

Questions and Answers for Whānau re-joining with Whānau Manaaki

Information for Parents:

Possible zoom option for community meetings – this could happen if requested

1. What will the cost of the merger be like rebranding etc and where will the money come from for this?
My understanding is rebranding etc. will not happen straight away it will evolve over time as things need renewed or on a cycle as it would come out of the Whānau Manaaki budget that they will set on improvements and be part of the work streams that there support office set. Ultimately this would all happen after the merger.
2. Will there still be a go to person in the south Otago area? Say above the head teachers, Like an area manager or something like that?
There will definitely be a satellite office in South Otago and there will be a senior teacher and an office person and or people based from this office. So in short yes there will be a person/people to go to at the local level.
3. What will the process be for teachers and pay rises for them? I just want to make sure the teachers are all paid appropriately and given increases as required/ deserved
The great thing here is all kindergarten teachers across Aotearoa are on a National contract so matter who they work for or where they are in the country they are all on the same contract and rates of pay and working conditions. The contract is negotiated at a national level and not at an individual level so everyone's changes to terms and conditions are negotiated as a collective.
4. How many will be/ are on the board? As if we only have two seats and it's a big board I'm just worried we may get lost and not much influence.
By having 2 on the board from South Otago we have more representation than any other community under Whānau Manaaki as their Board is comprised of elected members (who are either parents/caregivers of children), staff representatives and the Chief Executive. The Board also has the ability to appoint additional members who have specific skills. They currently have 10 board members. But like our board their board members are not there to represent their individual communities, they are there to represent all children and families that attend kindergarten and do what is best for kindergartens.

5. What does Whānau Manaaki structure look will the structure look like and what will the structure look like and how will they make decisions moving forward?

There is a visual of Whānau Manaaki's structure on the website so you can see how the support office is set up. They do see themselves as the support office behind teachers to ensure they have the support to do what the need to do every day. What would change in the structure if the merger goes ahead is that we would have 2 board members on the board. They set the strategic direction and set the policies and procedures and approve budgets etc. So we will have a voice in these decisions. We will also have a Kaitiaki group made up of local people from each kindergarten who will be a reference group for the leadership team to engage with to run ideas past and to see what the thinking is from a local perspective.

6. Have you talked to other Associations that have joined and what was their feedback?

Yes, the teachers got to talk to a group of teachers from the newest Association to join with Whānau Manaaki – Whanganui and from the feedback I got it sounded a very positive meeting but I was not part of this so cannot talk directly to it.
Feel free to ask your teaching team directly on how this went and how they felt about the information they received.

7. Did Whanau Manaaki approach us to join them?

No, they had been supporting the office team through some tricky times as in Covid and what we were dealing with through this time as well as some specialised employment related issues and through these interactions we could see that they were a like-minded Association with children and their whānau at the centre of all decisions. They have very similar values to our Association and also have a strong commitment to preserving kindergartens in Aotearoa and an active member in the Kindergartens Aotearoa journey. It was looking at this as the next step towards Kindergartens Aotearoa for both parties.

8. Would there just be 2 reps from the South Otago region on their board and how will they be chosen?

Yes, we can have up to 2 representatives from our region and moving forward in the future they will be chosen the same way as other board members are chosen for the Whānau Manaaki board. You will have to be nominated for the board from our region and then all parents will get to vote on who will represent them at the board level. However In the short term between AGM's and until we settle into our new way of working together, I would imagine it will be 2 representatives from our current board as they

have the most up to date knowledge of how we currently operate and what our journey is and where we were going as an organisation so it would make sense for them to remain in place to ensure a smooth transition takes place with a sharing of knowledge from both sides.

9. What is the structure of He Whānau Manaaki?

We have attached an outline of their structure in this file for you to see the visual representation. They have a CEO which is the chief Executive Office who works directly with the Senior Leadership Team made up of the leaders of each area of the organisation and they are in charge of the day to day operations for the kindergartens.

We have also attached the visual of the makeup of the current South Otago kindergartens frame work for reference.

10.What are the benefits to He Whānau Manaaki – why do they want us?

Like our Board, He Whānau Manaaki are committed to the future of “Kindergartens” in Aotearoa and are committed advocates that together we will be stronger. They have been active members of the Kindergarten Aotearoa journey from the onset and see this as the first step in all of the participating Associations coming together. They are also committed to ensuring that all children get access to a quality ECE service in their area and that is kindergarten.

Another advantage is when advocating for kindergarten at the Government level they can say they have kindergartens throughout Aotearoa, nestled in many differing communities so have a larger outreach for children and families.

11.How do we ensure a voice in the decision making process for our communities when part of a bigger organisation?

We can have up to 2 members from this area on the Whānau Manaaki Board so have a direct link when setting the strategic direction of the organisation. Also each community can have representation on the Kaitiaki group (this will possibly start with the current board but can be added to and could have more than one person) This group will be a reference group for the Whānau Manaaki leadership team to directly liaise with to get feed in from our communities. Ultimately, the Whānau Manaaki board and leadership team make decisions after consulting with the communities.

12.The name Whanau Manaaki – where has this come from?

Whānau Manaaki was formally known as Wellington kindergarten Association but when Remutaka Association merged with them they looked for a name that encompassed the growing area that they represented. Lady Tilly Reedy and Sir Tamati Reedy who were the experts involved in the

writing of Te Whāriki (the national early childhood curriculum document) – who are widely respected academics in the EC sector - gifted the name He Whānau Manaaki which translates to caring family.

13.If a vote is past at the Extraordinary Meeting, then when will it happen and we become of He Whānau Manaaki?

There will be a transition period where everything gets transferred over to the Whānau Manaaki as in becoming licensees of the kindergartens, employers of the staff etc. but the aim is by the 31st of March or 1st April 2023.

