



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Mentor an aspiring or beginning principal

How to register as a mentor

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Thank you for taking the first step to register as a mentor.

To be successful, aspiring and beginning principals rely on having a significant and diverse pool of experienced principal mentors to match with.

Support school leadership by becoming a mentor

Experienced principals have always played a vital role in supporting and guiding others in their school communities. As part of the Aspiring and Beginning Principal Programmes, we're inviting current and recent principals to register to become mentors - guiding, supporting and inspiring the next generation of school leaders.

The beginning principal programme is available to all new principals in their first two years of principalship and the one-year aspiring principal programme takes up to 200 participants each year.

Eligible current and recent principals can register to become a mentor. You can register at any time during the year, although all aspiring and most beginning principals will be matched early in the calendar year going forward.

Eligibility to register as a mentor

To be eligible to register as a mentor, you:

- Must have at least six years* principal experience in New Zealand state or state-integrated schools or kura (recent principals must have held a full-time permanent principal role in the last three years).
- Can confirm your school, or the last school you were a principal of, has not been under statutory intervention while you were principal. (Extenuating circumstances e.g, you took over a school under statutory intervention, should be included in the registration form).
- Can be available to mentor for the next one to two years (any planned sabbatical or extended leave should be included in the registration form).
- Have the support of your Board to become a mentor if you are a current principal.
- Are prepared to complete provider-led onboarding and mentor training.
- Must be endorsed by a referee.

*If you have five years' experience, we recommend you apply now and let us know when your 6th anniversary is.

The mentor role

Mentoring allows you to reflect on your own leadership journey, share your experiences and help build a pipeline of prepared, confident, and culturally responsive leaders for our schools and kura.

As a mentor you'll be matched to provide guidance, challenge, and encouragement to an aspiring or beginning principal. This is a unique opportunity to contribute to system-wide improvement while deepening your own professional practice – and a chance to make a lasting difference in the leadership journey of others.

Both the aspiring and beginning principal programmes are designed to combine structured learning, collaboration, and personalised support to connect theory with practice. The programmes are developed around three complementary modes of learning, with a key feature being one-to-one mentoring by an experienced principal.

Mentor programme selection and programme participant matching

Current principals can mentor one programme participant and can register:

- to mentor an aspiring principal (up to a 1-year engagement)
- to mentor a beginning principal (up to a 2-year engagement), or
- indicate they have no particular preference.

Recent principals cannot mentor aspiring principals as programme participants will need to have opportunities to shadow their mentor. Once registered, recent principals can agree to mentor up to three beginning principals.

Programme participant matching will be undertaken by the programme providers. Information provided in your mentor registration form and information provided by programme participants, will be used to make the mentor / participant match.

Matching depends on multiple factors. Examples include school setting, location, individual skill profiles and cultural needs, to ensure appropriate support for the aspiring or beginning principal.

Mentor allowance and payment

Current principals: A mentor allowance of \$5,000 per annum has been agreed in the collective agreements covering all primary, secondary and area school principals. Principals covered by these collective agreements, or an individual employment agreement reflecting the recent agreements, will be eligible for the allowance. The allowance will be paid while you are active mentor in either of the programmes.

Recent principals: Payment to recent principals will be made directly by the programme provider.

Please note: where travel is required, the Ministry will not be reimbursing associated costs.

Expectations of mentors

As a mentor of an aspiring or beginning principal, you will build a relationship of trust with them; one that is respectful, supportive, and focused on their growth. You'll be expected to meet regularly, to provide structured conversations that combine leadership insights, personal experiences, and practical strategies. Together, you'll explore their leadership identity, strengths, and readiness, working through challenges and decision-making moments along the way.

Mentoring sessions can take place online, by phone, or in person, whatever works best for you and the aspiring | beginning principal you are matched with. There's no expectation to travel for every session, noting where travel is required, costs are not reimbursed. Flexibility is key, and you will both agree on the most practical and accessible way to connect.

The programme providers have set out a schedule of activities and events, including induction expectations for mentors. Additional information for mentors about the aspiring and beginning principal programmes is available on the Education Workforce website:

[Mentor Update | Education Workforce](#)

Steps to register as a mentor

The registration process to become a mentor has 3 steps:

1. Seek approval of your Board to become a mentor*.
2. Complete the online registration form.
3. Be endorsed by a referee.

*Recent principals do not need to complete this step.

