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SPECIAL EDUCATION

INFORMATION GUIDE

Introduction

This booklet has been produced to introduce The Correspondence School (TCS) to prospective students and contains useful tips and guidance for existing students. Our students range in age from five years through to adults with special education needs.

Want to contact us?



Check out our website: www.correspondence.school.nz



Email: info@correspondence.school.nz

Email your teacher: firstname.surname@correspondence.school.nz

Email the library: library@correspondence.school.nz



Phone: 04 473 6841 or freephone 0800 65 99 88

or +64 4 473 6841 from overseas



Fax: 04 471 2406

or +64 4 471 2406 from overseas



Write to us:

The Correspondence School

Private Bag 39992

Wellington Mail Centre

Lower Hutt 5045

New Zealand.

Sending in school work? Use the above address,

or (NZ students only) use our freepost service:

FREEPOST No.10010

Your teacher's name here

The Correspondence School

(remaining address as above)

Want to contact TCS library? Just add *Attention: Library.*

What do we teach?

Our programmes for years 1–13 students are based on the New Zealand Curriculum. We offer credits towards the National Certificate in Work and Community Skills (Supported Learning) for years 10 upwards.

How do our students learn?

Our teaching methods can differ from those of other schools because we teach from a distance. We use a mix of print, audio, video and other resources suited to an individual student's needs.

What support is available?

Despite teaching from a distance, our teachers recognise the importance of having a good relationship with their students and their families. We encourage students and supervisors to discuss their learning needs directly with their teacher, all of whom can be contacted by letter, phone, email or fax. The library has resources available to parents and supervisors of full-time students living in New Zealand. There are resources to help with parenting and to help support your student's education. Full-time students can enrol with TCS library.

How much does it cost to study with TCS?

If a student meets the enrolment criteria of the Ministry of Education, www.minedu.govt.nz, there are no fees. However, full-time students are asked to make a voluntary donation of \$75 per school year for each student or \$100 for a family where more than one student is enrolled. The donation is tax deductible. A student who does not qualify under the Ministry of Education enrolment criteria can enrol as a fee-paying student (Please note: this does not apply to early childhood).

Distance learning – how is it different?

Studying with TCS means you send and receive your student's school work in the mail, or by fax or email. When you enrol with TCS we send you material you will need for studying at a distance, including a sheet of student identification labels, plastic bags and address cards.

e-learning

The Correspondence School offers some courses or parts of courses using the Internet and other electronic media.

Learning in this way will enable students to:

- interact with other students and their teacher in a password-protected online classroom
- be part of a collaborative group of learners
- communicate with their teacher using email
- access and participate in a variety of online learning activities
- use hands-on equipment and digital resources (for example CD, DVD, flash drive, MP3 files) in addition to booklets and other printed material
- record their learning in digital formats (for example Word, PowerPoint, Excel and a range of freely available software) as well as working in booklets.

Students enrolled in a course with a significant e-learning component will require:

- daily access to a computer with a stable Internet connection
- a means of listening to an audio CD
- a readily accessible email address with a recognised Internet Service Provider (ISP), i.e. not Hotmail, Yahoo or other online email providers
- any text processing or presentation software, for example Microsoft Office, MS Works or similar
- access to Skype.

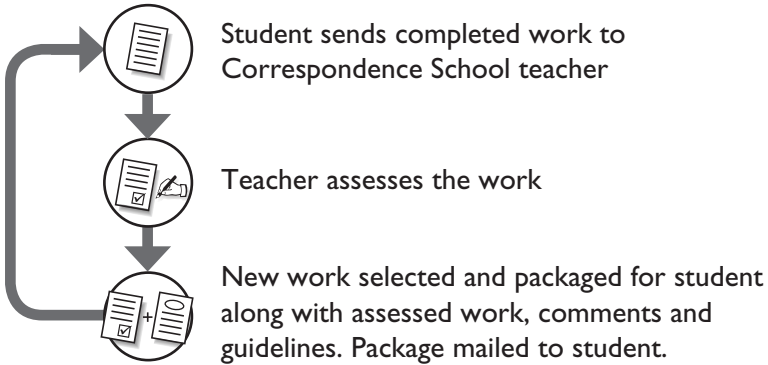
Optional items:

- a digital camera or PXT enabled mobile phone
- graphics, image editing or drawing software
- a microphone and appropriate software
- an MP3 recorder
- webcam.

