



## **Autism NZ Education Hub**

Autism NZ Education Hub will cater for autistic and neurodivergent secondary school students who have struggled with traditional schooling.

The school, sponsored by Autism NZ, will open in July 2026 and will operate from two campuses in Wellington and Auckland.

Autism NZ chief executive Dane Dougan says the hub will provide education for autistic students struggling with anxiety, sensory sensitivities, social-emotional challenges and those who have specific academic needs.

“Many of these students are at risk of disengaging — or have already disengaged — from traditional education,” he says.

The school will create tailored programmes for its students, based on the needs, abilities, interests and strengths of each student. The programme will recognise the talents and potential of neurodivergent learners while addressing areas where support is needed. The learning environment will be highly structured yet flexible, ensuring that students can thrive in ways that suit their individual learning styles.

Mr Dougan says each day will begin with calm and care. Students will be welcomed into a familiar routine that helps them feel safe and ready to learn. Their day follows a personalised plan built around their strengths, interests, and needs. Core subjects will be balanced with life skills, social-emotional learning and time for movement, quiet, or assistive tools — whatever helps them thrive.

“When learning from home, a trusted adult is nearby, and their teacher or learning facilitator is always within reach,” Mr Dougan says. “In-person sessions offer connection, confidence, and the joy of learning with others.

“This is not a one-size-fits-all model. The student is known, valued, and supported — not just to succeed in school, but to grow into who they are meant to be.”

The education hub will offer both NCEA and vocational pathways. It will work in partnership with families, local communities and Autism NZ.