

Central Regional Health School

<https://crhs.school.nz/>

of unique students – 663

Type of provider – School, public, special institution

Primary distance modality – Asynchronous

Background

With the advent of *Special Education 2000* in 1996, a process began that would eventually see the traditional hospital-based schools reformed into three health schools in 2000 (i.e., the Central Regional Health School, the Northern Health School, and the Southern Health School). This change reflected both a reality that modern medical practices were reducing the amount of time students actually spent in the hospital for treatment, as well as the reality that there are long-term illnesses which don't require hospital-based treatment. According to the *Special Education 2000: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy Final Report Summary – Phase Three* report, “the main priority for regional hospital health schools is to ensure that students with high health needs receive equitable education provision, irrespective of where they, or the health services they receive, are located” (Barwick, 2002, p. 42).

The students who are enrolled at the Central Regional Health School range in age from 5 to 19 years. At present, to be eligible for admission to any of the three health schools a student must have an (1) active treatment programme for their health condition or (2) be engaged in a health funded mental health programme with an active therapeutic programme. Additionally, students are also required to fall into one of these three categories:

- be in hospital, or recovering, for 10 school days or more;
- have more than six admissions to hospital in one year; or
- have repeated school absences due to illness, totalling more than 40 days in one year.

There are also cases where some students may also need support to return to school following an illness. In each instance, the student is required to provide a medical certificate from a medical practitioner specialising in their condition that details their diagnosis, treatment and the impact of these on attending school.

The Central Regional Health School serves students in the lower half of the North Island covered by Capital and Coast, Hutt Valley, Wairarapa, MidCentral, Whanganui and Hawke’s Bay District Health Boards. The Central Regional Health School also provides the education programme for students at the Oranga Tamariki residences, Te Au rere a te Tonga in Palmerston North and Epuni in Lower Hutt.

Governance

All three health schools are listed as “special institutions” in Schedule 2 as a part of the *Education and Training Act 2020*. The act requires that as state schools, special institutions must have a board. However, as a special institution the board is appointed by the Minister of Education. According to their Education Review Office (2019) report, “the Ministry of Education appoints board members with suitable experience and skills to uphold the special character of the school.” There is also a staff representative appointed to the board and a student representative, who is elected “by students (other than adult students) enrolled full-time in year 9 or above at... [the] special institution administered by the board” (Government of New Zealand, 2024a, p. 686). Further to the legislation, the “Hospital Schools Boards of Trustees Notice 2003,” as published in the 3 July 2003 edition of the *New Zealand Gazette*, specifically required that the board be constituted as follows:

- the principal of the school;
- one staff member elected by and from the staff of the school;
- up to five members appointed by the Minister of Education as the Minister considers appropriate; and
- up to four members co-opted by the board.

Additionally, “leaders and teachers regularly report to the board school-wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- “mathematics, reading and writing assessments from Years 1 to 10,
- NCEA unit standard and achievement standard attainment for Years 11 to 13, and
- transition goal information.” (Education Review Office, 2019)

Otherwise, the regulations governing special institutions are largely the same as any other state school, with the exception that a board administering a special institution may not combine with a board that administers other categories of state schools.

The structure, responsibility, and admission criteria for this school is documented in the *Guidelines and Protocols for Students with High Health Needs in Regional Health Schools* (Ministry of Education, 2018), which is updated from time to time by the Ministry in collaboration with the Principals of the three Regional Health Schools. These guidelines provide regulations around governance and management, information privacy and security policy, admission and enrolment requirements, attendance register recording requirements, school terms and holidays, individual education programme planning requirements, professional development days, school transport, and property requirements. Further, the board for the Central Regional Health School (2021) has approved a *Code of Conduct* that outlines standards of conduct and behaviour for all employees of the Central Regional Health School.

Resourcing

The Central Regional Health School is funded in a manner similar to all public schools.

Operational grants are recorded as revenue when the School has the rights to the funding, which is in the year that the funding is received.

