



# green school

NEW ZEALAND

## Green School Diploma FAQs

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## Why are we doing a Green School Diploma?

People come to Green School looking for a child centred, exam free environment, where learners thrive with purpose, pursuing interests with a sense of passion, and helping make a sustainable future.

Exam or external assessment focused 'programmes' create much of the disengagement, frustration, stress, unhappiness and 'failure' we see in 'traditional' schools. We choose differently. Following Green School Bali, we are offering a High School Diploma using the US model. We will be accredited by New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and use the mastery transcript to build a portfolio of learning aligned to Green School NZ competencies. The transcript will be what learners share with universities or employers to showcase their competencies and learning.

We join other leading schools like Think Global and Phillips Exeter in the US in pursuing this model of competency based learning. It aligns to our goal to Thrive with Purpose, and puts us on the cutting edge of student centred, mission driven learning.

## How does this align with our mission?

Competency based learning aligns strongly with our mission, in that it allows for both personalisation of the learning journey and to focus on competencies which express our mission for sustainability.

## How does it build upon the Year 1 - 10 curriculum?

Up until Year 10 learners are using the four ways of learning: Proficiencies, Voyage, Koru and Hikoi. We use the NZ Curriculum and the Green School Skills and Values as the language of learning to communicate and plan for this learning.

The competencies for the diploma then build and upon and take these much further. We continue to keep the NZC in view to ensure an appropriate level of challenge, whilst not tied to formal structures like NCEA.

## How is it accredited?

As above, the accreditation of the Diploma will be through NEASC - who will accredit both the school and the diploma programme and allow us to award a High School Diploma. The mastery transcript consortium will then provide the services we need to create a transcript, and they also advocate for the recognition of that transcript.

Other learning the learners do in Passion and Play may also be accredited in its own right.

## What are the strands of the learning?

**There are four strands for the Diploma Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share and Passion and Play, they are described below:**

### Earth Care

Earth Care is about experiencing and understanding the natural environments in our local context. We use these experiences to understand and take action on Global Issues. We explore the sea, river, land, underland and mountain. In each we explore how the environment and systems within it work; indigenous beliefs and practices; and the different ways people engage with it in extractive, sustainable or regenerative ways. Using Hart's Ladder, we scaffold experiences of taking collaborative regenerative action.

An essential part of stewardship of the natural world is developing a connection to nature. We create lived experiences of moving through and surviving in the natural world. Much of the learning in the different environments will be experiential. These experiences also form rites of passage which we hope to culminate in summiting the maunga.

### People Care

Our Koru curriculum in Years 1 - 10, grows into the People Care strand of the Diploma. This is underpinned by Te Whare Tapa Whā, a holistic model for health developed by Sir Mason Durie one of New Zealand's greatest Maori leaders. Te Whare Tapa Whā outlines four taha, or aspects, that contribute to holistic health - Taha Wairua (Spiritual wellbeing), Taha Whanau (Social wellbeing) Taha Hinengaro (Mental/emotional



wellbeing) and Taha Tinana (Physical wellbeing). In this strand our learners build expertise in supporting their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others in both a New Zealand and international context.

Within people care we include rites of passage that allow learners opportunities for awe, wonder and a sense of the numinous. We create experiences and an environment rich in possibilities. We build mindful practices.

In order to develop cultural competence and understanding of the different ways cultures understand and engage with the human condition and the natural world, we arrange exchanges with other Green Schools.

## **Fair Share**

Green School is an entrepreneurial community, and the OECD Education 2030 project emphasises the importance of 'creating value' as a transformative competency. In Fair Share the learners go on a journey to understand how people create value, considering a triple bottom line (financial, social and environmental value). In the Fourth Industrial Revolution, understanding how to build and leverage networks for action, learning or influence is an essential skill. In relation to other areas of their learning, students will learn how to communicate and build networks in online spaces and leverage these networks.

Part of the fourth industrial revolution we are living through, is the ability to create micro or peer to peer businesses that take advantage of platforms like Instagram, or Etsy, as well as emerging technologies related to AI and the internet of things. Our learners learn how to create, operate and close down microbusinesses in these spaces.

During their diploma all our learners will engage with the business cycle and create a small business, which they might want to keep at graduation or shut down having learned how to create value and have a positive impact on the world.

## **Passion and Play**

Students develop passion, expertise and engagement in up to three areas of focus, and in so doing "learn how to learn". They understand the important elements of the neuroscience of learning, in preparation for a lifetime of learning and unlearning that lies ahead of them.

