



# Preschool Handbook

2025



SAMUEL  
MARSDEN  
COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Whānau

*I wish you, your tamaiti (child) and wider whānau a warm welcome to Marsden Preschool.*

Marsden Preschool provides an environment for optimal learning and teaching. We promote attitudes and values that will prepare our tamariki to lead happy, stimulating, useful and fulfilled lives.

We encourage a love of learning in all our students and challenge them all to reach their potential. This is a theme that recurs in educational dialogue the world over and it is what is foremost in our minds at Marsden.

We promote and celebrate individual excellence as well as a team spirit, within a whānau atmosphere.

You will find in this booklet an outline of the Preschool's values, goals and organisation. It highlights relevant aspects of the curriculum and also provides general information that you will require.

We look forward to working with you to make sure your child's time at Marsden Preschool is a fun and fulfilling one. If you have any questions please come and talk to me or send me an email.

**Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu**

*Adorn the bird with feathers, and it will fly*

Warm regards

**Dr Helen McConnell**

**Head of Preschool**

P: (04) 476 8707 Ext 840

E: [helen.mcconnell@marsden.school.nz](mailto:helen.mcconnell@marsden.school.nz)

Marsden School's vision:

**Manu Rere Ao** > *The bird that flies the world*

Achieving this vision involves laying the foundation for lives of meaning, accomplishment and genuine happiness.

Our values:

**Hiranga**  
*Excellence*

**Manahau**  
*Resilience*

**Auahatanga**  
*Creativity*

**Oha**  
*Service*

**Whanaungatanga**  
*Respectful relationships*

Our students are supported to make the most progress possible from their starting point. Being and doing their best is how we define excellence and what it takes to uphold our motto *Ad Summa – Aim for the Highest*.

# > Marsden Preschool Philosophy

## 2025



### Marsden Preschool whānau

Our Preschool tamariki, parents, caregivers and wider whānau, kaiako (teachers), the wider Marsden and students' local communities make up our Preschool whānau. Our tamariki bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, values and beliefs from their homes and communities; parents and whānau have different aspirations and expectations for them.



### Hauora – Wellbeing

The Marsden Preschool whānau believes that our tamariki's health and wellbeing is paramount. We will ensure they feel they belong, in a safe, stable environment that supports their self-worth, identity and confidence alongside their emotional regulation and self-control.





## Learning and growing

Marsden Preschool's learning programmes are tamaiti-centred and holistic, created within the national Early Childhood Curriculum, Te Whāriki. Our programmes are fun and foster a love of learning; creating lifelong, capable, competent and confident learners, ready for their world beyond Preschool. Our future focused teaching and learning focuses on:

- ▶ warm and positive relationships
- ▶ belonging and keeping safe from harm
- ▶ resilience and coping strategies
- ▶ communication: verbal, non-verbal, print and digital
- ▶ identifying emotions (own and others)
- ▶ supporting strengths and interests
- ▶ exploration of the environment
- ▶ independence
- ▶ wonder and curiosity
- ▶ critical thinking.



## Aroha

We are committed to and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This includes maintaining the principles of participation, partnership and protection. We will weave te ao Māori through our teaching and we will honour and respect all cultures within Marsden Preschool. A partnership between parents, whānau and kaiako is the most effective way to provide a quality education for our tamariki. Tamariki and kaiako will work together to protect and nurture each other, our various cultures, values and beliefs and our natural living environment for which we are kaitiaki.

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*“We believe that the wellbeing of each child is interdependent with the wellbeing of teachers, parents and whānau. Children learn and develop best when their culture, knowledge and community are affirmed and when the people in their lives help them to make connections across settings. It is important that teachers develop meaningful relationships with whānau and that they respect their aspirations for their children, along with those of hapū, iwi and the wider community.”*

Ministry of Education, 2017

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Our Preschool staff are happy to assist you in any way. Please contact us on 476 8707 or via email if you have any queries. Please see our contact details on page 11.



# Curriculum

## What will my tamaiti learn?

In a safe, secure and positive environment, our aim is to develop the potential of each tamariki, nurture their confidence and promote a lifelong love of learning.

We recognise, notice and respond to tamariki interests, and involve them in deciding on our major explorations each term.

