

International Student Handbook 2026



— TE KURA O TITITEA —
MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE



Welcome (Nau mai)

Kia ora, and welcome to Te Kura o Tititea Mount Aspiring College.

We are pleased to welcome young people from around the world to our school community. It does not matter who you are or where you come from, there is a place for you at Mount Aspiring College.

Our school is located in the town of Wānaka, a setting of outstanding beauty on the pristine waters of Lake Wānaka and surrounded by the spectacular alps of New Zealand's South Island. This unique natural environment inspires our students to learn and grow, opening our students' minds and inspiring their creativity as they enjoy a rich learning experience encompassing academic, artistic, cultural, sporting and outdoor pursuits.

We pride ourselves on providing a place for all students to grow and be proud of who they are.

We encourage our students to not only make the most of the academic opportunities available, but to get involved in all aspects of school life – arts, culture, service, sport and leadership.

Toitū te whenua, toitū te takata
The land is strong, the people are fulfilled.

Nicola Jacobsen
Principal | Tūmuāki

Our school vision

We strive to be an inclusive and sustainable learning environment, inspiring our learning community to be creative, curious, courageous and compassionate.



Our school values

Our values represent what we stand for as a school community and inform how we treat ourselves, each other and our environment.

Whanaungatanga

We create strong relationships that foster a unique sense of belonging and support for each other.

Manaakitanga

We respect each other and our environment. We act with integrity and are proud of ourselves and our school.

Tikanga

We understand and accept each other, and our behaviour reflects this. Our diversity is our strength.

Aroha

We act with empathy, compassion and kindness.

Ihi

We grow resilience through our determination and commitment to do our very best.

Kaitiakitanga

We strive to live sustainably by protecting our unique environment.

A-Z Guide

Accommodation

International students may not live alone or in accommodation shared with friends, even if they are over 18.

Designated caregivers

Some students stay with a family member or close family friend known to the student's parents. This person is called a designated caregiver. A designated caregiver can be approved by Mount Aspiring College after the completion of safety checks.

Homestay families

- Most international students are hosted with homestay families in our local community.
- While living in a homestay family, students can experience a 'kiwi' lifestyle.
- New Zealand families do not tend to have housemaids or house cleaners, so all members of the household are expected to help around the house.
- Students will have their own bedroom with a desk, as well as access to Wi-fi.
- Host families provide all meals.
- Students should expect to pay for personal grooming products such as shampoo, toothpaste and clothes, as well as mobile phone costs (but not Internet access).

Activities at school

- There are many ways to get involved in activities at school.
- We have seven student-led committees: [academic](#), [arts](#), [culture](#), [service](#), [sport](#), [sustainability](#), and [wellbeing](#).
- We offer a range of before-school, at-school, and after-school [activities](#).
- Read more about student life in our [college prospectus](#).

Arrival

Airport

The closest airport to Wānaka is Queenstown.

Entering New Zealand

- Everyone travelling into New Zealand must complete a declaration.
- The New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD) collects travel, customs, immigration and biosecurity information.
- It is free and can be done using this [online form](#) or using the NZTD app.
- When people go through Customs, they may need to declare some items that they are bringing into New Zealand. Read what must be declared on the [New Zealand Customs Service website](#).

Bus services

Ritchies operates a bus service from Queenstown Airport to Wānaka. Visit their website to [make a booking](#).

Attendance

International students are required to attend school each day of school term. If students are sick, their homestay carer should contact the college to report an absence via email: absence@mtaspiring.school.nz or phone: 03 443 0499.



Banking

New Zealand has a safe banking system with a full range of accounts and services available.

- Bank branches in Wānaka: Bank of New Zealand, Kiwibank, ANZ and Westpac.
- Opening an account: In New Zealand, opening an account is fast and easy, and most banks offer low-cost accounts for students. Most banks require an account holder to have a student or work visa valid for longer than six months. Some banks allow students to open a bank account from their home country.
- What to bring to open an account: Students are likely to need their passport, proof of their residential address in New Zealand, and proof that they are a student (such as a fees receipt or a letter of offer). Some banks may ask for the Tax Identification Number (TIN) from a student's home country and some may also ask for a New Zealand IRD tax number.
- Using a card: This is the most common way to pay in New Zealand, even for small purchases. Debit cards and EFTPOS cards (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale) can be used at most places to pay for goods and services electronically.
- ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines): These allow people to withdraw money 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are available in Wānaka's town centre and at supermarkets.

