



The AGE Journey

Your child's future starts here

Welcome to a new way of learning – and thinking about learning.

Our mission at AGE School is to help children flourish. For children to thrive, they need two things: they need to feel secure and they need to be challenged. We've worked really hard to get the balance right between wellbeing and academics.

At AGE School we have low student to teacher ratios designed for children who thrive in smaller class sizes. Our maximum class size is 15 kids to one teacher. That allows us to do individualised learning plans.

We emphasise project based learning linked to our students' passions, and we help them apply that learning in real-world situations. We practise compassionate communication (NVC) and listen to our students instead of the traditional top-down approach to education.

It's a place where respect for each other and care for the environment goes hand in hand with learning that extends beyond the national curriculum. Our learning model is designed to let your child embrace who they truly are.

"AGE is a place where you can be yourself, unlike other schools where you have to be what they want you to be."

Max, 11



How we do it

Our approach to education is different to mainstream schools. In recent years the New Zealand education system has become more focused on meeting standards and targets rather than meeting the needs of the students. We appreciate that given the number of kids in the mainstream system there are limits to how much individual learning can happen. At AGE School, there are no limits.

We get it. Mainstream schools are set up to serve the huge number of kids moving through each year. So it needs to be a very simple, structured and standardised system. The one they've settled on is based on age. In simple terms, the mainstream system decides that if you're a certain age, then you should know A, B, and C. Every year we'll top you up with D, E and F and so on until you get to X, Y and Z and then you're ready to face the world. Or so the theory goes.

The system doesn't take into account the fact that different people learn in different ways. Just because kids are the same age doesn't mean they can all swim the same distance at the same speed. So why do we think they all learn maths the same way? We know that a 'one size fits all' approach to education doesn't work for all kids. A lot of children get lost in the system.

We don't organise kids strictly according to year groups. Yes, age is a factor, but it's a rough guide. We also consider their academic ability and the different stages of their social and emotional development. Kids at AGE School move between different groups for different

"At mainstream schools you're just a number. You're nothing special unless you're gifted academically. If you're not, then nobody really notices you. AGE feels like a real community. Everyone knows everyone else and I feel a lot more confident in myself. I feel like I can embrace my personality because no one judges you. At AGE I can finally express myself."

Terina, 16

subjects depending on the level they're at, giving them the opportunity to learn from and mix with students of different ages. Our older students run lunchtime activities for the younger ones and often act as role models around the school.