Each term we conduct an inquiry focus, which extends on tamariki group interests. Inquiry supports tamariki to engage and wonder, explore, discover, explain, share and reflect. This investigation is conducted through focused activities and independent exploration.

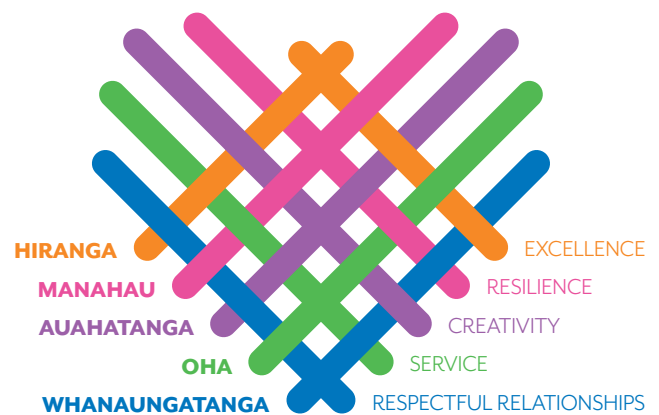
Play is greatly valued as a way tamariki will learn about themselves as individuals and also discover the necessary skills of co-operation.

Maths, Science and Digital Technology exist in our everyday environment. Tamariki experience an environment where they develop working theories to make sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds. Tamariki learn through play – by doing, by asking questions, by interacting with others, by setting up theories or ideas about how things work and trying them out, and by purposeful use of resources. A strong focus is using communication skills, with group time, stories, discussions and conversations. We encourage tamariki to share their experiences.

Language grows and develops in meaningful contexts, such as dramatic play, rhyme and music. These are valuable methods of developing language when tamariki have a reason to communicate. This leads to tamariki developing thinking skills.

## Hauora/Wellbeing

We want Marsden students to be empowered and equipped for lives of purpose and meaning. Therefore, we strive to help them recognise their own worth and to place value in living well. To achieve this, we have created Awhi, our tailored wellbeing education programme. In te reo Māori, Awhi means to nurture, care for, embrace, and cherish. Grounded in our school values, wellbeing education at Marsden is intentional and specifically designed to best nurture preschoolers as they grow with us.



## What can I do as a parent/caregiver?

### Support your tamaiti

We value reciprocal relationships with whānau as part of our Preschool community. We encourage you to talk with kaiako about your child’s interests and what they have explored each day.

Encourage your tamaiti in their own special interests and share this with the kaiako.

We also encourage you to share your language and culture with us in Preschool. This could be greetings, numbers and cultural celebrations.

If you would like to share a skill, attend class trips, assist with topic work, read with tamariki or simply help out in Preschool, please talk to our staff.

### Literacy

Early reading and writing skills are introduced with the overall aim to instil a love of reading and a joy of discovering the world of literature. Tamariki 4 years and over are invited to have a named book bag.

We use the iDeal structured literacy approach to guide and support our tamariki to build their confidence with literacy over time. This approach introduces print and symbol concepts, alongside phonological awareness such as rhyme, syllables and sounds.

As part of our literacy programme, we focus on a letter or sound of the week. Your tamaiti is encouraged to bring an item of interest from home that begins with this sound to share at mat time.

### Parent Coordinators

The Parent Coordinators encourage the integration of new parents into the Marsden community. They arrange whānau get-togethers and social events within the Preschool. If you would like to help, please talk to our staff.

### How will I be updated on my child's learning?

Preschool uses the *EDUCA* online portfolio system to record and share your child's learning assessment and curriculum planning, related to Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum strands and learning outcomes. This may include examples of art work, conversations and learning stories. You will be invited to contribute to your child's learning goals and plan. Stories will

support this goal with kaiako reflecting on each child's learning goal regularly as a team. Each time a story is posted you will be notified by email. Kaiako will update your child's portfolio regularly. We encourage you to revisit and share your child's learning stories with them, encouraging them to reflect and discuss their progression and learning journey with you. Kaiako will reflect on your child's stories in conversation with them every term. We also encourage you and extended family to contribute to your child's portfolio, sharing comments and stories from your home.

You receive a written report on your child's learning when they leave for school. However, if at any time you wish to discuss your child's progress, let kaiako know and they will be happy to meet with you.