Before starting your registration, we recommend the following:

- Read the programme information for mentors so you know the format and time-commitments of both programmes.
- Speak with your school Board and secure their endorsement.
- Confirm and contact the person who will be your referee.
- Think about the specific skills and experience you should share for matching with a programme participant.

School Board support

Current principals will need to provide evidence that your school Board is supportive of you becoming a mentor. You can upload one of the following as part of your registration:

1. An excerpt of the Board motion confirming support (not full minutes).
2. A signed letter from your presiding member or their delegate.
3. An email from your presiding member.

A PDF of your support document should be uploaded as part of completing the registration form. Please scan a copy of your support document and save as a PDF or save the email as a PDF. (Please name file using: 'MoE number - School Name' before uploading).

If you don't have your support document available when you complete your registration, it can be forwarded later. Please note however, your registration as a mentor won't be complete until we have received it.

[How to register as a mentor](#)

A draft letter | email template to support this request is available on the Education Workforce mentor webpage in the popular resources section:

[insert link when page updated]

A note about meeting additional costs: it is important that your Board understand that where travel is required, the Ministry will not be reimbursing associated costs.

Confirm your referee

All mentors are required to provide a referee to endorse their registration. Your referee will need to complete the mentor endorsement form. You will need to choose a referee (another current or recent principal) who can attest to your suitability to become a mentor.

You will need to share your **Ministry of Education (MoE) number** with your chosen referee. They will need it as part of the referee endorsement process as your MoE number is used to link your registration and their endorsement.

You may also want to share the following link which details what they need to do as your referee:

[Instructions for referees – becoming a mentor | Education Workforce](#)

Specific skills and experience you should share

The registration form includes three longer form responses about your principal, leadership and mentoring skills and experience. Please read the [completing your registration form](#) section of this guide to get an idea of the information you should provide.

You may want to consider drafting these responses before completing the online form.

Registration acceptance

Your registration will be reviewed by the Ministry to confirm eligibility and completeness, and that a referee has endorsed you. We are not assessing the information you provide.

We will contact you if:

- you do not meet the eligibility criteria
- we have not received evidence of Board support (current principals only), or
- we have not received your endorsement.

Once your registration is complete, we will advise you that your information has been passed to the programme providers who take responsibility for matching mentors with programme participants.

Completing the online registration form

You will be asked to complete a privacy statement, eligibility check and to provide contact details for you and your referee, along with useful, contextual information to support your matching with a programme participant.

You will also be asked about which programme you want to be involved with and what regional, city, community you are able to support.

As part of the eligibility check you will be asked to upload evidence of your Board support.

Principal and leadership career summary

You will then be asked to provide three more detailed responses covering:

Principal career highlights: a summary of your career as it relates to your leadership experience. This could include experience outside of education if appropriate.

Areas of expertise as a principal: features of your experience and skills which may be relevant to who you mentor. Focus on describing the context of your roles.

Examples of what you could include:

- Educative specialisation (e.g., Māori Medium or Kaupapa Māori education).
- Context or setting specific expertise (e.g., Integrated schools, rural, area schools, teaching-principal roles).
- Qualifications and experience other than education (e.g., legal, financial qualifications).
- NZSL/sign language capability.

Mentoring & coaching experience and development: outlining your mentoring and coaching experience with school leaders, and any related professional learning.

Examples of what you could include:

- Who you've mentored or coached: e.g. in-school leaders, early-career teachers.
- The type of support provided: one-to-one coaching, group facilitation, critical friend conversations.
- Your professional learning: workshops, accredited coaching courses, peer-learning networks, self-directed study.
- Qualifications you've undertaken to build your mentoring and coaching capability.

All three responses should be no more than 250 words and bullet points can be used.

Additional disclosure and declaration

To complete your registration, you will be required to confirm you have disclosed any information that may impact the aspiring and beginning principal programmes and a declaration confirming that:

- The information supplied is accurate.
- That you have met the eligibility criteria, including the support of your Board to be a mentor.

There will also be an opportunity to include any additional information you would like to share about your registration.

Useful links and contact us

Go to the become a mentor webpage:

[Mentor an aspiring or beginning principal | Education Workforce](#)

Go to mentor registration form:

[Mentor registration form](#)

Go to programme information for mentors

[Go to webpage](#)

Template for Board approval

[Go to webpage](#)

Mentor referee guidance

[Go to webpage](#)

Contact us if you have questions, we're here to help:

principal.pathway@education.govt.nz