Not every TCS course has a significant e-learning component. Students without access to the above equipment will not be excluded or disadvantaged in their access to TCS resources. They can still submit work and interact with their teacher in the traditional manner, i.e. using TCS booklets and other resources sent by mail, and making telephone contact with the teacher.

If you want to find out more about e-learning at TCS please refer to our website (www.correspondence.school.nz).

Tips for studying at a distance



Send in your student's school work as soon as they finish it – roughly every two or three weeks. Don't wait to hear from the teacher before going on with the next lot of work. Regular return of work will ensure your student's teacher can give regular feedback and keep up the supply of further postings of work suited to your student's learning needs.

Before mailing your student's completed work to the teacher, go through this checklist. Have you:

- completed the learning module sheet providing feedback for the teacher?
- included your student's comments on their learning where possible?
- completed any assessment sheets for printed material?
- ensured breakable items are wrapped in bubble wrap?
- checked puzzles are complete and in plastic bags?

- told the teacher of any problems with doing the work?
Let the teacher know by writing a note, faxing or emailing them, or including a message on the audio with oral work
- included any audio recordings your student has made for the teacher?
- attached an address label or written the student's name and address on the cover sheet?
- attached the cover sheet (if there is one) to the front of the work for that booklet?
- added the address card?

Now you're ready to return your student's completed work.

- 1 Put all the items you want to return into a TCS green bag with one of the address cards provided.
- 2 Check that the address card has the student's name and ID number; Correspondence School teacher's name and delivery area (Special education).
- 3 Seal the bag with sticky tape. No postage is necessary if sending within New Zealand.

Live outside New Zealand?

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries prohibits any biological specimens being sent through the mail. For example, do not send any seeds, leaves or food along with your school work.

Return completed work by airmail. To cut down on postage costs, send in the work your student's teacher has requested for assessment. Include all the checklists, comment pages, work done on tape and photos of art work. Return resource books and audio visual resources with student work. Always include your student ID number and the topic code. Your marked work will be returned by airmail at no cost to you.

When your student's work comes back



With your student, read carefully through the returned work, paying attention to any comments and suggestions from the teacher.



You can discuss these further with the teacher by letter, phone or email.

Your teacher will work with you and your student to plan their programme of learning. The teacher will give feedback about your student's work by writing, emailing or phoning you. If your student has a problem with an activity, encourage them to try and do as much of it as they can, then contact the teacher if you need help.

Full-time students

Your teacher will work with you to create an education plan for the year and keep track of your progress against the agreed goals in the plan.

Need help?

Phone the school and ask for your student's teacher. Alternatively, email your query or write a letter and post it with the work.

Contacting your student's teacher

Contact the teacher by phone, fax or email. Teachers appreciate hearing from their students.

More specifically, you should contact your teacher if:

- your student is running out of work or work doesn't arrive on time
- you receive the wrong booklets or something is missing
- the work is too easy or too difficult
- there are any medical or family circumstances affecting your student's schoolwork
- you have any problems regarding the schoolwork
- your home address, phone number, fax number or email address changes.

What does my student need in order to study at TCS?

TCS provides online support and teaching materials such as booklets, workbooks, readers, audio, CDs, DVDs, interactive CD-ROMs, textbooks, a mathematics box, a science box, an art pack, craft materials for primary level technology, and the loan of technology tools at secondary level. Special education programmes may include puzzles, games, activities and manipulative items.

Students are required to provide their own general stationery supplies. Computer and internet access are useful and desirable for your student.

Some courses may require students to have their own materials and/or textbooks. Refer to our website, under Study with us/Course list, to see lists of materials and/or books required for different courses.

Planning your student's timetable

We suggest you draw up a timetable to suit your student's working and learning style. Allow time for them to become involved in all their learning areas.

Use this grid to plan your student's timetable, then keep it in a place where you can see it each day.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Morning break				
	Lunch				

Tips for supervisors

Your role is to support your student to develop skills and knowledge to become more independent in their learning.

