

He Māpara Mātauranga Elmwood Normal School

Principal

Candidate Briefing Information

December 2025



The Role

Principal

- Strategic and visionary educational leadership
- Supportive staff, an engaged community and an inclusive and collaborative culture
- Based in Christchurch

About our School:

Elmwood Normal School is a State Contributing Normal school situated in beautiful grounds in the central city suburb of Merivale, Christchurch. With a roll of 510, it offers a six-year programme, catering for Y0–6 children, from which the children proceed to intermediate schools.

We are proud to be a learning community where every child is supported to be an active participant in their own learning journey. Our vision is to inspire lifelong learners who grow into confident, capable, and valued citizens and strive to be the best that they can be.

At our school, we nurture and celebrate the values of Respect (Whakaute), Independence (Motuhake), Creativity (Auaha), Collaboration (Mahi Tahī) and Excellence (Hiranga). These values are woven through everything we do—from our classroom programmes to our playground interactions.

Our newly developed buildings offer rich and vibrant spaces, designed to encourage curiosity, growth, and meaningful learning experiences. Our dedicated team of teachers and support staff bring skill, enthusiasm, and care to every aspect of their work, ensuring tamariki receive the highest quality education.

We value highly the partnerships we build with whānau and our wider community. Together, we create a supportive environment where every child can thrive.

Elmwood Normal School was appointed by the Government to serve as a model for teacher training and educational best practice in Aotearoa New Zealand and provides a major teaching practicum facility for the six universities, and other Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers nationwide. Elmwood is proud of its status as an exemplary school and contributes at national policy level to ITE in Aotearoa.



About the Role:

We are seeking a passionate and experienced educational leader, to lead our dedicated team and ensure our tamariki receive the highest quality education. You will be supported by an enthusiastic and skilled leadership team in a school designed to encourage meaningful learning experiences.

As the Principal of a Normal School, you will be influencing ITE across the motu, contributing to our future teachers in Aotearoa. This includes leading ITE partnerships, contributing to teacher development and engaging with New Zealand Normal and Model School Association and the wider sector.

Our new Principal will be:

- An experienced and dynamic educational leader, with significant prior experience and a demonstrated track record, bringing established leadership credibility and leading research-informed practice
- A strategic planner – innovative, developing a forward-thinking direction that builds on great foundations of a school, thinking outside the box whilst honouring what works well
- Skilled in supporting staff wellbeing and advocacy, valuing the team and supporting the positive culture
- A child-centred decision-maker – prioritising student wellbeing and success, ensuring equity and respect for all children, passionate about education, and an enabler of diverse learning experiences
- Visible, present, and approachable – regularly in classrooms and the playground, knowing children and staff personally, accessible and engaged in daily school life.

Our new Principal will have:

- Proven skills in overseeing the business of the school, using resources effectively and efficiently, addressing problems promptly and being transparent with decision making
- Experience engaging with multicultural communities, celebrating diverse cultures and having a deep understanding of the needs of varied families
- Strong relationship building skills across all key stakeholders – with an ability to build trust quickly, creating authentic connections with students, staff, community, Board, and the Ministry
- High emotional intelligence, known for creating a warm and caring environments and with excellent communication (written and verbal) skills
- Cultural competence with experience honouring Te Ao Māori, and an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- A demonstrated commitment to be involved at a policy level and on advisory panels with the Normal & Model Schools Association.

Leadership or experience in a Normal or Model School, contributing to ITE would be an advantage.

About He Māpara Mātauranga | Elmwood Normal School

Elmwood Normal School is a state contributing normal school in Merivale, Christchurch, catering for Years 1–6 with a roll of approximately 510. It provides six years of primary education before students transition to intermediate schools. The school serves as a model for teacher training and educational best practice.

Elmwood aligns strongly with the NZ Curriculum vision of developing confident, connected, lifelong learners. It offers values-based education, an inclusive and collaborative culture, and a positive learning environment. The 2025 ERO report recognises the school for highly effective leadership and commitment to equity and excellence.



Elmwood offers a learner-centred curriculum that emphasises personalised learning, student voice, and tailored challenges. Collaborative learning is encouraged through group work and tuakana-teina relationships. Literacy and mathematics form strong foundations, supported by assessment for improvement.

