

Al Noor Charitable Trust

Question 1: Please confirm your rationale for the proposed school curriculum?

Our Response: AKA Curriculum Rationale

An-Nur Kiwi Academy (AKA) is structured as Muslim culture-based boys' high school with special focus on mathematics and science. This is in accord with guidelines 2.5.5 and 2.5.6 on PSKH by the Ministry of Education. AKA education programme is based on **New Zealand curriculum** and features a rigorous approach to nine basic academic disciplines: English language, mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, ICT, Islamic studies, Arabic language, and physical education. **Focusing on mathematics and science are paramount for career competitiveness of our students in contemporary world at the national and international levels.**

NZ curriculum has placed an emphasis on educating the diversified population in this country with the aim of creating productive citizens who can make an impact on the global scene. By educating our youth to be able to function in a variety of environments with diverse people and in several languages AKA will be at the forefront of producing individuals who can work to bring more opportunities to New Zealand through their education gained from the AKA curriculum. Just this week, survey by the Asia Foundation indicated that while students recognised the importance of Asia, more than half of those students did not feel comfortable or prepare to work in that environment (

http://www.asianz.org.nz/sites/asianz.org.nz/files/Asia_Aware_Students_Survey_May_2013.pdf and NZ Herald article: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10883442).

AKA curriculum will prepare students to be competent to function in both New Zealand and the Muslim countries of Asia and the Arab countries. The curriculum is also aimed at:

- 1- Educating students who would be fully integrated culturally and connected to a wider population of New Zealand considering AKA would attract students from diverse ethnic and economic background nationally and internationally.
- 2- Ensure our students acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and values expected of a well-educated person.
- 3- Foster positive attitudes and values; especially being respectful, motivated and inclusive.
- 4- Provide equitably for all students, regardless of ethnicity and gender.
- 5- Enable students to achieve success in national qualifications.
- 6- Prepare students for either tertiary education, or entry to the workforce.
- 7- Recognise the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the multicultural diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand, and incorporate these into learning programmes

The following Table details the rationale for the various subjects of AKA curriculum.

Subject	Rationale
English	Active and effective participation in New Zealand society as well as international

Language	<p>community is based on the ability to speak, listen, view, read, and write English with fluency, confidence, purpose, and enjoyment in a wide range of contexts. The study of English language encompasses a student's ability to use language appropriately and effectively, as well as his ability to use language as a means of learning in other areas of the curriculum. Through language use, students discover information, work through ideas, and express thoughts and feelings. They learn how language works, and how to use it well. Learning about texts and language is important to the personal and social development of the individual. Students need to understand and control the English language to develop the competence and confidence needed to meet the demands of school, employment, and further education. The basic structure to learning in New Zealand is English. The most important reason to learn English language is that it is relevant to virtually all subjects. In English language subject, students are actively involved in reading, viewing, writing, comparing, and talking about texts. Students are encouraged to explore, interact with, and appreciate a wide range of literature, and to take pleasure in using texts to explore ideas and to think critically about their community and the global community. Knowledge about how language functions and how it both reflects and shapes social attitudes assists students to achieve a better understanding of themselves, their cultures, and the world.</p>
Mathematics	<p>In today's world, those who understand and can do mathematics will have opportunities that others do not. Mathematical competence opens doors to productive futures while a lack of mathematical competence closes those doors. All students deserve an opportunity to understand the power and beauty of mathematics. In order for this to happen, students need rigorous, high quality curriculum and instruction. This must include "high expectations and strong support for all students" as well as coherent, focused activities presented effectively and based on the students' prior knowledge of mathematics (NCTM). The assessment strategies should support learning and produce useful feedback to help the teacher reflect on and analyze teaching methods. This task is of critical importance to the success of our students to provide them with the superior thinking skills necessary to fulfil their personal ambitions and career goals in this ever-changing world.</p>
Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology for senior years)	<p>At the present time, the rate at which developments in science and technology are taking place has enormous implications for the wellbeing of our society. The values that guide scientific endeavour: respect for living things and the environment; respect for evidence and the opinions of others; honesty in collecting and presenting data; openness to new ideas, are the basis of responsible citizenship. Science is part of our heritage and part of our everyday lives at work, at leisure or in the home. It is important that all young people experience a sound science education given our rapidly-evolving, technologically-driven, world. Some will become the trained scientists and engineers required to build a vibrant and sustainable economy. Others will encounter science and its applications in the workplace and at home. Everyone needs to have the capacity to engage as confident individuals and effective communicators in informed debate, and make informed decisions about scientific issues of social, moral and ethical, economic and environmental importance. In order to prepare children and young people for their future lives and careers in the 21st century the two main purposes of science education are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Enable young people to develop as scientifically literate citizens, able to hold and defend informed views on social, moral, ethical, economic and environmental issues related to science; and 2- Prepare them for further, more specialised, learning by developing their secure understanding of the 'big ideas' and concepts of science. <p>Through science, students develop their understanding of the living, material and physical world. They can increase their awareness of the pace and significance of</p>