Credit cards: Cards are accepted for most purchases and services – please contact your provider for transaction fees.

Campus

- Mount Aspiring College is located in the town of Wānaka, a setting of outstanding beauty on the pristine waters of Lake Wānaka and surrounded by the spectacular alps of New Zealand's South Island.
- This unique natural environment inspires our students to learn and grow, opening our students' minds and inspiring their creativity as they enjoy a rich learning experience encompassing academic, artistic, cultural, sporting and outdoor pursuits.
- Our facilities include teaching spaces, performance studios for music, drama and dance, music practice rooms, a library, a wellbeing hub, sports fields, a gym for school assemblies and indoor sports, and landscaped outdoor spaces.
- The college campus is a short walk from the town centre and Lake Wānaka.

Canteen

- Students can buy food at school at morning tea (interval) and at lunch time.
- The canteen is located opposite the main administration building near the main entry to the gym.
- View the [canteen menu and order food on our website](#).

Climate

Winter

The winter season in Wānaka runs from the beginning of June to the end of August, with an average temperature of 10°C. Wānaka is located a short drive from two ski fields (Cardrona and Treble Cone) so there are lots of opportunities to ski, snowboard, snow shoe and enjoy our alpine environment.

Spring

The spring season in Wānaka runs from the beginning of September to the end of November, with an average temperature of 17°C. During spring, the days start to get longer and there are many walks and bike tracks that become accessible in the spring. Students can also enjoy spring skiing at our local ski resorts.

Summer

Long daylight hours mean you will have plenty of time to enjoy Wānaka trying out water sports on the lake or swimming at the lakeside beaches. The summer season in Wānaka runs from the beginning of December to the end of February, with an average temperature of 24°C.

Autumn

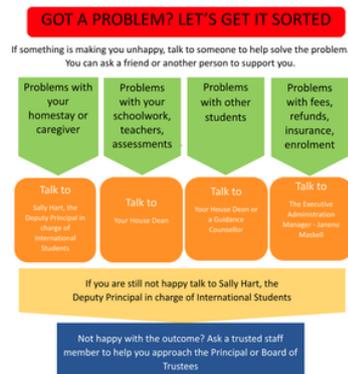
Autumn in Wānaka is very beautiful with lots of gorgeous colours and cooler days. Autumn is the ideal time to enjoy mountain biking and hiking and the many events and festivals that occur locally at this time, including the A&P Show and the biennial Festival of Colour. Autumn in Wānaka runs from the end of March to the end of May, with an average temperature of 15°C.

Code of conduct

All students are expected to conduct themselves according to the school values. The [International Student Code of Conduct](#) outlines how we expect students to conduct themselves at the college.

Complaints

The college has [clear guidelines](#) for dealing with complaints, including an [international students complaints policy](#), [complaint procedures policy](#), and [complaint procedures chart](#).



Computer facilities

- Students must have their own device to use for classroom learning and study at home. The use of devices for learning is known as [BYOD \(Bring Your Own Device\)](#).
- There are a number of devices you can borrow on a short-term basis if your own device is unavailable to use.
- Personal devices will have access to the high-speed, fibre network via campus-wide WiFi.
- Internet access is administered by our on-site IT staff, who can also provide limited support and advice for personal device issues.
- You will have access to printing facilities from your personal devices and can print either in the hostel or at the college.
- Please read about our approach to personal digital devices at the [SchoolDocs policies and procedures website](#) and by entering the user code: mtaspiring and password: success

Contact information

International team

Email: office@mtaspiring.school.nz

Useful contacts

Visit the [college's contact page](#).

View the [college's staff directory](#).

Daily school timetable

PERIOD	MONDAY - WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Manaaki (Whānau)	8.40am - 8.50am		
P1	8.55am - 9.55am	8.40am - 9.35am	9.05am - 10.05am
P2	9.55am - 10.55am	9.35am - 10.30am	10.05am - 11.05am
Tiaki (Whānau) or assembly		10.30am - 11.15am	
Interval	10.55am - 11.25am	11.15am - 11.40am	11.05am - 11.25am
P3	11.25am - 12.25pm	11.40am - 12.35pm	11.25am - 12.25pm
P4	12.25pm - 1.25pm	12.35pm - 1.30pm	12.25pm - 1.25pm
Lunch	1.25pm - 2.10pm	1.30pm - 2.10pm	1.25pm - 2.10pm
P5	2.10pm - 3.10pm	2.10pm - 3.10pm	2.10pm - 3.10pm

Driving

International students are not allowed to drive at all while studying at MAC, unless they live with their own parents.

