



Tumuaki | Principal Westland High School Candidate Briefing Document

March 2026



BRANNIGANS®

MIHI

E te tī, e te tā, nau mai haere mai ki Te Tai Poutini

Ko Tūhua, ko Tūtoko ngā maunga
Ko Arahura, ko Makaawhio ngā awa
Ko Te Tai Poutini te tai
Ko Arahura, ko Te Tauraka Waka a Māui ngā marae
Ko Ngāti Waewae, ko Ngāti Māhaki ki Makaawhio ngā hapū
Ko Poutini Ngāi Tahu te iwi

Poutini Ngāi Tahu as an iwi is made up of 2 hapū, Ngāti Waewae and Ngāti Māhaki ki Makaawhio. Ngāti Waewae are based at Arahura marae, just a few minutes north of Hokitika. Ngāti Māhaki ki Makaawhio are based at Te Tauraka Waka a Māui marae, 3 hours south of Hokitika.

Both hapū work together to support Westland High School. This includes:

- Board representatives from both hapū,
- whānau support for design, carving and narrative mahi throughout the kura, and
- whānau and hapū support for te reo, kapa haka and pūrākau development and implementation.

Many rangatahi who attend Westland High School also whakapapa to one or both hapū, as has been the case for many generations. These connections to Westland High create a strong, intergenerational commitment from Poutini Ngāi Tahu to support Westland High to be the best kura possible for all rangatahi who spend time there.

We look forward to continuing the important mahi needed to make Westland High all it can be, alongside a new Tumuaki.

Nau mai, haere mai ki tō mātou rohe, ki tō tātou kura.



TŌ TĀTOU KURA

Westland High School sits at the heart of its community on the West Coast | Te Tai Poutini, serving rangatahi and whānau from Hokitika and the wider Westland rohe. The kura is proud of its strong sense of place, close knit community connections, and the deep relationship between the kura and its environment. Surrounded by coast, bush and mountains, Westland offers a lifestyle grounded in connection, resilience and belonging, a place where people know one another and kura matters.

This is a kura with committed staff, supportive whānau and a strong desire to look forward with confidence. Westland High School is on a pathway of strengthening stability, building trust and shaping a future-focused learning environment that reflects both local identity and wider opportunity. Partnerships with mana whenua are central to this journey, with a clear commitment to deepening relationships, honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and creating a culturally responsive kura where all ākonga can thrive.

For a prospective Tumuaki, this is a rare opportunity to lead a kura where relational leadership truly matters, where presence and partnership are as important as educational expertise. Westland High School offers the chance to make a meaningful, lasting impact: to work alongside a dedicated Board, engage authentically with community and iwi, and help shape a stable, inclusive and aspirational future for young people on the Coast.

A Principal Recruitment Allowance will be available for an eligible candidate.

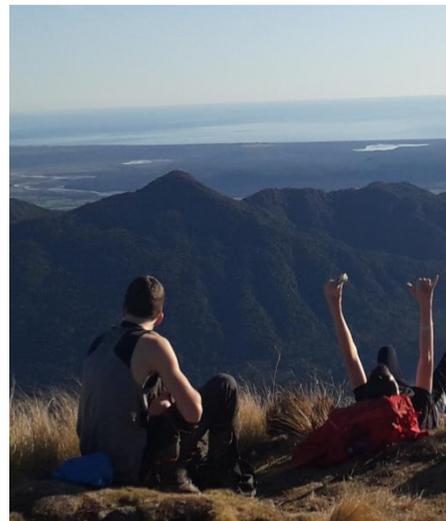


TŌ TĀTOU ROHE

Our area, Hokitika, offers a way of life that many senior leaders are actively seeking, focused on being connected, grounded and purposeful. Set between wild coastline and native rainforest, Hokitika is a town where community matters, relationships are strong and the kura sits at the heart of local life. It is a place where leaders are known, valued and supported, and where your presence and contribution will genuinely make a difference.

For a Tumuaki, Hokitika provides the rare opportunity to lead with visibility and impact, while enjoying balance and wellbeing beyond the kura gates. With a strong sense of identity, a vibrant arts and cultural scene, accessible outdoor adventure, and a welcoming community, Hokitika is well suited to a leader seeking meaningful leadership, combining connection and a lifestyle that supports both professional fulfilment and personal wellbeing.

Click here to find out more about [Hokitika](#)



LEARNING AND OPPORTUNITIES AT WESTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Westland High School provides a broad, inclusive learning environment for Years 7–13, offering academic, vocational and practical pathways that prepare rangatahi for tertiary study, trades, employment and beyond.