	developments in biology, chemistry and physics and acquire knowledge and understanding of the impact of science on their own health and wellbeing, the health of society and the health of the environment. They are able to develop important, transferable skills to prepare them to be enterprising and creative adults. Through collaborative investigative tasks they can learn to interpret data, make deductions and draw valid conclusions based on evidence. Through learning about science in relevant, real-life contexts they can acquire the ability to express and justify their views on science-based issues of importance to society, based on knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and concepts. Taken together, this learning through science will help their development as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
Physical Education	Physical education is an essential and integral part of the total education program at AKA. It makes significant contributions toward the achievement of desirable educational and health outcomes through the medium of physical activity. AKA physical education program promotes the physical growth and development of youth while contributing to their general health and well-being. It is based on a planned sequence of experiences in a wide variety of activities beginning with basic movement skills and progressing toward complex sports, and other forms of movement. Ultimately, it should help young people keep physically fit and enjoy many forms of physical activity during the school years and continuing throughout life.
ICT	As ICT underpins today's modern lifestyle it is essential that all pupils gain the confidence and ability, that they need in this subject, to prepare them for the challenge of a rapidly developing and changing technological world. The use of ICT will also enhance and extend pupil's learning across the whole curriculum whilst developing motivation and social skills.
Islamic studies	The purpose of Islamic education as guided by the holy Quran and the traditions of Prophet Mohammad is to prepare the pupils for a life of purity and sincerity. This total commitment to character-building based on the ideals of Islamic ethics is the ultimate goal of Islamic education. Islamic education at AKA, first and foremost, will focus on teaching values and emphasize issues of identity and self-esteem; furthermore, it will address the real concerns of students, and it will emphasize and provide for training in leadership. Finally, in order to achieve the goals of Islamic education it is essential to gain the active involvement of parents and the community. Ultimately, it will help young people keep spiritually fit and develop wise approach to adopting a meaningful life.
Arabic language	<p>The primary reason for including Arabic language as a subject in AKA curriculum is that Arabic is the liturgical language of Islam, the faith of over 1 billion followers. Therefore, millions know Arabic as a second language because it is the language of the holy book of Islam, the Quran. Other reasons of the benefits of learning Arabic are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabic is the 5th most commonly spoken native language in the world. Arabic is the official language of over 20 countries with well over 300 million native speakers. It is also the official language in the UN, the Arab League, The Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the African Union. • Arabic speakers are in high demand and low supply in the western world. With the growing importance of the Middle East in international affairs, there is an extreme shortage of workers in the west who are versed in the Arabic language and culture. Speaking Arabic increases job opportunities for careers in a variety of fields at the national level as well as in the Arab countries. • There are financial incentives for learning Arabic when considering careers in the Arab countries. • Arabic speaking nations are a fast growing market for trade for New Zealand. The Arab region, with its rapidly growing population, provides a huge export market for

	<p>goods and services which Kiwis should tap into to strengthen New Zealand economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Arabic would increase international understanding and promote global communication. <p>Therefore benefits of Arabic language to AKA students can hardly be overstated.</p>
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Question 2: If you propose to use proportions of unregistered teachers, what is your compelling rationale for this?

