take medication during the MindPlus day, please give this to your child's MindPlus teacher for safe-keeping, along with instructions – **medication should not be left in your child's school bag.**

**What if MindPlus is not working out for my child?**

We know that MindPlus is just one option you have for your child and our aim is always to support your child and your family. If MindPlus is not working out well for your child, your first port of call is always to chat with your child's MindPlus teacher. Make a time to chat and let's see what we can do together to make things work. Remember our staff contact details are on our website [here](#). If together you decide to finish your journey with us, fill in the [Leavers Form](#). More information about leaving and fees is in the section about fees.

**What happens if I need to contact my child urgently?**

If you need to contact your child urgently during their MindPlus day, please contact your child's teacher directly. If you have any difficulties, please contact our office. All our contact details are [here](#).

**Do you take photos of the students and their work?**

We do regularly take photos and videos of students in action at MindPlus. We do this to record students' learning and to share with you as well as to display in class. We also use photos and videos of students on our website and social media but do not use students' real names to identify them without consent. We will ask you when you enrol for your permission to use photos and videos for these purposes and are very happy to respect your wishes.

**How do we ensure student safety under Covid?**

We are committed to operating our MindPlus programmes nationwide in a way that keeps your children safe and learning. To do this we comply with all requirements of the Public Health Orders, the Ministry of Education and our Host Schools. Please have a read of our most [up-to-date Covid response](#). This may change over time and we will keep you updated via the **Community Feed** in Hero.

## How we communicate

We are committed to open, regular communications between you, our MindPlus teachers and your child's regular school teachers.

We know that families are always keen to know more about what their children are up to on their MindPlus days - and sometimes our children are not super forthcoming with details! It's important to us that parents do feel included and part of the learning going on, so please get in touch anytime for an update or with ideas on how we could communicate with you better.

### How you can communicate with us

Your first port of call if you have anything you'd like to discuss about your child or the MindPlus programme is to get in touch with your child's MindPlus teacher. If you'd like a specific time to chat, please get in touch to set this up as well, as sometimes right before or after school isn't the best time for a good in-depth discussion. We have an open door policy, so if you'd like to visit just set up a time that works for all. If there are things you'd like to discuss further, you are welcome to contact our Deputy Programme Manager. Contact details for all of our staff are on our website [here](#).

### Communicating about your child

Our MindPlus teacher will proactively be in touch with you to share good news about your child's progress as well as if they have any questions or concerns.

We welcome you to visit your child's MindPlus class at any time - just make a time that suits you with your child's MindPlus teacher. We are also happy to welcome regular school teachers and principals.

**Hero** is our 'one-stop shop' app for checking in with what's going on in your child and their MindPlus class. You can download Hero to any device [here](#). When you start your MindPlus journey with us you will be asked to enrol in Hero, and you can find out more about how to do this [here](#). If you currently use Hero for your school, your accounts will be linked and will show up side by side.

Through Hero you will get:

- **Weekly Class Updates** - to keep you up to date with what's happening in your child's MindPlus class each week, with news, notices and upcoming events. These are in **Community Feed**
- **Learner Profile Updates** - in Terms 1, 3 and 4 we will update you on your child's learning through the Learner Profile. We will also add any special highlights of your child's MindPlus journey in the the Learner Profile These are in the **Learner Profile** under your child's name
- **Termly Invoices** - more information about these are in the Fees and Scholarship section. Invoice and payment information is found under **Finance**

### Reporting on Progress and Achievement

Each term our teachers will update you on your child's progress and achievement. In Terms 1, 3 and 4 this will be through the **Learner Profile** in Hero. In Term 2, this will be through a **Learning Conversation**. We will book in a time that suits you. We can also provide a specific reference for school entry or placement on request - just ask your child's MindPlus teacher at least a fortnight in advance of this being needed.

### **Connecting with our MindPlus whānau**

We know how valuable it is to connect with other MindPlus families and we will help you to do this. This is through a shared MindPlus class parent contact list that you can opt into, and is confidential to MindPlus families. Keep a lookout for this in Hero **Community Feed** early each term about this.

We also come together at least once a term for some fun events! Some key events in the MindPlus calendar are:

- **Term One - Welcome Night** - Early in Term One, we invite parents and Contributing School teachers to an evening session at our units so you can meet your child's teacher and other parents
- **Term Two - Gifted Awareness Week Whānau Night** - We celebrate Gifted Awareness Week together in June each year with a super-fun evening of games and sharing for all the family and regular school teachers at each of our units
- **Term Three - Whānau Morning** - This is a great opportunity for families and regular school teachers to join in with a MindPlus session and for your child to show you their work and meet their MindPlus friends
- **Term Four - Expo and Graduation** - Our Expo and Graduation evenings are a wonderful way for our students to share and celebrate their learning with family and their regular school teachers, as well as for our year 8 students to celebrate graduating from MindPlus

Our **other regular** communications with our MindPlus whānau include:

- **Pānui** - Each term, we share a Pānui by email with families and schools across Aotearoa, keeping you up-to-date with what's happening with our programmes, students and gifted education more generally, and sharing events and opportunities
- **Facebook** - Our NZCGE [Facebook page](#) is not our main means of communicating with families but we use it to share interesting articles and learning as well as information for the wider community interested in gifted education around events and opportunities coming up

### **Learning more**

We've heard from families that you want to learn more about giftedness and about ways to support your child. We are committing to supporting you with that through:

- **Online learning modules** - short learning modules in [Teachable](#) that you can sign up for. These are free and on-demand. Start with our Introduction to MindPlus module and explore from there. If there is a specific learning module you would like to see, just let us know!