A valued feature of the kura is its bilingual unit, strengthening te reo Māori, tikanga and identity while ensuring full access to the wider curriculum.

Strong academic and pastoral systems ensure rangatahi are known, supported and challenged. There is a clear focus on building independence, leadership and readiness for life beyond kura.

Outdoor education is a defining strength. With mountains, bush and coastline at our back door, rangatahi engage in authentic, place-based learning that builds confidence, resilience and teamwork. A uniquely West Coast | Te Tai Poutini advantage.

Co-curricular opportunities across sport, culture and leadership, alongside an established international programme, further enrich the learning environment.

Westland High School is committed to ensuring every rangatahi leaves equipped with the skills, confidence and qualifications to succeed.

For more information, please visit the [school website](#)

*Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga,
Rangatiratanga, Kaitiakitanga.*

OUR STAFF

Westland High School is proud of its dedicated staff, who are passionate about teaching and building meaningful connections with rangatahi across the kura. The staff bring a broad range of backgrounds, perspectives and professional experiences, and are at different stages of their careers, contributing to a rich and dynamic teaching environment

What the new Principal | Tumuaki needs to know about the staff at Westland High School:

- Staff are committed to rangatahi and the Hokitika community
- There is significant expertise, many staff are highly qualified and nationally respected in their subject areas
- Teachers who bring diversity require culturally responsive leadership and onboarding support
- Staff have experienced leadership instability and therefore, trust must be rebuilt carefully
- Staff value autonomy and professionalism
- Morale is closely linked to how leadership communicates, consults and follows through
- WHS operates like a whānau, and relationships matter as much as systems.



STAFF CONSULTATION

Staff have clearly articulated some non-negotiables for the next Tumuaki of Westland High School:

- High-trust leadership model – empower staff, collaborate and hold people accountable fairly
- Visible, relational presence – in classrooms, staffroom, playground and community
- Commitment to Hokitika – a willingness to contribute to and be part of the community

Staff also hold strongly to the leadership qualities which a new Tumuaki will need, to be successful:

- Relational and emotionally intelligent
- Culturally competent and values-driven (manaakitanga at the centre)
- Decisive yet consultative
- Visible and hands on
- Builder of stability, trust and cohesion
- Strategic with strong operational capability (HR, finance, systems)
- Champion of both academic and whole person development



RANGATAHI ARE AT THE CENTRE OF WESTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Westland High School presents an exciting leadership opportunity for a Principal | Tumuaki seeking scope, influence and purpose. The role offers the chance to lead a secondary kura at a pivotal point, shaping stability and strengthening collaboration across the school community.

Rangatahi sit at the centre of this work. They are clear in what they seek: a leader who sees them as individuals, respects their identity and culture, and genuinely listens and responds to their voice.

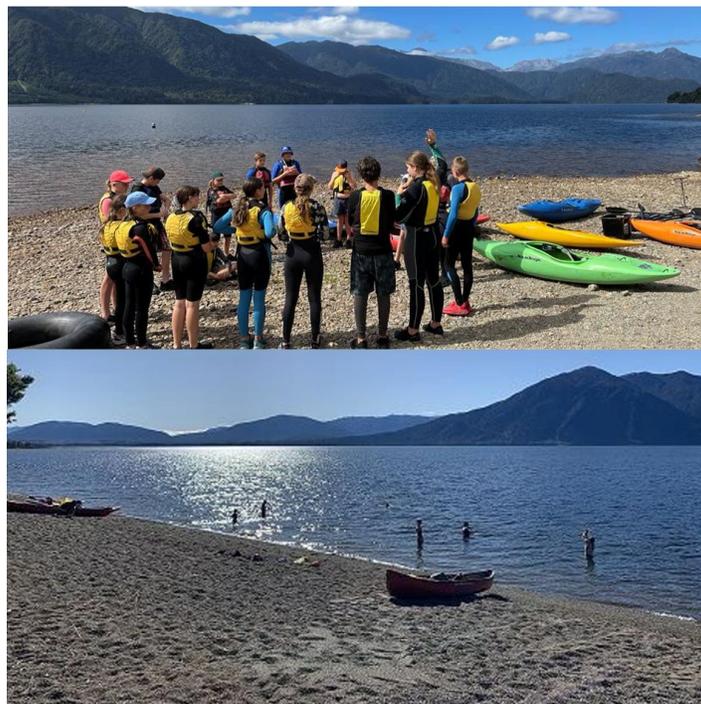
- Rangatahi value their cultural identity and mana, and whānau and hapū commitments are important
- WHS is a tight-knit community, but rangatahi want to be recognised as individuals
- Not all rangatahi are academically driven, many need diverse pathways and practical opportunities
- Outdoor education is a genuine strength and highly valued by most students
- Rangatahi appreciate structures like morning whānau time and want consistency
- There is a strong desire for rangatahi voice to be heard and acted on
- Rangatahi want fairness, not being judged by one mistake or academic performance alone.