Our Response: AKA will employ only highly qualified staff, priority to NZ registered teachers

The founding committee of AKA is well informed of the growing body of literature^{*} which shows that student achievement is more heavily influenced by teacher quality than by students' race, class, prior academic record, or school a student attends. Research also shows that poor and minority students produce significant gains when assigned to effective teachers. In light of these findings and in line with **Government's Better Public Services target of 85 percent of 18 year olds having NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent in 2017**, AKA will only seek recruitment of highly qualified staff for all teaching positions and priority will always be given to NZ registered teachers.

An-Nur Kiwi Academy (AKA) is structured as Muslim culture-based boarding boys' high school. Therefore, Islamic studies and Arabic language subjects are integral components of the special character of AKA. While it is the aim of AKA to employ registered NZ teachers, there may be particular situations where we may not find qualified registered teachers for these subjects, but where we find highly qualified individuals with need expertise (e.g. in the areas of Islamic studies, Arabic language). If we do employ unregistered individuals, AKA intends to ensure that these individuals are holders of NZQA recognized university degree (preferably advanced degrees such as MSc & PhD) in their subject and followed by a one-year Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) or a combined specialist subject degree and secondary teaching qualification, have 5+ years of experience as teachers in overseas high school experience. All employees and instructors will be highly vetted for character as well as qualifications and would be required to operate within the NZ best practices.

*References: Linda Darling-Hammond (2000). Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence, **Education Policy Analysis Archives**. Vol. 8(1), pp 1-44.

Question 3: How will your teaching and learning programmes support priority learners (please provide evidences)?

Our Response: AKA aims to promote excellence in learning and teaching practices

AKA is aiming to develop a student-centered success culture and a staff-centered enabling culture, attaches the highest importance to ensuring consistently high quality learning experiences and outcomes for all its students and to supporting academic staff that are needed to achieve these goals. Positive learning

outcomes reflect interplay between the teaching activities and learning environment provided by the school and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of its students. The following principles aim to guide excellence in learning and teaching practices at AKA, while recognizing that effective learning and teaching involves a partnership between students, parents, community and AKA.

- Create an engaging, motivating, and intellectually stimulating learning experience.
- Encourage the spirit of critical inquiry and creative innovation informed by current research.
- Emphasize the importance, relevance, and integration of theory and knowledge with professional practice to develop solutions to real world issues.
- Provide learning experiences that develop inter-culturally capable graduates who can make a difference as socially and ethically responsible New Zealand citizens.
- Value and recognize individual and cultural diversity through the provision of an inclusive context of support and respect for all students.
- Enhance student engagement and learning through effective curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment strategies.
- Continuously improve teaching practice through academic staff professional development, and critical reflection informed by a range of evaluation approaches.

An-Nur Kiwi Academy (AKA) is structured as Muslim culture-based boarding boys high school, therefore the students AKA may enrol are Muslim kiwi boys. Having said the above AKA will not be restricted to Muslim students but warmly wide open to all students from the NZ larger community. AKA motto “All pupils warmly welcome”.

NZ Muslims comprise many ethnicities amongst Maoris, Pacifica, refugees and migrants (low socio-economic backgrounds). It is very pleasing to indicate that AKA has received overwhelming support from the community including parents from **Maoris, Pacifica, refugees and migrants’ background** for its proposed education programme (**Appendix 1**).

Although NZ education system is world-leading in many respects, however these groups of students have not been reaching their potential in education. Therefore, it is anticipated that AKA students’ body will comprise large number of low achieving students. AKA recognizes this challenge and is prepared to tackle it head on **through AKA’s innovative education philosophy of balanced nurturing of the spirit, the mind and the body** weaving academic excellence with highest morals and ethics.

In resuming this heavy undertaking, AKA will implement the findings of a comprehensive literature review by Stephen Lamb and Suzanne Rice (2008) entitled “Effective Intervention Strategies for Students at Risk of Early Leaving” (<http://www.gllen.org.au/downloads/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Effective%20interventions%20discussion%20paper%20revised.pdf>).