- **Regular parent learning opportunities** - we hold regular online parent learning sessions across each year. Keep an eye out for these in the **Community Feed** of Hero

## Our expectations of each other

We value our relationship with you and your family and we want to be clear on what you can expect of us, as well as what we expect of you and your child.

We have comprehensive policies on [privacy](#) and health and safety (including accidents, Covid precautions, bullying, managing behaviour etc). We can provide you with these on request and all policies will be online soon.

### Our commitment to you

#### *Learning*

We are committed to providing you with:

- A specialist gifted education programme for one day a week at one of our dedicated MindPlus OurSchool units over 38 weeks of the year
- A high-quality, experienced teacher with a strong commitment to gifted education and to their own ongoing professional learning
- A safe, inclusive, welcoming learning atmosphere
- Regular communication with you and your child's regular school teacher about how your child is doing and an ongoing invitation to talk with your child's teacher about their progress and how we can better support you and them

In some cases, circumstances outside of our control may limit our ability to provide these things (eg teacher sickness, Covid lockdowns, a drop in student numbers). In such circumstances, we will do our best to find a suitable solution and to keep you informed of the issue we're dealing with and what steps we are taking. This could include finding a high-quality reliever teacher or moving the class online.

#### *Health and safety*

As discussed above, we have comprehensive policies and procedures in relation to health and safety (including accidents, Covid precautions, bullying, managing behaviour etc). We are committed to working in accordance with them to ensure the safety of your child.

We will alert you promptly if we have any concerns about your child so that we can work together with you to find constructive solutions.

### Your commitment to us

As we work together to provide the best possible MindPlus experience for your child, we expect you will share any information or insights that will help us to support your child. You know your child best and sharing your wisdom benefits us all.

We expect you to keep us up to date on any changes that might impact on how your child is doing at

MindPlus.

We ask that you bring any issues you might be concerned about with your child or the MindPlus programme to us promptly so that we can work together constructively to address any issues.

### **Our expectations of your child**

At MindPlus, we expect our students to aim high and to challenge themselves across many dimensions - intellectual, social and emotional - and our MindPlus teachers will support them in this.

We expect MindPlus students to be open-minded and curious, to take on new challenges, to reach out of their comfort zone, and to make connections with their like-minded peers, and again, our MindPlus teachers will support them in this.

We expect our students to use internet-enabled devices appropriately and safely, in keeping with our policies and procedures around device use. Our MindPlus teachers will make these expectations clear and visible.

We expect our students to contribute to the safe, inclusive and positive learning environment that MindPlus provides, by behaving appropriately for the classroom, respecting their MindPlus teacher, peers and the environment, and working together to have a great experience with us.

## Financial Terms and Conditions, Fees and Scholarships

NZCGE is a non-profit organisation which operates on the basis of parent fees, Government funding and philanthropic donations. Our mission is to ensure that **all** gifted kids in New Zealand can access the specialist support they need to thrive. We support students whose families cannot afford to access this support through our Scholarship Fund and by developing a range of programmes at different price levels that families can access.

These **Financial Terms and Conditions** apply to all children attending MindPlus programmes. If we need to vary these Terms and Conditions, we will notify you before the start of a new year so that you have the opportunity not to continue on the new terms.

### What are the fees for MindPlus OurSchool?

**Term Fee:** MindPlus OurSchool costs families \$720 per term (incl GST).

**Application Fee:** There is a one-off Application Fee of \$30, payable when you accept your child's Place Offer at MindPlus.

**Annual Donation:** We also ask parents for a \$50 Annual Donation, whenever in the year you start. This donation is tax deductible and you can download your receipt from Hero, under **Finance**.

### How and when do I pay the fees?

**Term Fee:** Your termly invoice will be in Hero at least two weeks before the start of each term. You will get an email notification when the invoice is there. Payment must be made, or an automatic payment set up, **before** your child starts the term. Payment can be made directly from Hero or through electronic banking, and these details are included on the invoice.

**Application Fee:** This is payable through the link on the Place Offer Confirmation Form.

**Annual Donation:** We will provide an invoice for this at the start of each year, or when your child starts at MindPlus. You will get an email notification when this invoice is there. Payment can be made directly through Hero or through electronic banking, and these details are included on the invoice. You can download a receipt for tax purposes from Hero, or donate the rebate back to NZCGE using the link on the receipt.

### Do I get a refund for absences?

NZCGE is a not-for-profit organisation, but we do need to be financially viable. So that we can meet our financial commitments, we cannot give a refund if your child is away from MindPlus, for whatever reason.