Twice a year in Terms 1 and 3, you will be invited to come in for an individual Parent/Kaiako interview.

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## What if I have a concern?

If you have a concern, please contact Dr Helen McConnell, Head of Preschool, immediately. Following that, please contact Head of Primary, Jo Burns, who will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have.

Our email addresses are in the format **firstname.lastname@marsden.school.nz**

You can find all Marsden staff contact details in the [Staff Directory](#).

## Absences

To report absence or lateness, please email [helen.mcconnell@marsden.school.nz](mailto:helen.mcconnell@marsden.school.nz) or phone (04) 476 8707 Ext 840.



# Practical Information

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## Your child's first day

To create a smooth transition, we recommend visits before your tamaiti starts. If your tamaiti is anxious you may wish to leave them for progressively longer periods of time or begin with half a day until they are comfortable in their new environment. It is important to record your child's attendance each day. We use the *Discover* student management system, all adults authorised to pick up and drop off your tamaiti will be allocated a pin number. This is to be used at drop off and pick up times. We also ask that you sign the weekly attendance sheet to record your child's attendance for funding regulations.

## What your tamaiti will need

### Sun Protection

During Terms 1 and 4, all tamariki are required to bring a named sunhat and we will apply sunblock during the day. Please encourage your tamaiti to leave their sunhat at Preschool.

### Spare Clothes

Preschool tamariki enjoy and learn through messy play, and can have toileting accidents during the day. Please pack a change of clothes to ensure they have something available to change into.

## What will your tamaiti eat at Preschool?

Your tamaiti should bring a named drink bottle filled with water, as well as a named lunch box containing both morning tea and lunch.

We ask that food be healthy as this helps tamariki's concentration. Parents are strongly encouraged to

provide simple nutritious food. Please see the [Ministry of Health guidelines](#). Please also refer to the Ministry of Health's [recommendations for reducing food-related choking](#).

A shared fruit plate is offered to tamariki at the end of the day. Each tamaiti is asked to bring a piece of fruit to share, for each day they attend during the week.

A cafeteria service is available for Preschool tamariki. To order lunch please email [elaine@finecuisine.co.nz](mailto:elaine@finecuisine.co.nz) and use your tamariki's name and 'Preschool' as the reference. Payment is by direct credit to bank account: 06 0574 0084776 01 Fine Cuisine.

## What happens during the day?

We offer a variety of play-based and structured learning opportunities for tamariki throughout the day at Preschool, which support both independent and group exploration. These include literacy, numeracy, arts, te reo Māori, problem solving, digital technology, mindfulness, library, chapel, music, drama, PE and outdoor activities. We focus on supporting each child's holistic development, encompassing their social, physical, emotional, cultural and academic needs.

Tamariki all take part in three mat/whāriki times throughout the day. Mat times are opportunities to focus on sharing, music, iDeal structured literacy, numeracy and our inquiry focus.

Meal times take place three times a day and are together, beginning with a karakia.







<b>8.15am - 9.00am</b>	Sign in and welcomes
<b>9.00am - 2.45pm</b>	Play-based learning, structured learning activities, active play-based inquiry learning, and specialist lessons
<b>2.45pm - 3.15pm</b>	Awahi Time
<b>3.15pm - 3.30pm</b>	End of school day

### School Directory

The Marsden School Directory is online, compiled using an app called 'Directory Burst'. The directory contains parent/caregiver name and contact details and is only for the use of current Marsden families and staff of the school.

Parents and caregivers who have indicated that they are happy to have their email and phone number published for this purpose are included in the School Directory.

Changes of address and phone numbers should be notified in writing to the Primary School office immediately [jo.sherlock@marsden.school.nz](mailto:jo.sherlock@marsden.school.nz)

### Emergency Procedures

The Preschool regularly carries out routine earthquake, fire and shelter in place drills so that tamariki are familiar with routines. Teachers take part in lockdown training separate of tamariki.

- Upon enrolment all parents are required to fill in an Emergency Contact form, including someone who lives in Karori who can collect your tamaiti in case of an emergency, such as an earthquake, that may require school evacuation.
- All families are asked to contribute a box of tissues and two ready-to-eat meals (that do not require water), to be kept at school and used in an emergency.