Drugs and alcohol

It's important that international students are aware of the laws regarding drugs and alcohol in New Zealand, and the associated offences and penalties incurred through the misuse of these substances. For more information on drug and alcohol laws and penalties, please visit: [police.govt.nz/advice/drugs-and-alcohol](https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/drugs-and-alcohol)

Emergency contacts

For emergencies in Wānaka, dial 111 for Police, Fire, or Ambulance services.

For non-emergencies, you can call the Police on 105.

For medical emergencies or to access urgent care at the medical centre, call 03 443 0710.

For emergencies at school, please contact the office on 03 443 0499. For emergencies outside of school hours, please contact the Principal on 021 796 116.

English language

Students' English level will be assessed when they commence at the college, and will be assigned to classes in accordance with their English language level.

English language learning support

Our international students can access English language learning support through our dedicated English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teaching team. Students undergo testing when they arrive at the college so we can place them in the correct class to meet their individual English language learning needs.

Exams

Students are expected to fully participate in their chosen subjects, including sitting exams and completing assignments, regardless of how long they are enrolled at the college.

Fees and costs

Students are required to pay tuition fees as well as homestay, insurance and administration costs. Details of our international student fees are available [here](#).

Holidays

During the school holidays, the college is closed. Students can spend the holidays with their homestay family or travelling independently with the written permission of their parents.

Internet use

Homestay accommodation includes access to Wi-Fi.

Insurance

- International students must have appropriate and current medical and travel insurance while studying in New Zealand.
- Please ensure this document is translated into English for school administration.
- Students must provide evidence of medical and travel insurance before enrolment can be finalised. The insurance must cover the full length of time spent in New Zealand. New Zealand insurance cover will be accepted only. The school will keep a record of the insurance policy number and the type of cover provided.

Insurance cont.

- It is students' responsibility to understand and become familiar with the insurance policy terms and conditions, understand their coverage, any policy exclusions and when excess may apply.
- If you have any questions about your insurance cover, please contact the insurer directly.

Medical services

- There are three medical practices in Wānaka.
- If students seek medical attention from one of the local medical practices or a hospital, they may be required to pay at the time of their consultation. Students will then need to make a claim to be reimbursed for those costs.
- Please keep a copy of your medical notes and your receipt.

Mobile phones

- Our [mobile phone policy](#) states that no phones are permitted to be used from the time a student arrives at school until they leave school at the end of the day.
- No phones can be used at break times.
- Smartwatches can be worn at school but cannot be used like a phone. Notifications must be turned off.

Newsletter

The school newsletter is published weekly on a Friday and is emailed to students, parents and caregivers. Students can also read it on our [website](#).

Orientation

International students who commence at the college at the start of the school year will attend orientation with all new students, as well as an additional orientation for international students. Students who commence part way through the school year will attend an international student orientation.

Passport

- When students arrive in New Zealand, they must carry a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond their intended departure date.
- All passport information is available on the [Immigration New Zealand website](#).

Pharmacies

- Wanacare Pharmacy operates at the Medical Centre and can be used to fill prescriptions when students have been to the doctor.
- The Wānaka Pharmacy and Aspiring Pharmacy are both based in the town centre in Helwick Street and are convenient for students purchasing toiletries and personal items as well as filling prescriptions.

Policies

Our international student policies, including our International student policy, fee refund policy and changing enrolment status policy are available on our website.

Prospectus

View our international student prospectus on our website.

Public transport

- There is no public transport in Wānaka. However, there are a number of taxi and shuttle services students can use to travel around Wānaka, including [Yello!](#), [Tuk Tuk Taxi](#), and [Wana-Taxi](#). There is also the [Ritchies shuttle](#) which runs between Wānaka and Queenstown.

Smokefree policy

The school premises are (by law) smoke-free environments. Students are not permitted to smoke or vape, either on or off campus.

Social media

We use both Facebook and Instagram to connect with our students, staff, parents, caregivers and local community to share stories about the activities and achievements of our students and to build connections within our school and local community.

Staff

Deputy Principal, International Students

Sally Hart is our Deputy Principal, International Students
T: 03 443 0499
E: harts@mtaspiring.school.nz
Sally's office is located upstairs in the main administration building.

Deans

Every international student is assigned a dean. Our deans encourage our students to live by our school's values and support students in developing the personal and life skills they will need to be successful contributors to our community when they leave school.