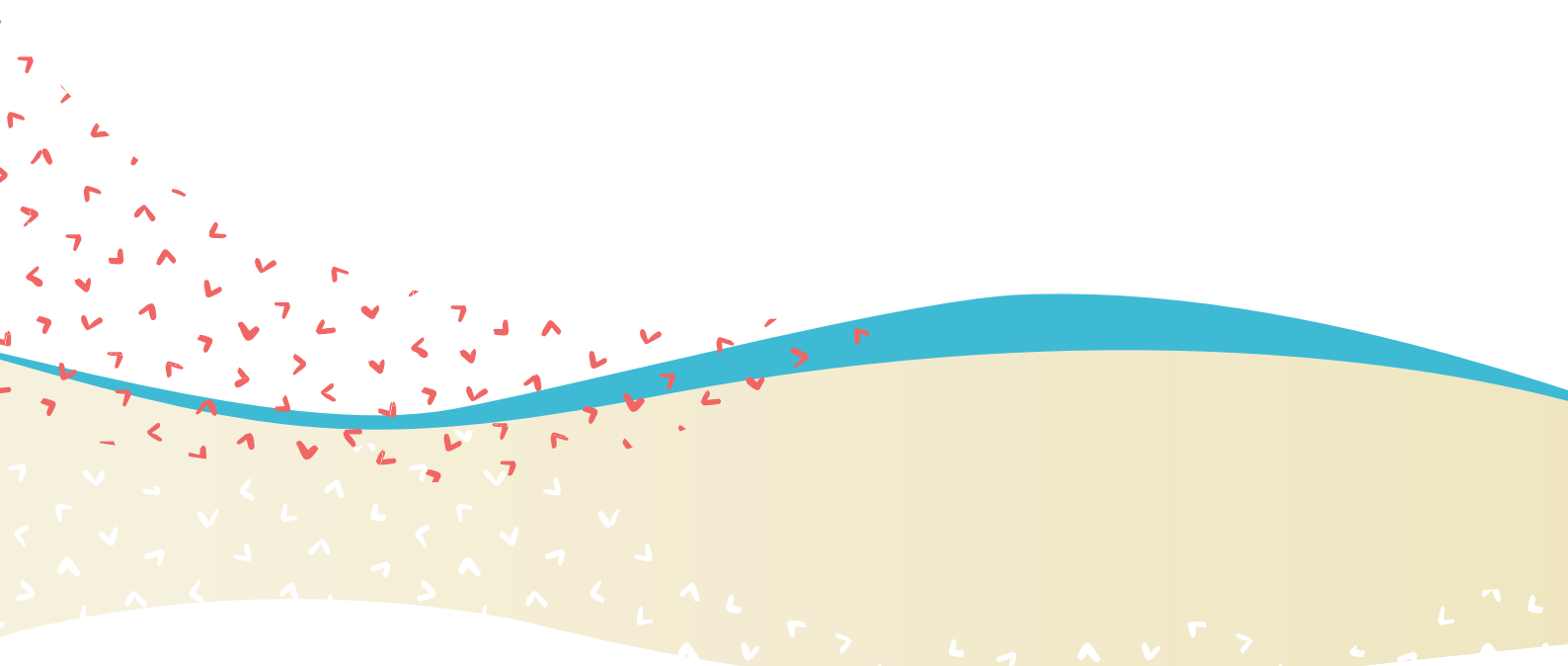
The academic work we do at AGE fits within the New Zealand curriculum. People still refer to it as the new New Zealand Curriculum even though it dates back to 2007. A lot has changed since then. While some of the curriculum is outdated, there's still a lot to like about it.

We took the curriculum apart, identified the key concepts and foundational skills, and designed multi-disciplinary modules that give our learning coaches the flexibility to deliver individual learning programs based on students' passions and interests. Because we're not so target focused, it means that if something doesn't work, we can try something else. If a child is struggling to learn using one method, we can approach it from a different angle.

Students' achievement and progress is measured against the levels of the New Zealand Curriculum. Parents receive feedback and reports based on the curriculum, as well as how your child is developing socially and emotionally.

"AGE makes learning easier and much more fun. It has opened up a whole new world for me."

Torbien, 13

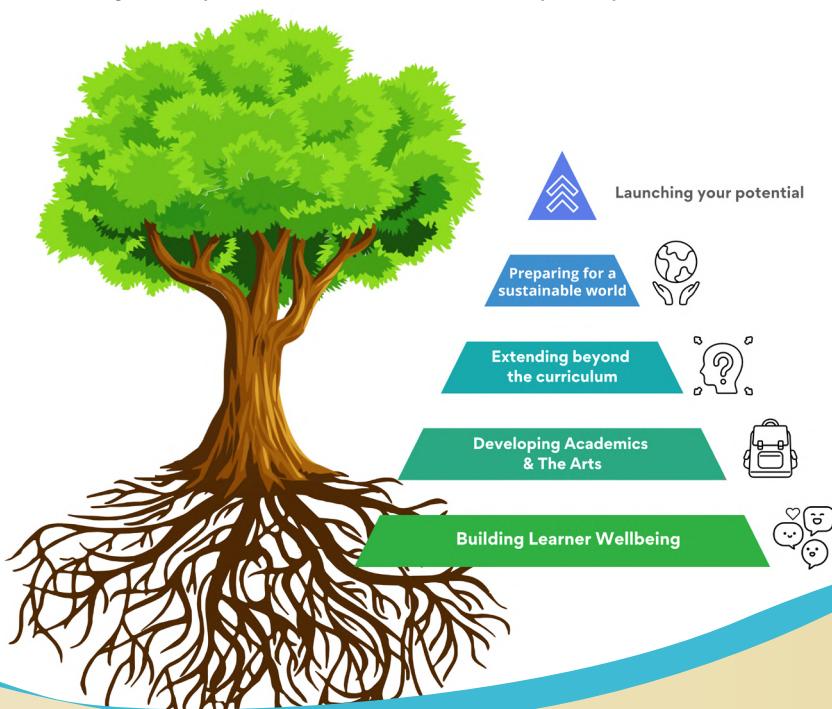


The AGE journey

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that basic needs lower down on the ladder must be satisfied before individuals can focus on their higher needs:



The AGE Journey is modelled on Maslow's principles:



The layers on the AGE Journey are:

Building Learner Wellbeing

This includes physical, emotional and community wellbeing. Our initial focus at AGE is on kids' wellbeing and establishing solid foundations. Once they are feeling secure and safe, then we can feed their academic needs and encourage their creative expression. You can't have one without the other. Most mainstream schools have little or no focus on personal wellbeing. At AGE it is the cornerstone of our learning philosophy.

Developing academics and the arts

Once students have a strong sense of wellbeing, they are able to develop the foundational skills from the curriculum. Like other schools, we focus on building foundational blocks in literacy and numeracy, but just as important for us at AGE are scientific literacy and developing creative skills in the Arts.

Extending beyond the curriculum

We don't just do book learning. We believe in a much broader education that equips our kids with the traits and skills they will need in the real world. We don't provide the kids with all the answers. They've got to come up with solutions themselves.



Preparing for a sustainable world

AGE School takes a truly future focused approach to learning by helping prepare students to engage in the world around them. We develop skills that will enable students to understand the people and environment they will be interacting with. AGE School is for any kid (or the parents of any child) who want to equip themselves for the future by expressing themselves in the present. These traits are critical for the world our kids will live in, where innovation and an awareness of the environment go hand in hand.

Launching your potential

We team up with NZ innovators and inspirational business people to mentor students on projects that stretch them well beyond the four walls of a classroom. This helps students understand how important technology, entrepreneurial thinking and creativity are in the world they're growing up in, and gives their work that much more meaning.

Who is it for?

We help kids understand who they are and give them confidence in themselves. It's a safe place for children to develop their sense of self. They become more independent and grow in confidence. They feel like there's a place in the world for them. A lot of kids have been through different schools, and never felt understood, or never felt like they belonged.

Parents of kids who are new to the school tell us all the time: "It's like we've got a different kid," or "we're just so stoked our kid wants to go to school now." If the kids are happier at school, life at home is easier. If the kids are less stressed, the parents are less stressed.

"My old school wasn't working for my dyslexia. My teacher didn't really understand me. She used to raise her voice a lot. The other kids bullied me and called me dumb.

What I like about AGE is the teachers understand what I went through at my old school and are helping me get back on my feet."

Ben, 9

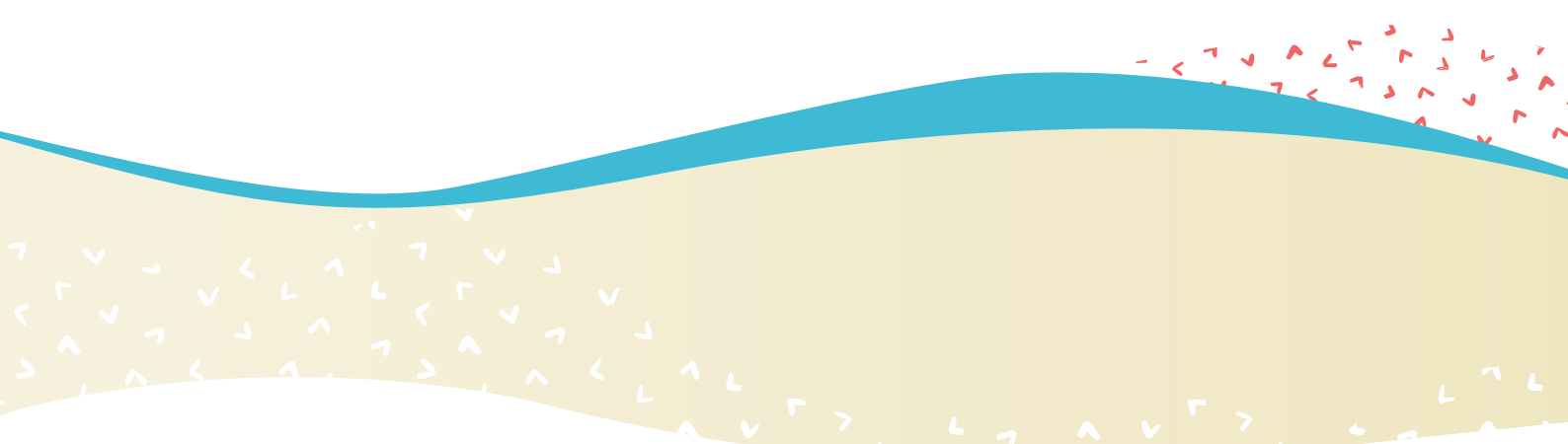
A common misconception about AGE School is that kids need to be gifted to come here. That stems from the original mission of the school which was reflected in the name: Academy for Gifted Education.