The school's cultural narrative integrates local heritage and values into the learning environment, while the house system builds leadership, responsibility, and community through collaboration and healthy competition.

Situated in attractive grounds and newly developed buildings offering vibrant spaces, the school is designed to encourage curiosity, growth, and meaningful learning experiences.

The school's dedicated team of teachers and support staff bring skill, enthusiasm, and care to every aspect of their work, ensuring tamariki receive the highest quality education.



Vision & Mission

Vision: Inspiring today’s learners to be successful in tomorrow’s world. - (Kia whakahirihiko ngā akonga ki te whai angitu mō te ao kei tō heke mai)

Mission: Striving to be the best that we can be.

Core Values

The school promotes five key values woven through everything—from classroom programmes to playground interactions.

- Independence (Motuhake)
- Collaboration (Mahi Tahī)
- Excellence (Hiranga)
- Creativity (Auaha)
- Respect (Whakaute)

Strategic Plan

Our Learning	Our Place	Our Relationships
<p>Strategic Goal 1 Realise the potential of every child</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 2 Provide an environment that supports future focussed teaching and learning</p>	<p>Strategic Goal 3 Foster an engaged community and associated partnerships</p>
<p>Success Measures: By the end of 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Mātaiaho will be implemented as per the MoE’s implementation plan • Student achievement in Mathematics and Literacy will continue to show improvement • Teachers will demonstrate continued improvement in their practise through the Professional Growth Cycle • Student attendance will improve 	<p>Success Measures: By the end of 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and Learners will be thriving in their new environments • Te Ao Maori will underpin our kawa • Our physical environment will support the delivery of our local curriculum • All CSR redevelopment projects will be complete 	<p>Success Measures: By the end of 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of parent engagement in 3WLC, Meet the Teacher, Assemblies, Learning in action days, whanau hui etc. • Stakeholder formal and informal feedback • The ITE Practicum experience will continue to be enhanced.
NELP 1, 2 & 3	NELP 1, 2, 3 & 5	NELP 1, 2, 3 & 4
<p>Our Actions / Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen staff cultural competency • Te Mātaiaho PLD and implementation in mathematics and literacy • The REAL Learner attributes will be unpacked, integrated and modelled. • Develop and implement initiatives to respond to patterns emerging from 2024 Literacy and Numeracy reviews. • Implement the ENS Attendance Plan (STAR) 	<p>Our Actions / Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and implement hard and soft systems for new our environment • Create an outdoor environment that complements our pedagogy • Celebrate the opening of Rimu Block • Partner with MoE in the planning and construction of Mātai Block • Specialised teaching spaces will be planned and implemented 	<p>Our Actions / Initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen a culture of collaboration • Plan days to involve community engagement in student learning eg “celebration of learning days” • Strengthen first family connections. • Develop and deliver Targeted Parent forums (ESOL, HERO etc) • Foster strong educational focused relationships with other educational community institutions.

Our Curriculum - Learner-centred, personalised

The Elmwood Learners sit at the centre of the curriculum framework. The school seeks their voice and responds to their individual differences, needs, aptitudes and interests. They create learning opportunities that challenge their learners to reach above their existing level and capacity. They provide opportunities for children to enhance their experiences by ensuring that they understand the purpose of their activities. Through seeing the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives, their learners will be more engaged and their learning will be more effective.

The school’s curriculum aims to develop self-regulated learners who are aware of themselves as learners and who understand how to think as they work through the learning process.

Our Cultural Narrative

The school's cultural narrative integrates local heritage and values into the learning environment.

<https://hail.to/elmwood-normal/publication/oQat42j/>



The name 'He Māpara Mātauranga' was gifted by Ngāi Tūāhuriri as they are located in the rohe (tribal territory) of Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri.

- **Māpara** meaning heartwood (especially of kahikatea and rimu)
- **Mātauranga** meaning knowledge

The new logo symbolises connections to the past and new beginnings.

Historically the school uniform reflects two shades of blue colour – dark and light. The shades of blue can also be seen in the exterior colour of the buildings.