- In the event of an accident, parents will be contacted as soon as possible by the school nurse or kaiako. If it is judged necessary, your tamaiti will be taken to the Karori Medical Centre or hospital for treatment.

### Medication and Immunisation

Preschool are required to have a copy of your child's 15 months and 4 years of age immunisation certificates, completed by your medical centre.

If your tamaiti requires medication, please bring it to school, and complete the chart in the kitchen area with a staff member, authorising the staff to administer medication to your tamaiti.

We adhere to the Ministry of Health guidelines in regards to infectious illnesses. This includes staying home until well and 48 hours after the last episode of an infectious illness. Tamariki with diarrhoea, vomiting or a temperature over 38°C should stay away until symptoms have ceased.

The school will contact you if your tamaiti is unwell and needs to go home. The school nurse will assist sick tamariki and staff will care for them until parents arrive.

### Excursions

Throughout the year we organise excursions to support tamariki learning. You will be informed of these via *Operoo*, the parent-driven medical information and permission slips programme, so please ensure that your child's details are complete and correct on this system. *Operoo* allows kaiako to have family and medical details on hand while out of school.

You will be asked, in the notice, to advise if you are able to be a parent helper on the outing. There will be a small charge to help cover costs for most excursions.



We also do spontaneous walks in close proximity to the school and walks around the school grounds. You will have given your consent for this as part of the Enrolment documentation.

### **What links does Preschool have with the Primary School?**

#### **Chapel and Assembly**

We join the Primary School assembly every fortnight. Once a term, we aim to share some of our learnings during the assembly. The assembly service is 30 minutes long. The Preschool joins the communion service at the end of each term at St Mary's Anglican Church, Karori.

#### **Library Visits**

Once a week, tamariki will visit the Primary School library. They are able to issue one book to take home. Please return it the following week, on or before their library day, and put it in the plastic basket in the locker room.

#### **Languages**

Specialists teach te reo Māori and waiata in fun and creative ways. Te reo Māori is also incorporated into our daily programme.

#### **Buddy Reading**

Each Preschool tamaiti has a Year 5 buddy who reads to them and joins in with letter of the week activities every Friday.

#### **Music**

Preschool students enjoy a weekly music session with the specialist Primary Music kaiako.

#### **Athletics and Cross Country**

We join the Primary School in their Athletic Sports Day and Cross Country event, along with other sporting,

cultural and community events throughout the year.

### **Physical Education (PE)**

Kaiako provide physical education, movement and coordination sessions each week, encouraging physical skills and coordination. These take place on the tennis courts. Tamariki need to wear sports shoes on these days. We also subscribe to the Jiggle Jam online programme. This programme is designed to make fitness fun, through aerobics, dance and fitness.

In Term 1 we take part in the SwimWell Learn to Swim programme at Karori Pool, run by trained instructors.

In Terms 2 and 3 we arrange gymnastics sessions run by Capital Gymnastics fortnightly at Marsden. This comes at a small cost to whānau.

In Term 4 Preschoolers take part in Play Ball training sessions, having the opportunity to develop hand-eye coordination and ball skills.

### **Photos**

Formal class and individual photos are taken in Term 1.

### **Transition to School**

Kaiako will prepare a transition plan with your child's new entrance teacher. We will speak to you the term before your child prepares for school to ensure we have a learning plan that meets your child's needs and aspirations. Tamariki transitioning to Marsden Primary will begin their transition four weeks before they begin, with three visits to our Year 1 class, but some tamariki will need more. This will be arranged with the Head of Primary and Year 1 teacher. The purpose is to become familiar with the classroom, kaiako and the different structures in the school.

Your child's written report detailing their learning and progress when they leave for school will be forwarded to their Year 1 kaiako, with parent permission.



All Preschool tamariki will take part in regular Mahitahi – collaboration time with our Year 1 tamariki, to support their relationship and connection with the Primary School.

### Policies

If you want to know the Preschool policy on any issue, there are copies of our policies in the Locker Room or online on EDUCA.

### Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated at Preschool when tamariki turn four and five. We invite whānau to bring in a cake if they wish to share at morning tea time. When tamariki graduate and move on to Primary School, we have a celebration to farewell them and celebrate their learning and achievements. Whānau are invited to be part of this event, and provide a cake or individual cupcakes, and two other food choices to share with the class. Kaiako will give you our food guidelines for this. Girls transitioning to Marsden Primary invite the Year 1 class to attend their celebration as part of their transition and sense of belonging to Samuel Marsden Collegiate School.

### Parking

In accordance with Marsden’s parking policy and in the interests of child safety, cars are to be parked outside the school grounds. There is an entrance to the Preschool via the steps from Karori Road.

However, exemptions are granted ONLY to parents with small babies or parents with disabilities. Please talk to Dr Helen McConnell if you require an exemption.

### Telephone Numbers

The direct dial voice mail phone for Dr Helen McConnell is 476 8707 extension 840. Please contact Jo Sherlock on Ext 832 if you cannot reach the Preschool.

## Staff

Marsden Preschool staff are Dr Helen McConnell, Kirsten Whitehead and Enzo Vatselias. Our tamariki refer to us by our surnames.



**Dr Helen McConnell**  
Head Teacher, Head of Preschool  
[helen.mccconnell@marsden.school.nz](mailto:helen.mccconnell@marsden.school.nz)



**Mrs Kirsten Whitehead**  
Preschool Teacher  
[kirsten.whitehead@marsden.school.nz](mailto:kirsten.whitehead@marsden.school.nz)



**Mr Enzo Vatselias**  
Teacher Aide  
[enzo.vatselias@marsden.school.nz](mailto:enzo.vatselias@marsden.school.nz)



**Mrs Jo Sherlock**  
Primary Administrator  
[jo.sherlock@marsden.school.nz](mailto:jo.sherlock@marsden.school.nz)



**Mrs Jo Burns**  
Head of Primary  
[jo.burns@marsden.school.nz](mailto:jo.burns@marsden.school.nz)

### 2025 Term Dates

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Term 1 | Monday 27 January – Friday 11 April<br><i>Note: Waitangi Day is Thursday 6 February.</i>  |
| Term 2 | Monday 28 April – Friday 27 June<br><i>Note: King’s Birthday is Monday 2 June; we have a staff only day Tuesday 3 June; Matariki is Friday 20 June.</i> |
| Term 3 | Monday 21 July – Friday 19 September  |
| Term 4 | Monday 6 October – Thursday 4 December<br><i>Note: Labour Day is Monday 27 October; we have a staff only day Monday 3 November.</i>                     |

## Communications at Marsden

All news and updates from Preschool will be communicated with you via our Community Message Board on EDUCA. Please ensure you read these updates and speak with us if you have any questions.

Here are the other ways we communicate with you at Marsden:

1

### Marsden website [marsden.school.nz](http://marsden.school.nz)

Is designed for prospective families, but useful information for Marsden parents/caregivers (such as uniform, term dates etc.) can be found under QUICKLINKS in the main navigation menu.

2

### The Marsden Portal

Log in to the Marsden Portal for access to specific information about your child, including attendance records, reports etc., as well as your account and contact details.

Access the Marsden Portal in the blue bar at the top of the Marsden website.

3

### Emergency information

Emergency information will be posted on the homepage of our website. We also use the Marsden App to send you any emergency alerts.

4

### Newsletters and emails

You will be emailed the Marsden Newsletter every Saturday morning during term time. The newsletter can also be accessed via the Marsden App. The weekly newsletter contains the Principal's blog, a link to the school calendar, community notices and news celebrating student events and achievements.

5

### The Marsden App

We encourage you to download the Marsden App. We use the App to send you any emergency alerts. Using the Marsden App is the best way for you to notify the school of an absence. You are also able to access most of the features of the Marsden Portal, along with school contact details, the school calendar and the weekly newsletter. Just search for 'Marsden' in the App Store or Google Play and allow notifications. By using the Login button, sign into the Marsden Portal to give you full functionality.