These areas will be co-constructed with learners and parents and might include taking credentials or brokered content with providers as appropriate.

## **What about traditional subjects and content knowledge?**

The learning of the Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share will be interdisciplinary in nature but pulling on the disciplines as tools to make sense of the world and take action. But the individual disciplines will not have 'separate lessons'. Literacy and numeracy will continue within the Diploma to the level equivalent to those required for NCEA.

In Passion and Play learners can pursue areas of interest or specialism. These might include taking qualifications in disciplinary specific areas.

## **Can my child take any brokered content, like an A Level or accredited course in a subject they are passionate about?**

Yes. Our goal is to cater for students' passions and specialisms in Passion and Play. Based on individual arrangements this might include taking courses with Crimson Global or with WITT for example, as well as taking industry recognised courses depending on the child's areas of interest.

## **Who is developing the Diploma?**

The initial framing of the diploma is coordinated by Stuart MacAlpine, supported by Sophie Bradley. Sophie will then continue to support, and Stuart will move to a consultancy role. Many people have contributed to the development of the diploma so far. We have had input from Bali Green School, Green School International and particularly Leslie Medema the Head of Learning for Green School International. We have also had subject experts from universities and organisations to support specific strands of the diploma. Many of our parents also have deep expertise in areas we are interested in and we are grateful for being able to tap into these. We also of course have access to a massive breadth of existing curricula and programmes.

## How will you achieve university recognition?

We will be working with universities (and this has already begun) in NZ to support their recognition of our Diploma. Bali has already done this with its diploma and has been extremely successful in gaining students access to their first choice universities, including Auckland. Green School International will also support us here.

## What happens if learners want to transition out to another school during the diploma years?

Obviously transitioning during any diploma (IB, NCEA, A levels) to another system is challenging, however if a student wants to transition to NCEA at another school they would use their mastery transcript to show their learning so far, and we would have covered learning equivalent to the requirements for Literacy and Numeracy for NCEA (level 1 Maths, and Level 2 English equivalency) as part of our competencies, so they could seek to gain recognition for their learning in literacy and numeracy, and then transition to the relevant subjects at the level of NCEA they were they were interested in.

## How do you moderate the Mastery Credits/Competencies?

Some of the moderation or assessment of the competencies is in the fact that we can actually show the learner's portfolio – so rather like an art portfolio for art school, we don't need to moderate, but rather just show the university or employer how good the actual work is. However, we do need to internally make decisions about whether the work matches the quality of what we would expect. We can use this by loosely benchmarking against similar achievement at NCEA or equivalent qualifications, and this could be a conversation with the learner if we feel there is more that needs to be demonstrated to achieve the mastery credit. The Mastery Transcript Consortium will also support us with advice around this.

## Can you fail the diploma?

If you don't complete the 'foundation credits' then you would not complete the diploma, but this is almost inconceivable and we would support learners who found it challenging to meet the basic requirements. What then matters is the quality of work that you can show to demonstrate your competence and advanced competencies – but it is not a matter of failure or passing grades.

## Can you gain mastery credits for work done outside of school?

Yes. It is about what the learner can do independently. It is not about where or when they did it. We would hope that the line between 'school' and 'real life' is very blurred in our diploma, and their passions and interests all form part of their diploma.

## Can collaborative work be used as evidence of their mastery credit.

Yes. In fact much of the successful work taking action will almost certainly have collaboration as part of it. However, their role and learning, which they are showcasing, or shared achievements, should be very clear in the evidence provided.

## Can I as a parent help them by 'doing' some of their work alongside them?

No. You can be a mentor or teacher, like anyone else can be, but you cannot do things for them, as then the credit no longer shows their mastery – it shows yours. Just as you might encourage your child to draw, or give them tips for their portfolio – but you can't draw something and then say it is their work.

## **When do we see their competencies?**

You will see learning posted to HERO immediately as they do it. When learning is curated and posted to the Mastery Transcript we will alert you and ensure that you can see it. At the Kanohi ki te kanohi you will also have the chance to review all the evidence of learning.

## **How does the Passion and Play bit work for my child?**

We will meet with both your child and you as a family to discuss what their pathway looks like, and what their goals are after school, and how to create that personalised learning.

## **Do the mastery credits happen ‘at the end’ or ‘all the way through’.**

They happen all the way through as the learners take action, follow passions and reach milestones.