The smaller tree positioned in front represents the original Elm tree and history of the school's identity. The taller tree positioned behind represents the original stand of Kahikatea trees that stood on the school's current site.

The two different tree sizes also symbolise the number of relationships that happen within a school – parent and child, teacher and child, school and whanau, associate teacher and student teacher and lastly, old and young child in a tuakana-teina relationship.

The double flowing lines are representative of the nearby waterways. The Wairarapa Stream flows near the school and is a tributary of The Otākaro (Avon River). The waterways also symbolise the movement with their learning journey.



Being a Normal School

Elmwood is one of 29 Normal and Model Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand appointed by the Government and provide a major teaching practicum facility for the six universities, and other Initial Teacher Education providers nationwide.

Normal Schools originated in 16th-century France to model best teaching practices and set educational standards aimed to instil norms and values through curriculum. This concept spread globally, with many universities, including UCLA, beginning as normal schools.

Today, Normal and Model Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand serve as key practicum sites for teacher education, hosting student teachers for extended placements, fostering strong relationships and adding fresh perspectives to classrooms. These schools are recognised for exemplary teaching, close ties with universities, and a commitment to sharing best practices nationally and internationally—all to benefit children’s learning.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION
2023-2025

Nga Kura Tautoko Whakangungu Kaiako o Aotearoa - Normal and Model Schools of Aotearoa New Zealand

<p>OUR MISSION</p> <p>To provide leadership and expertise in Initial Teacher Education for Aotearoa New Zealand</p>	<p>OUR VISION</p> <p>To grow exceptional kaiako for all ākonga of Aotearoa New Zealand</p>	<p>OUR VALUES</p> <p>Manaakitanga - Care, Respect Kaitiakitanga - Guardianship, Mana Pūkengatanga - Excellence, Growth Whanaungatanga - Interdependence</p>
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Source: <https://www.namsa.ac.nz/>

Our Pou	PARTNERSHIP	BEST PRACTICE	ENVIRONMENTS	STUDENT TEACHER LEARNING	COLLEGIALITY & ADVOCACY
Our Aims	To work in full partnership with ITE providers to deliver high quality ITE.	To model exemplary practice that is underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the NZTC code of standards.	To optimise our environments for student teacher learning that reflects our bicultural heritage, inclusiveness and professionalism.	To provide quality guidance, support, evidence based feedback and mentoring.	To examine issues and challenges faced by ITE providers and advocate for change where needed.
Our Strategic Goals	Relationships that closely connect NAMSAs with ITE providers.	Excellence in school culture and teaching practice.	Centrality of children’s learning, wellbeing and happiness.	High quality practicum experiences and mentoring.	Productive partnerships and relationships with ITE providers and Government Agencies.



For further information visit:

<https://www.ero.govt.nz/institution/3334/elmwood-normal-school>

<https://elmwood.school.nz/>

[2024 Annual Implementation Plan](#)

[2024 Annual report](#)

[New Zealand Normal Schools Association](#) - The New Zealand Normal Schools Association is a shared resource for 29 Normal and Model schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Living and Working in Christchurch



Source: www.christchurchnz.com

Christchurch offers a great lifestyle with easy access to beaches, mountains, and parks, making outdoor adventures part of everyday life. It's New Zealand's happiest city, known for its welcoming community and diverse population.

The city combines career opportunities with affordable living and a relaxed pace. With vibrant culture, modern infrastructure, and family-friendly suburbs, Christchurch is an ideal place to live, work, and thrive. To find out more visit www.christchurchnz.com

Merivale is a fashionable Christchurch suburb known for its leafy streets, elegant homes, and vibrant community. It offers boutique shopping, stylish cafes, all close to Hagley Park and the Avon River for outdoor recreation. With top schools nearby and easy access to the CBD, Merivale combines convenience with a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere, making it one of the city's most desirable places.



Person Specification

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Sheffield Contacts



Andrea Bankier - Senior Consultant



Ph +64 27 447 8102, **Email** andrea.bankier@sheffield.co.nz

Andrea assists clients to create productive and sustainable work environments and deliver strategies that achieve organisational, business and individual outcomes. As an experienced organisational development consultant and human resource project manager, Andrea's learning and development expertise has allowed her to work with multidisciplinary teams, to build workforce capability across a range of sectors.