6

### News and social media

We share and celebrate school happenings and achievements on:

**Facebook** - MarsdenNZ

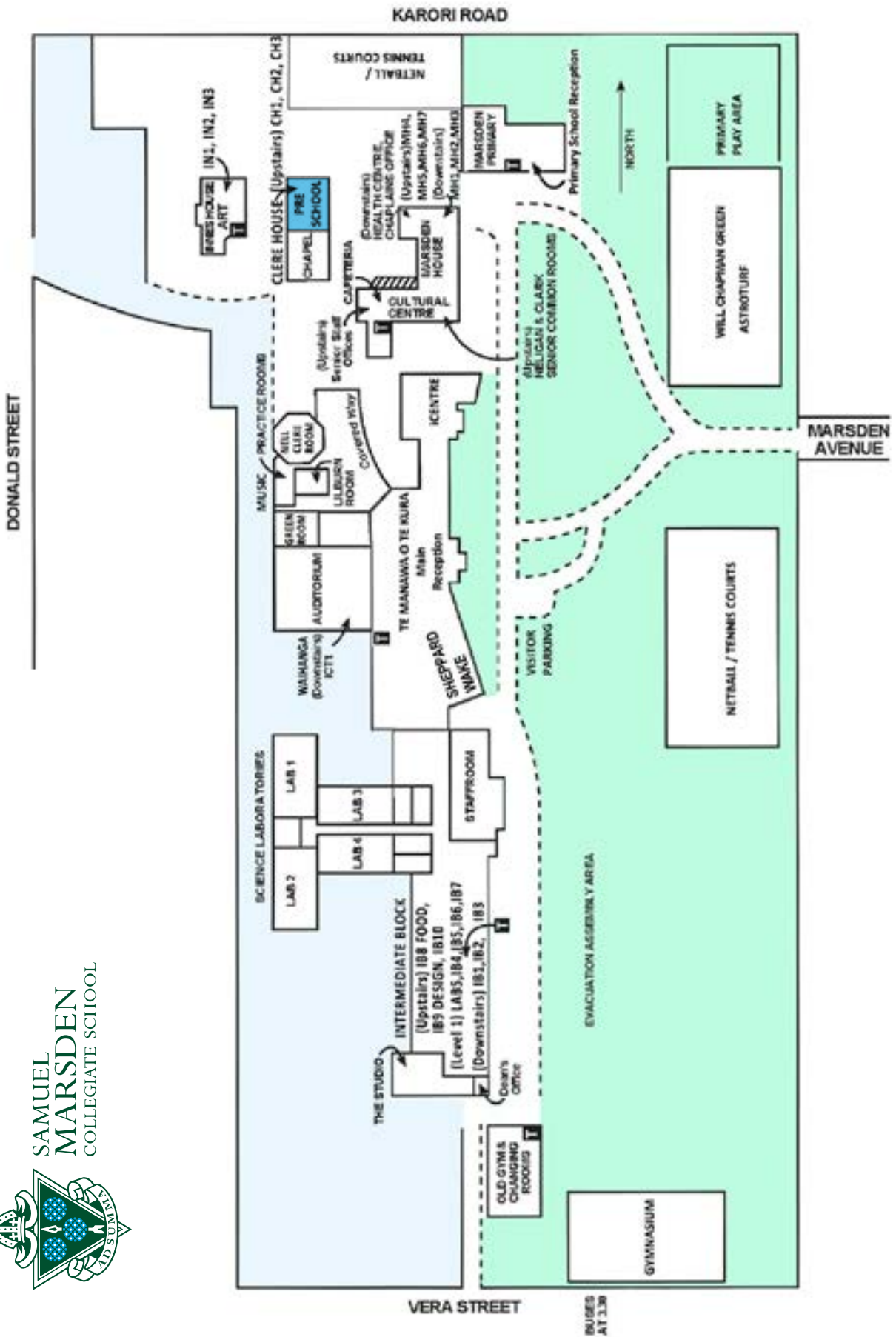
**Instagram** - SamuelMarsdenSchool

**Youtube** - MarsdenNZ

**School News page** - see <https://www.marsden.school.nz/news-events/news>  
(you can filter on Preschool news)

**LinkedIn** - samuel-marsden-collegiate-school-karori

# Campus map



Welcome to  
Marsden Preschool.

We are glad you and your  
family have joined us and  
look forward to making  
this special time a fun and  
fulfilling experience for  
your tamaiti.



**Marsden Preschool**  
Marsden Ave, Karori, Wellington  
(04) 476 8707

[marsden.school.nz](http://marsden.school.nz)