Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Poipoia ngā ākonga kanorau ā-roro

New learning opportunities for 2027

November 2027

Poipoia ngā ākonga kanorau ā-roro offers funded professional learning and development opportunities for eligible support staff who work directly with neurodiverse learners.

Poipoia ngā ākonga kanorau ā-roro was established following collective bargaining between NZEI and the Ministry.

Teacher aides, support staff, kaiārahi i te reo and therapists who are on the *Support Staff in Schools'* or *Kaiārahi i te reo and Therapists' Collective Agreement* and working directly with neurodiverse learners are eligible to participate. The learners can be at primary or secondary level.

Approved participants can attend one learning opportunity free of charge and are reimbursed for their learning time.

Schools are reimbursed for the participant's learning time and travel and accommodation costs of up to $500 (terms apply). Schools | kura apply on behalf of eligible staff to participate in a learning opportunity.

About the learning opportunities

These learning opportunities are designed to fit the different needs and schedules of support staff. Options will:

- suit a range of experience levels
- be delivered through a variety of formats
- vary in the time commitment required
- cover a range of topics within the special-learning areas, including:
    - trauma-informed practice
    - assistive technology and accessible learning (practical classroom use)
    - sensory processing and regulation support
    - autism, ADHD and executive function support
    - specific learning disorders (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia)
    - speech language and communication needs, including stuttering and childhood

apraxia of speech
    - motor and coordination needs (developmental coordination disorder and dyspraxia)
    - behaviour and self-regulation support (proactive and function informed).

The fund is available until 31 December 2028 or until the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first.

The full list of opportunities will be available in March 2027 through the Education Workforce website.

Eligibility and considerations for schools

Teacher aides, support staff, kaiārahi i te reo and therapists who are on the *Support Staff in Schools'* or *Kaiārahi i te reo and Therapists' Collective Agreement* and working directly with neurodiverse learners are eligible to participate. The learners can be at primary or secondary level.

When applying, schools | kura must confirm that each support staff named in the application meets the eligibility criteria.

Applications for approved learning opportunities open on 17 March 2027. Schools | kura wishing to have staff to participate should consider:

- which staff members are eligible
- when is the most suitable time for them to do the course.

When nominating staff, schools | kura will be responsible for:

- completing and submitting applications
- providing any required eligibility verification and declarations
- managing learning time payments and related administration
- supporting staff to undertake the approved learning during the agreed participation period.

The application process and reimbursement

Poipoia ngā ākonga kanorau ā-roro is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Schools | kura wishing to apply for a learning opportunity for their staff must follow these steps:

1. School | kura and the eligible staff member work together to decide which learning opportunity the school | kura will apply for.
2. School | kura completes an online application form on behalf of their staff member.
    a. If there are travel and accommodation requirements, these must be verified by the school in the application. Please note the conditions regarding travel and accommodation outlined below in step 6.
3. The Ministry processes the application.

4. Once approved, school | kura and/or approved participant enrol with the learning provider.
5. Participant completes learning opportunity.
6. School | kura pays participants for their learning time and, if applicable, travel and accommodation.
    a. Payment for learning time is to the maximum number of hours specified for the learning opportunity.
    b. Travel and accommodation payment is in accordance with Section 16 in the *Support Staff in Schools'* or Section 12 in the *Kaiārahi i te reo and Therapists' Collective Agreements*. Participants should save their receipts as proof of costs.
        i. As stated in the collective agreements referenced above, reasonable travel and accommodation costs of up to $500 are reimbursed if the staff member:
            1. is located more than 100km from a population centre of more than 20,000 people, or
            2. has to travel to a specialist course that is only delivered in limited locations that are at least 100km from the staff member's home.
    c. Schools are encouraged to review the following guidance from the Auditor-General — Part 5: Expenses when travelling — The Audit Office
7. School | kura requests reimbursement from the Ministry using an online form available on our website. This can be done only when the participant has completed the course.
8. The Ministry reimburses approved claims through Pourato monthly.

Key dates

Below are indicative key dates and are subject to change.

- **3 March** — All relevant information will be sent to schools and peak bodies. This includes:
    - the list of learning opportunities
    - a learning opportunity guide
    - the link to the application form.
- **17 March —** Online applications open. The Ministry will acknowledge receipt of an application and usually advise applicants of the outcome within 4-5 working days of acknowledging the application.

Contact us

If you have any questions, we're here to help.

Webpage: Poipoia te kākano and Poipoia ngā ākonga konorou ā-roro | Education Workforce

Email: workforce.pld@education.govt.nz