Emma Gifford - Search Consultant



Ph +64 3 374 9355, **Email** emma.gifford@sheffield.co.nz

Emma has a strong analytical and research background, with over 20 years experience in professional services and consultancy firms. She combines an interest in what makes businesses work well with a genuine interest in candidate care and enjoys working in an environment with a strong team focus that delivers quality outcomes for our clients.



Jane Cotter - Project Coordinator



Ph +64 3 353 4357, **Email** jane.cotter@sheffield.co.nz

Jane has an extensive recruitment background, having worked the majority of her career in the sector, in both consultant and coordinator roles in UK, Middle East, Australia and New Zealand markets. She has worked with government and private companies across many disciplines including engineering, education and health. Her focus is always to make the appointment process for candidates and clients smooth and enjoyable.



Kennedy Neal - Project Coordinator



Ph +64 3 353 4359, **Email** kennedy.neal@sheffield.co.nz

As Project Coordinator, Kennedy guides candidates through every step of the recruitment process, ensuring a positive experience. With a keen eye for detail and a passion for connecting talent with opportunity, Kennedy streamlines communication, coordinates interviews, and provides timely updates. Dedicated to excellence, Kennedy ensures each candidate feels valued and informed, making the recruitment journey seamless and rewarding.

Our Process



Search and Advertising

During this period a Sheffield consultant may contact you to discuss your application, explore your motivation for applying and assess your suitability and fit with the key competencies of the role. All applications received will be acknowledged via email.



Candidate Review

Sheffield will provide a formal report of all applications received with summarised candidates' information from CVs and cover letters, to the client for their consideration. All candidates will be advised of the status of their application within a week of the advertised closing date.



Consultant/Longlist Interviews

The lead consultant will interview those candidates selected for progression either face to face or via video meeting depending on location. The format will be a behavioural-based interview where you will be asked to provide examples from your career in relation to key competencies of the role. This will also be a chance to discuss motivations for applying and general career background, as well as to answer any queries you may have about the role.



Recommendations for Shortlist

From the initial longlist interviews, Sheffield make recommendations for shortlist to the client. We also provide a formal report to our client including summary points from your longlist interview. Those candidates not selected for further progression will also be advised at this stage.



Client/Shortlist Interviews

If you are progressing to the shortlist/client interview stage, you will be contacted and arrangements will be made for a suitable time for interview. We ask for your flexibility to make this work as easily for the client as possible.



Due Diligence and Decision

If you are the successful candidate this will involve reference checking and probity of education, employment and police records as well as online searches. Sheffield will support you with any due diligence required on your part. Unsuccessful candidates will also be informed at this stage and feedback will be provided.

How to Apply

Candidates can apply, in strict confidence, online at www.sheffield.co.nz.

To apply by email, please attach your cover letter and CV and send to cvchc@sheffield.co.nz quoting 9089aa.

Applications close on 12th February 2026. Emails will be electronically acknowledged, and further correspondence may be by email. For more information please phone Andrea Bankier on +64 27 447 8102.

Sheffield has prepared a Candidate Handbook which provides you with valuable information and suggestions for your job search. To read through the handbook please visit: [Candidate Handbook](#)

Working with Sheffield

You can expect that Sheffield will:

- Act with utmost integrity, honesty & with complete confidentiality
- Treat you with respect & comply with all relevant laws & policies
- Maintain a high level of communication throughout a recruitment process
- Demonstrate the highest levels of individual skills & knowledge

In return, we would like to expect that you will:

- Be up front and completely honest with us
- Prepare thoroughly for all interviews
- Treat your consultant as the potential employer with the same courtesy and respect they show you
- Work closely with your consultant

The information contained in this document is a reflection of the essential elements of the position and company history as represented to Sheffield by He Māpara Mātauranga Elmwood Normal School and is not intended as a formal position description. It will be subject to further elaboration or clarification at a later stage in the selection process and Sheffield accepts no liability for any representations made in good faith.

Trusted advisors in
sourcing, selecting and
shaping leaders for
over 60 years

sheffield 
Sheffield South Island

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