14.So if it is this time frame what happens with support for the first term of next year?

If there is a vote to join He Whānau Manaaki and we are then in the process of the transitional stage – then all support services from their office in Wellington will be accessible to our kindergartens and support will kick in straight away as we work on the administration stuff in the background.

15.Who will own the community assets and what would happen if the kindergarten was to close?

The Whānau Manaaki Board would become the custodians of the assets just like the current board is the custodians of the assets on behalf of the community currently. (Remember we can have up to 2 representatives on the board.)

Also if the kindergarten was to close then like any community owned not for profit organisation the assets have to be offered to a like-minded organisation and the community would be consulted on this. The great news is that He Whānau Manaaki has never closed a kindergarten yet and their ethos is to grow the services across Aotearoa.

16.Do you see any concerns in regards to joining He Whānau Manaaki?

I had one thing that worried me and that was around succession planning as I absolutely have faith in Mandy’s leadership (current CEO) and her personal and professional philosophies around the importance of kindergarten but also around her integrity in living the values of the organisation and expecting all employees to do the same. My worry was if she left in the near future would these like-minded values remain central I in the organisation. I asked this question to the operations manager when I was up in Wellington and that is when Amy showed me their operational structure where Mandy is one of 5 within the leadership team that is responsible for making the day to day decisions on behalf of the organisation. So if she left the rest of the leadership team can continue the journey being true to the values to the organisation as they have been party to the “why” that sits behind the process. Amy also showed me the decision making matrix where they use a

frame work when making a decision that clearly brings them back to the focus of the organisation and that is “Does this benefit Children”.
With this answer I felt confident that we were in safe hands now and in the future as they have a mechanism in place to future proof who they are and what they believe in.

17. Was the South Otago Kindergartens Board decision to move the motion to join He Whanau Manaaki unanimous?

Yes, it was. In our Constitution that we are governed by, it stipulates that all big decisions made by the Board have to be unanimous. This is to ensure we are all on the same page. The Board has done a lot of investigation and put a lot of thought into this and is not something that we take lightly and it has been part of our strategic direction for many years.

18. Why are we not going with an Association closer to us

In 2017 and 2018 we did investigate the option of joining a local Association but for various reasons they were not deemed the best fit for our organisation. Also moving forward the Board is committed to the bigger picture on Kindergartens Aotearoa to strengthen and grow Kindergarten and unfortunately our local neighbouring Associations do not share this vision

19. Will kindergartens fundraising money stay with the kindergarten?

Yes – all money raised and allocated to each separate kindergarten will stay tagged to that kindy.

20. Who runs Kindergartens Aotearoa?

Kindergartens Aotearoa is made up of 8 like-minded associations NZ wide who came together to create one kindergarten association in NZ – although Covid has put out a lot of the planning around this – associations are still working towards one big entity. Whanau Manaaki and South Otago kindergartens are still a large part of the working group and both have the same goal of seeing this come to fruition. For the time being other associations have had to put aside this planning and focus on the recovery from how Covid impacted their services and communities.

21. Will holiday dates still stay the same?

There will be no change to how and when your kindergarten is open. Changes will only be looked at when the community has a need, this is the same way South Otago Kindergartens has operated for years consulting and communicating with each individual community to make sure you have a voice and we are offering services applicable to your needs.

22. How are we going to look after teachers

Kindergarten Teachers are covered by collective agreement across New Zealand so conditions of employment will not change and nothing will change other than teachers being employed by WMK (Whānau Manaaki).

Nothing will be taken away – only things will be added which will give teachers the opportunity to focus on teaching & learning with increased support to do this.

23. Why merge?

To be able to strengthen and grow kindergarten in South Otago, currently we haven't got the capacity within the office to do this.

To give teachers more background support to be able to concentrate on their role with children and families. E.g. compliance, building maintenance, IT support and HR support etc. Also to give the teachers more support in their role with a senior teacher who can focus on just the teaching and learning. More exposure to professional learning opportunities and a wider network to learn with and alongside.

24. What will the changes mean benefits/impacts

The changes will be the big picture stuff. Engine at the back will be different but what happens in kindergarten daily will not change – gradual change will be improvements to support for teaching teams as they can access specialist help in different areas. Help to attract teachers to our rural communities.

25. Will fees change and what happens to the money each kindergarten has gathered out of fundraising

No changes to current fees, Fundraising – all fundraising already accumulated and in the future will stay with the kindergartens

26. Who pays for travel for group Professional learning in Wellington – WMK pays for that?

Whole staff conference – all staff travel/ accommodation covered. Leadership Hui -HT's would attend and this will be all paid for.

27. What will be different for my 1 year old who comes in a few years time to the same kindergarten?

Enhanced environments, teachers increased knowledge due to access to PLD, possible additional staff (KBS) may even have more kindergartens that have babies if communities want it, more opportunities to meet community needs as will be bigger and have the expertise to do this.

28. Will the license change and or hours and model operating?

initially the name on the kindergarten license will change but the models and hours will remain as they are and will only be adapted if changes needed by the communities and in consultation with communities

29. What happens to staff?

Everyone will keep their positions and in kindergartens nothing will change. In the office there will be discussions around the roles the staff want to take on within the organisation but still working from a local office.

30. How will we maintain the rural connection and our own identity

All kindergartens across both Associations are unique and this will not change as they respond to their localised curriculum and respond to their individual communities' aspirations for their children. Also we will maintain a Kaitiaki group of people made up of representation of each community (just like the current board) - that will be a reference group to feed into the support office. This will maintain the integrity of the kindergartens in South Otago. We will also hold two positions on the Whānau Manaaki board. An office will remain in the local area.