Here are some tips on how you can provide support:

- Set up a comfortable, clear and tidy workspace.
- Be prepared ahead of time.
- Ensure your student has all the materials they require.
- Plan a daily routine.
- Plan the day's programme together. (The timetable on page 10 may be helpful.)
- Set daily learning goals.
- Talk about what your student has learnt each day
- Discuss and mark your student's work with them for immediate feedback and praise. This will help your student's learning.
- Ask questions to stimulate thinking and inquiry.
- Read and discuss lots of books with your student.
- Send in regular tapes of your student reading.
- Encourage and praise effort and success.
- Have fun learning new skills and knowledge together.
- Have regular short breaks during the day.
- Learn new skills yourself.

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the learning process. Teachers assess and provide feedback on key areas of learning for students. The goal is for each student to work at the level that is right for them.

Supported learning standards

Students may study units which earn credits towards the National Certificate in Work and Community Skills (Supported Learning). The supervisor and verifier (who authenticates the assessment tasks carried out by the student) play a pivotal role in implementing the programme. Contact your teacher if your secondary age student is interested in these units.

Reporting on student progress

Student Education Plans (SEPs) set aspirational goals which identify your student's next learning steps. They are developed in consultation with supervisors and students and used by the teacher to develop the student's programme of learning. The SEP process throughout the year is:

Term 1 (or within eight weeks of enrolment throughout the year)
– consulting and setting the SEP goals with student, supervisor and teacher

Term 2 – mid year review and resetting new goals where appropriate

Term 4 – end of year SEP review and overall comment.

Other information

Does TCS have any sports, clubs or activities?

TCS has a range of clubs for full-time students in Years 6 to 13, for example: a Christian club, cooking club, Māori club, snowboard/ski team racers club and craft club. Students in Years 1 to 13 can join the Lone Guides and Lone Scouts.

For students 15yrs+ there are opportunities to sail on the Spirit of Adventure.

Contact your student's teacher for further details on clubs or activities.

TCS holds camps and events during the school year. We include information about these in our newsletters and also on our website (www.correspondence.school.nz).

Leaving school?

If you are going to start at another school give your teacher the school name. If you are planning to leave school, you may need a leaving certificate. Contact your teacher for details.

TCS has information about career planning and transition to work – check our website for information and useful links to other websites.

Does TCS have any medical or dental services?

No. If you want your student to have a medical examination you will need to make arrangements outside of TCS with the Medical Officer of Health at your local District Health Board office. (You will find them listed in the front section of the phone book under *Hospitals and other health service providers*.) Or you can contact your local public health nurse.

Students are entitled to a free dental service up till their 18th birthday. This is provided by dentists in private practice, but not all dentists are part of this scheme. You can call a dentist and ask if they are a provider under a government contract. Or you can get the names of dentists who are part of the scheme by contacting your local District Health Board office. Ask to speak to the Dental Services manager. Primary students need to be enrolled with the School Dental Service. To obtain an enrolment form, contact your local school dental clinic or phone your local District Health Board as above.

The Home Supervisors Allowance

TCS administers the Home Supervisors Allowance on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The payment recognises that you supervise student learning. Supervisors of full-time students in New Zealand should refer to our website or contact us for more information.

Return of work and ‘attendance’

For full-time TCS students, ‘attendance’ means regularly sending in work they have done that is related to the programmes/courses they are enrolled in. This is referred to as ‘assessable’ work.

When full-time TCS students don’t ‘attend’ school for an extended period of time, they are truanting. We will notify parents/caregivers/whanau by letter if there has been no work from the student for a month or more. To ensure this does not happen, encourage your student to send in assessable work every two to three weeks. If there is a reason why the student can’t send in regular work, let the teacher know.

Students who are truanting cannot remain on our roll. If they are under 16 years of age we also have to refer them to the Ministry of Education’s Non-Enrolled Truancy Service (NETS).

TCS students may be approached by local Truancy Officers, whose job it is to see that students are enrolled at and attending school. Students who have their TCS ID card with them can show that to the Truancy Officer, or they can give them their name and the Truancy Officer will check with TCS. We will confirm whether your student has been returning assessable work regularly, and whether their TCS ‘attendance’ is satisfactory.

Moving on from TCS?

Pack up and return all materials on loan. Mark parcels with *Attention*, then the *teacher's name*. Include student name, address and ID number in and on all packs of material. Send your parcels by:

- freepost if you live in New Zealand
- air or surface mail if you live overseas (you pay for this).

If you are planning to attend another school, let your TCS teacher know as soon as possible which school you will be going to.