QUALITIES RANGATAHI WOULD LIKE IN THEIR NEW PRINCIPAL | TUMUAKI

These are the qualities rangatahi would like to see in the new principal:

- Visible and engaged - regularly present in classrooms and around the kura, interacting with rangatahi informally and authentically
- Kind, genuine and approachable – friendly, energetic and easy to talk to, while still maintaining high expectations
- Culturally competent – understands Māoritanga, respects cultural identity, and values whakapapa and local iwi connections
- Collaborative, not authoritarian – listens first, consults widely, and avoids “dictator-style” leadership
- A person of integrity – lives up to their word, honest when they don’t know something, and fair in decision-making
- Recognises individuality – understands that rangatahi have different learning styles, strengths and Pathways



OUR WHĀNAU AND COMMUNITY

Westland High School sits within a close-knit and proud West Coast | Te Tai Poutini community where schools are highly visible and deeply valued. There is a clear desire for open communication, genuine partnership and leadership that is present and engaged beyond the school gate.

Mana whenua hold an important place within the community, and there is a shared expectation that the school will continue strengthening authentic relationships, cultural identity and collective responsibility for rangatahi success.

Through stakeholder engagement, there are some key things that whānau want the new Tumuaki to know.

- Whānau care deeply about the school and want to feel proud of the kura
- Trust has been impacted in the past and building confidence is critical
- Retention of staff and rangatahi matters
- The school is seen as a community hub, not just an institution
- West Coast | Te Tai Poutini identity, outdoor environment and practical pathways are valued strengths
- Whānau enjoy two-way communication, newsletters and conversation
- There is strong goodwill and willingness to support the school if invited early and meaningfully



IDEAL PRINCIPAL PROFILE

BASED ON FEEDBACK ACROSS ALL STAKEHOLDERS:
WHĀNAU, COMMUNITY, STAFF, RANGATAHI & BOARD

Leadership Domain	What We Are Seeking
Relational & Visible Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly visible and approachable across the kura and community • Builds trust through listening and consistent follow-through • Leads calmly and steadily, prioritising cohesion before change
Culturally Grounded & Partnership-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi • Strengthens authentic partnership with mana whenua • Values and supports the bilingual unit and culturally responsive practice
Firm, Fair & High Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes clear, consistent behaviour systems • Creates safe, focused learning environments • Champions both academic excellence and diverse pathways
High-Trust People Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowers staff and avoids micromanagement • Recognises professional expertise • Builds capability, wellbeing and retention
Community Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invests long-term in Hokitika and the West Coast Te Tai Poutini • Engages visibly beyond the kura gate • Cultivates pride and confidence in the kura

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

Our vision is to “experience success together” or in Māori, “piki kotahi ki te taumata” which refers to climbing the mountains to reach the summit, with everyone experiencing success in unison (as one). Ākonga, are at the heart of everything we do, and Westland High School’s people, place and learning environment are all designed to foster the wellbeing and growth of rangatahi.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to join with our community to create the very best education for our young people. Our staff are educational leaders that are dedicated and passionate about their roles. Furthermore, we see the community as being a necessary and valued partner in the learning process.

OUR VALUES

Manaakitanga – Uplifting and empowering ourselves and others.

Whanaungatanga – Actively building and contributing to positive connections with others.

Rangatiratanga – Developing leadership with confidence, respect, self-determination and teamwork.

Kaitiakitanga – Promoting guardianship and preservation of the kura values, learning and the environment.



WESTLAND HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL | TUMUAKI POSITION DESCRIPTION

Purpose

The Principal | Tumuaki is the professional and cultural leader of Westland High School and the Chief Executive of the school. The Principal works in partnership with the Board, mana whenua, staff, rangitahi, whānau and the wider community to lead a safe, inclusive, high-performing school that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and delivers equitable outcomes for all learners.