### What if my child leaves during the year?

We understand that sometimes families want or need to leave MindPlus during the year for a variety of reasons. If MindPlus is not working out for your child and family, please have a chat with your child's MindPlus teacher to work out how we might make things work better. If together you decide that your child will be leaving, **you need to fill in our [Leavers Form](#)**. Please note that advising your child's MindPlus teacher or our office is not sufficient.

### What happens about fees if my child leaves?

In order to fulfill our financial commitments, fees are non-refundable. Our terms and conditions for fees are:

If your child is leaving MindPlus **within** the first two weeks of a term, you only need to pay for those two weeks, provided the [Leavers Form](#) has been completed before the start of week three of term.

If your child leaves MindPlus **after** the first two weeks of term, fill in the [Leavers Form](#). You will be liable for the fees for the full term.

If your child will be leaving MindPlus **at the end of a term**, fill in the [Leavers Form](#) before the end of that term, so that you are not charged for the term ahead.

When we receive your **Leavers Form** we will send you your final invoice.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances, please contact our CEO on [justine.munro@nzcge.co.nz](mailto:justine.munro@nzcge.co.nz) to discuss.

### **What if I can't pay the fees?**

We understand that sometimes families can experience financial difficulties in making payments. Please let us know as soon as possible if this is the case and we will work with you to establish a manageable payment plan to ensure any debt is paid.

If we are not able to agree on an acceptable payment plan with you, your child will not be able to continue at MindPlus until the debt is paid and we may need to refer the outstanding debt to a debt collection agency.

### **Where can I get help with fees?**

We know that these fees are significant for many families. If this is the case for your whānau, we suggest that you work first with your school to support your child to attend. Some of our schools support families with up to a 20% subsidy. Some families may also be able to approach iwi, churches or local trusts to find support.

If external support is unavailable and you would not otherwise be able to afford for your child to attend MindPlus, we do have a Scholarship Fund which is available to assist a small number of students who meet its criteria. We are working hard to raise more funds for the Scholarship Fund from trusts and foundations and individual donors. We ask families who can afford it to consider "buy one, give one" - providing a scholarship for a child who would otherwise not be able to attend MindPlus to join the programme alongside your child. You can find out more [here](#).

If we are not able to offer your child a scholarship immediately, you may like to consider enrolling them in one of our other online programmes. **MindPlus Online** costs \$340 per term and can be done at school, with your school's support. For more details on our range of programmes, click [here](#).

## How do I apply for a scholarship?

If you have not been able to find support through your school and you meet our criteria, you can apply for a full or part scholarship to MindPlus OurSchool from our Scholarship Fund. With a full scholarship, you will pay \$380 per year; with a part scholarship, you will pay \$1,520 per year.

We have a strategic focus on increasing the number of kids who are right now significantly under-represented in our programmes: girls, Māori and Pasifika students, and students from low decile schools. We also have a limited number of scholarships available for students with significant potential that may be unable to be fulfilled without specialist gifted education support.

### Criteria

To be eligible for our main scholarships, you and your child must meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

- Your child identifies as a girl or gender diverse
- Your child identifies as Māori and/ or Pasifika
- Your child attends a school in a lower socio-economic area

To be eligible for our exceptional circumstances scholarships, you will need to show only that:

- Your child has significant potential that will be unable to be fulfilled without the support of MindPlus OurSchool

You **also** need to show us that:

- Without the scholarship, your family could not afford for your child to participate in MindPlus. You'll need to provide a statement that outlines your family's financial position, and you are able to provide information, such as a family budget, to support your statement.
- You have made an effort to find other sources of financial assistance for your child, including by working with your school. You'll need to provide a statement that outlines the steps you have taken.

### Scholarship Application Form

Once you have a Place Offer for your child to attend, you are able to apply for a scholarship by filling out the online form [here](#).

Given that you have already shared extensive information on your child in your Application Form, we try to keep the Scholarship Application Form as brief as possible.

### Outcome

Once we have received your Scholarship Application Form, we will assess whether:

- You meet our criteria and
- We have a scholarship currently available that fits your child's needs

We will let you know the outcome as soon as possible. If you have been awarded a full or part scholarship or are receiving a subsidy, these amounts will already have been deducted from your invoice in Hero.

We are constantly working to build the number of scholarships available in our Scholarship Fund. We may not immediately have funding available but may offer to put your child on a waiting list for a scholarship.

If you are on the waiting list, you may like to explore other MindPlus options [here](#).

**How long is a scholarship for?**

If you are awarded a MindPlus Scholarship, this continues with your child for as long as they are at MindPlus. If your child leaves MindPlus but would like to return, you will need to re-apply for a Scholarship.

**Do you still have a financial subsidies scheme?**

We are no longer operating the subsidies scheme for new students. Existing students who were supported under the financial subsidies scheme in 2021 will continue to be supported on this basis for as long as they want to stay at MindPlus. If your child leaves MindPlus but would like to return, you will no longer have a subsidy and will need to apply for a Scholarship.