Stationery

- Paper Plus located in town stocks stationery which can be ordered online or bought in-store.
- The Warehouse in Wānaka also stocks stationery which students can purchase online or buy in-store.
- The stationery lists can be viewed on the college's website.
- Some subjects require additional resources outside the standard stationery lists. These items are provided to students in class and an invoice is sent to parents or caregivers.

Student email

Students are issued with their own school email address when they start at MAC.

Student wellbeing and support

- Our students' wellbeing is central to our educational approach.
- We have a skilled team of professionals who provide support to our students.
- Our [school guidance counsellors](#) are trained professionals who provide mental health and wellbeing services to our students, their parents and families, and our staff. Our counsellors offer individual counselling and group/class work to assist with creating a positive and inclusive culture at our school.
- [Our deans](#) form strong relationships with students in their houses, act as advocates for students, and are responsible for supporting students' wellbeing and achievement.
- Our [24-7 youth workers](#) support our students through one-on-one mentoring, group activities, and by being a familiar face that students can seek out and talk to when they need it.
- Our Peer Support programme forges strong relationships between senior and junior students, where older students act as role models to provide guidance and support to those who are just beginning their high school experience.
- You can read more about [student wellbeing on our website](#).

Term dates

- The school year in New Zealand is divided into four terms.
- Each term lasts for between nine and 11 weeks and there are holidays in between.
- International students can commence at MAC at any time of the year.
- View our term dates [here](#), and find out what's happening on the [college calendar of events](#).

Tertiary providers

Universities

There is a range of tertiary education providers in New Zealand. MAC students attend universities in both the North and South Islands of New Zealand. You can learn more about [New Zealand's eight universities here](#).

Polytechnics

Polytechnics are regionally based organisations that provide practical, hands-on learning. They offer a range of qualifications from certificates and diplomas to degrees in fields such as engineering, healthcare, hospitality, information technology, and trades. The closest polytechnic to MAC is the [Otago Polytechnic](#). Learn more about [New Zealand's polytechnics](#).

Career pathways

Please visit the [careers pathways section](#) of our website to learn more.

Travel

- Students can travel within New Zealand with their homestay family provided they have written permission from their parents.
- Students who wish to travel outside of Wānaka without their homestay family or the school must obtain written permission from their parents, the school, and their homestay family.

Transport

- International students are not allowed to drive or own a vehicle while studying at the college.
- Students can use bikes, scooters or e-scooters to travel to school.
- Helmets must be worn when using bikes, scooters or e-scooters.



Visas

- When the college accepts an international student enrolment, we send a letter with an offer of place and an invoice.
- Once payment is received, the college will issue a receipt and a confirmed offer of place to help students finalise their visa applications.
- Students must book a return flight to secure a visa.
- Information about how to apply for a student visa can be found on the [Immigration New Zealand website](#).
- Students who transfer from another educational institution must apply for a new visa.
- If applying through an agent, the agent can assist with the application process directly.
- Please note that the school is required to report any student breaches of visa conditions to Immigration New Zealand. This can include working without work rights on their visa, and absenteeism from school except for genuine reasons.

What to bring

Spring/Summer (Oct - April)

Swimwear, sunhat, sunglasses, sunscreen, shorts, skirts, t-shirts, jumper/sweatshirt, light raincoat, good walking shoes.

Autumn/Winter (May - Sept)

Warm waterproof jacket, sweater/jumper, long trousers/jeans, long sleeve shirts, scarf, hat, gloves, good walking shoes.

Withdrawal

If a student needs to withdraw early from the college, they should speak to their dean who will support them. Students should submit a request in writing to the Deputy Principal, International Students at: harts@mtaspiring.school.nz

Working

- Students in Years 12 or 13 can apply for work rights.
- Students must seek permission from Mount Aspiring College and their parents before applying for work.
- Once they have permission to work, students can apply for a 'variation to conditions' to their visa enabling them to work up to 20 hours per week during term time, and full time during the school holidays.

Uniform

- All students must wear the college uniform and comply with the [uniform guidelines](#).
- The main uniform can only be purchased in-store or [online from the U-Shop](#) in Wānaka.
- The PE uniform can be purchased from the Apparel Studio in Wānaka.
- Our secondhand uniform shop is open on the first Wednesday of every month from 3:20pm – 4:00pm between the gym entrance and the canteen.
- All uniforms and personal belongings should be labelled.