The Principal is a full member of the School Board in their own right and is responsible for implementing Board policy, meeting all statutory obligations, and leading the school in line with its vision, values and strategic direction.

Accountability

The Principal reports to the Board through its Presiding Member and is responsible for legal, curriculum, policy and financial compliance.

Working Relationships

Leads and strengthens the Senior Leadership Team, building capability and stability across Westland High School.

Builds trusted relationships with staff, rangitahi, whānau, mana whenua and community partners through presence, listening and connection.

Works in partnership with the Board to turn strategic priorities into clear, achievable actions.

Acts as an authentic ambassador for Westland High School, promoting its strengths and opportunities within Hokitika, the wider Westland community and external networks.



POU AKO
Leader of Vision for Learning

The Principal is the educational leader of the school, responsible for leading teaching and learning that is future-focused, inclusive and grounded in the Westland context.

- A clear, shared vision for learning is lived across the school and reflects the aspirations of Westland whānau, mana whenua and community
- Teaching and learning are future-focused, evidence-informed and culturally responsive, aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum and local context
- Rangatahi progress and achievement are monitored, analysed and responded to in a timely and effective way
- Equitable outcomes are actively pursued for all learners, with Māori ākonga supported to achieve success as Māori
- Learning environments are safe, inclusive and characterised by high expectations, engagement and belonging
- Continuous improvement is embedded through self-review, reflection and innovation

POU TĀNGATA
Leader of People

The Principal builds strong relationships and a positive school culture where people feel valued, supported and empowered.

- A strong, stable and collaborative Senior Leadership Team provides confident leadership across the school
- Staff feel valued, supported and developed, with wellbeing and sustainable workloads prioritised
- A professional culture of trust, respect and shared responsibility is strengthened and sustained
- Rangitahi feel known, supported and safe, with wellbeing and pastoral care embedded in school practice
- Change is led thoughtfully and inclusively, building confidence, capability and shared ownership
- Relationships across the school are characterised by integrity, empathy and open communication

POU TIKANGA MĀORI
Leader of Te Tiriti o Waitangi Practice

The Principal brings Te Tiriti o Waitangi to life in the school and actively upholds bicultural practice.

- Authentic, trusting partnerships with mana whenua are strengthened and embedded in school life
- Whānau Māori are meaningfully engaged in shaping the school's vision, priorities and learning pathways
- Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are visible, valued and increasingly integrated across the kura
- Māori learners experience culturally safe environments and are supported to thrive as Māori
- Bicultural practice is prioritised through leadership, resourcing and professional learning
- Leadership reflects an understanding of the impact of colonisation and a commitment to equity and partnership

POU MAHI
Leader of Operations and Governance

The Principal ensures the school is well managed, compliant and sustainable.

- The school is well-managed, compliant and financially sustainable, with systems that support effective teaching and learning
- Clear governance-management boundaries are maintained, with the Board supported through timely, evidence based advice and reporting
- Strategic and annual plans are implemented effectively and monitored against agreed outcomes
- Resources, staffing and property are aligned to educational priorities and rangatahi needs
- Health and safety, employment and legislative obligations are consistently met
- Risks are identified early and managed proactively to support long-term stability

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

PROPOSED DATE	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
27 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising goes live • Initial screening
19 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role closes
22 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial long list created • Consultant interviews
Week beginning 29 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortlisting • Initial Reference Checking Psychometric Assessment
9 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews in Hokitika • Part A: Marea (whānau member/s welcome to attend) • Part B: Kura
12 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference & Background Checking
20 July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Principal Commences Or agreed on date



FOR MORE INFORMATION

ROSIE ROBINSON

Talent Partner | Education Pillar Lead

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Rosie brings extensive experience in the education sector, and special education having served as Principal Adviser and Special Education Adviser at the Ministry of Education, Deputy Principal, RTLB and Across School Lead for Kāhui Ako. With a relational and insightful approach, she understands educational strategies and drivers, delivering solutions tailored to your needs, placing your objectives at the forefront.



SALLY WYNN-WILLIAMS

Talent Partner | Executive Director

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[YouTube](#)

With deep experience in executive and senior leadership recruitment, Sally has worked extensively within the education sector, supporting many secondary schools to appoint exceptional leaders. She brings insight, empathy, and strong process management to every assignment. Drawing on her background in HR consulting and organisational strategy, Sally helps clients find people who not only fit the role but also strengthen the culture and future direction of their school.



**Better people make a
better world**

**Mā tatou ka pai ake ai
(te ao)**

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