After our first year we realised our values and our approach to education could work for kids of all abilities, not just gifted children. So we kept the name AGE School and rebranded it as a school to prepare kids better for the Age of Innovation we are all living through right now. A school where kids can dare to dream.

We don't focus on labels. Instead we focus on each individual's needs. Some of our kids are gifted in one area which means they may have slightly different needs to our neurotypical kids. But all kids come with different needs and amazing gifts. Most of the time, kids are scared to express those gifts. When they do, that's when the magic happens.

In saying that, AGE School is not a good fit for everybody. If you're expecting a traditional school with a traditional approach to discipline and learning, then it may not be for you. We want parents to send their kids here because they share our values and want to prepare their kids for the fast-changing future we are all facing.

You will know if it's right for you and your child when you walk in the door and take a tour of the school. And if it doesn't feel right, for whatever reason, please don't encourage your child to come. Because it may not work for them.



Where we do it

Our new school building opened in 2020 and it was specifically designed with our learning philosophy in mind. The layout, colours and interior design were all carefully considered to create a flexible, adaptable and calming environment.

As soon as you walk in the door of our purpose-built school in Takapuna, you get the sense that this place is different. The kids at AGE don't sit at the same desk and stare at the same four walls every day. There are outside spaces, breakout spaces and communal spaces to suit different environmental and learning preferences.

Each space has different seating options with a mix of tables, chairs, sofas and individual pods. Some kids prefer working at a table with others. Others do their best work in their own space and in their own time. No matter what a child's preference is, they can find their own happy place.



The kids figure out what works best for them and the teachers do their best to accommodate their learning preferences. Giving children the option to choose the learning environment that suits them requires a mutual trust between teacher and student, which is sadly lacking in mainstream schools.

At AGE School we focus on developing students' abilities to manage their emotions and behaviour. Open learning spaces, breakout rooms, individual pods and reset rooms all play a part in providing a learning environment for every situation. We help students learn when they need to use different environments to best manage their learning.

If students need to reset their focus, they may be directed to either our quiet or active reset rooms to regain their focus. Learning coaches will then work with students to work out which environment will help them be most successful with their learning.

"AGE has made me more independent but I never feel lonely because there is always someone to hang out with. It's an easy place to make friends."

Ben, 9




Along with a performing arts and music area, specialist technology and science classrooms, the AGE School also has a kitchen where students regularly do cooking and baking classes, a central hub and a garage for workshops where we teach practical hands-on skills. The different areas and learning environment are designed to help each student learn freely and feel as comfortable as possible – just like a home away from home.

We also do a lot of work outside. Takapuna Beach is just two minutes walk away and we take advantage of it as often as we can to apply lessons learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

Spending time outside the classroom – exploring, understanding and contributing to our community – is a key part of the AGE experience and underpins our approach to education. It allows students to discover their passions, apply their knowledge in real-life situations and helps build a sense of belonging.

At AGE School our students enjoy a wide range of physical activities including yoga, tennis, badminton, sailing, boxfit, kayaking and skiing. As we're a small school, our students actively use the excellent facilities of the North Shore for sports and recreation.





**First, think.
Second dream.
Third, believe
and finally, dare.**
WALT DISNEY