Teachers salaries grants are recorded as revenue when the School has the rights to the funding in the salary period they relate to. The grants are not received in cash by the School and are paid directly to teachers by the Ministry of Education. (Central Regional Health School, 2022, p. 31)

In the case of all of the health schools both of these grants are based on an average of the notional roll for the previous 12 months. The roll is calculated using the average roll at the end of each week. For example, if during a four-week period the school had enrolment of:

Week 1 – 100 students

Week 2 – 80 students

Week 3 – 100 students

Week 4 – 120 students

The average roll would be set at 100 students. Once the average is calculated, a growth factor is applied based on the enrolment trend in recent years to give the notional roll to calculate funding. In the case of the teachers salaries grants, staffing is calculated at approximately 1:10.

Finally, the Central Regional Health School does receive some funds through KiwiSport. KiwiSport is a Government funding initiative to support students' participation in organised sport. According to their annual report, the funding was spent on sporting endeavours.

Programming

The Central Regional Health School provides a variety of programming based on the students' individual needs. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is developed for each student approved for admission to the Central Regional Health School. Depending on the student's age, location, and nature of their medical condition, the Central Regional Health School will typically provide learning opportunities in one of three ways:

1. from the student's home school, where the health school teacher facilitates and supports that student's reintegration back into their home school;
2. where the student is dual enrolled through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura) and the health school teacher is a local facilitator for that distance programming; and/or
3. developed and facilitated primarily by the health school teacher. (Winder, 2014)

It is not uncommon for an individual student to have some combination of these three models in place at a given time. It is also quite common for students to work on a reduced curriculum load. Regardless of the type of programming, the health school teacher may work with the student (a) on the ward in hospital, (b) at one of the 15 community support centres or classrooms maintained by the Central Regional Health School, (c) in a public place (e.g., local library), or (d) in the student's home. This programming is typically provided in one-hour time frames, two to three times each week.

With respect to instances where the student is dual enrolled through Te Kura and the health school teacher is a local facilitator for that distance programming, the roles and responsibilities of each of the two providers was outlined in a *Dual Provider Partnership Agreement between Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu and Regional Health Schools* (Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, 2019). As a part of this agreement, the regional health school agrees to ensure that the student has access to appropriate devices and level of connectivity that would allow them to access Te Kura's distance learning. From an instructional standpoint, the regional health school commits their teachers to:

- “provide the Te Kura teacher with any updated learning needs during the academic year, including their current abilities, skill level, strengths and interests;
- ensure your student has adequate support to complete learning tasks, including marking their work and giving immediate feedback on their achievements;
- provide evidence of monthly engagement in each enrolled subject. This may be relevant parts of booklets posted/scanned and emailed to the teacher, photos, drawings, video, audio and other digital files; and
- complete the assessment page for each resource, including student's comments where relevant.” (p. 8).

Teachers at Te Kura are committed to:

- “ensure that each student has an individualised programme designed to support your students' learning goals, in collaboration with your school; and
- provide ongoing advice and guidance, and digital and non-digital resources as required.” (p. 7)

Additionally, the responsibility for all assessments rests with the Te Kura teachers, as supervised by the teachers from the regional health school. It should be noted that the most recent version of this document is more generic and applies to all dual enrolment partners – not just the regional health schools (see Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, 2023).

Activity

According to the *Education Counts* website, the school enrolment was described as so.

Level	Total
Year 10	2
Year 11	1
Year 12	10
Year 13+	11
Total	24

These figures included 9 students of Māori descent enrolled. In terms of the actual nature of enrolment, the Central Regional Health School reported that in the 2023 school year the school enrolled a total of 888 unique students. Their lowest weekly enrolment was 214 unique students, and their highest weekly enrolment was 315 unique students.

The Central Regional Health School indicated that 527 of those 888 unique students were dual enrolled in their home school. Additionally, there were 225 students enrolled in Te Kura on a supplemental basis (i.e., enrolled in one or more courses, but not on a full-time basis).

Finally, there were 264 unique students who were not dual enrolled in their home school, but who were directly enrolled in the Central Regional Health School. Note that this figure includes those enrolled in their Tu Au Rere A Te Tonga Youth Justice and their Epuni Care and Protection brick-and-mortar programming. It also includes 43 unique students who were enrolled in their Community Health programming.

To summarise:

- total enrolment: 888 unique students
 - lowest weekly enrolment: 214 unique students
 - highest weekly enrolment: 315 unique students
- enrolment based on programming
 - dual enrolled in a home school: 527 unique students
 - dual enrolled in Te Kura: 225 unique students
 - directly enrolled in the Central Regional Health School: 264 unique students
 - enrolled in community health: 43 unique students