These strategies formed part of programs for which there was good research evidence suggesting that they support priority learners. In brief, the support strategies for priority learners are grouped into three areas:

(1) Supportive school culture (school commitment): This is about the broad school approach to students, to teaching and learning and addressing the needs of students at risk. It is about management, leadership,

school culture and the commitment of the school to improvement for all. It is the commitment of the school at this level that enhances the success of any specific or targeted interventions to produce improvements.

(2) School-wide strategies (school-level initiatives): This is about specific strategies or initiatives that are adopted school-wide, affecting all students, but which help improve student engagement and reduce rates of early leaving.

(3) Student-focused strategies (initiatives addressing needs of specific groups of students or individuals): This area relates to interventions that target specific groups of students. These are the programs that attempt to directly address the individual or group needs of at-risk students, rather than the whole student body.

As stated in the AKA PSKH application “Goals and Performance Measures, Section 3, Question 1(b)” AKA combines a range of the above strategies and therefore will allow AKA to significantly raise the educational achievements of its students including Māori, Pasifika, from low socio-economic backgrounds, and with special education needs in accord with AKA’s Mission *“To provide all learners with a meaningful and high standard of education by effective and dedicated educators aiming to promote and achieve excellence by using techniques which will promote critical thinking and responsible decision-making which will inculcate sound Islamic moral values and attitude”*.

AKA performance measures once implemented will; 1) foster connectedness, 2) increase the trust placed in students, 3) provide tasks with immediate, tangible benefits, 4) make spaces within schools and curricula for diverse student needs, 5) address poor achievement and 6) address practical personal obstacles to staying at school.

AKA is mindful that raising educational performance of low achieving students is rarely a problem free. The following is a list of barriers that may be encountered.

- 1- Financial barriers: Funds are required to implement new courses, train staff, or simply address the multiple social needs presented by at-risk students.
- 2- Attitudinal barriers: For example parents with low levels of education sometimes believed that leaving early had done them no harm, and so would not harm their children. In contrast, some parents refuse to approve of anything other than a university career for their children meant that students inappropriately took a tertiary education pathway, struggled, and then dropped out.
- 3- Attracting and retaining appropriate teaching staff: This will place limits on the breadth and quality of the programs the school is able to offer.

AKA stated “Goals and Performance Measures, Section 3, Question 1(b)” are formulated to overcome these barriers and therefore will allow AKA to significantly raise the educational achievements of all its students including Māori, Pasifika, from low socio-economic backgrounds, and with special education needs.

To conclude: AKA will offer opportunity for all Priority Learners such as Māori and Pacific learners, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs. By the structure of AKA as a Muslim culture based boarding boys high school with a close supportive environment, where

relationships and character (mana) will be priority and highly valued, Maori and Pasifika students find a comfortable environment where they can learn and excel. Through embracing difference and the importance of cultures, AKA will assist these learners to further cherish their heritage and improve connections with their communities and whanau. The Muslim population of New Zealand has a high refugee population which faces many of the concerns of other students who come from low socio-economic backgrounds. By providing a safe, comfortable environment to live and to excel for all students and especially those that board with AKA, we will be able to provide a stable atmosphere for these students to move forward without the disparity of social status impacting their progress. For students with special education needs, AKA will offer the opportunity for additional tutoring and one-on-one instruction in afternoon and evening tutorials. AKA anticipates testing all incoming students to assess their levels upon arrival and we will track these students to ensure that we provide that is needed for these students progress. It will be an AKA policy to not exclude students who are academically behind their peers, but rather we will promote moving each individual forward so that they can meet and hopefully exceed expectations and long term outcomes. The success of AKA would be judged on established NZ standards and guidelines like every school in the country, however, AKA would have an internal standard that requires paying particular attention to underperforming students to ensure they succeed rather than throwing or weeding them out in order to artificially enhance the performance of the school. AKA will judge its success on the basis of how many of the struggling students it helped to succeed in life in addition to what all other schools would be judged against.

Appendix 1

AKA Endorsement Letters