

Ruawai College
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Te Kura Tuarua o
Ruawai College
Kimihiā ngā maunga teitei | Seek the highest peak



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Ruawai College Statement in Support of Equitable Admission Pathways

8 September 2026

Kia ora,

As Principal of Ruawai College, I strongly support equitable admission pathways such as MAPAS, the Regional Rural Admission Scheme and other targeted pathways that recognise the realities faced by students from rural, Māori and under-represented communities. Our students have high aspirations. We have had Ruawai College students go on to study and work in medicine and across the wider health sector, and we continue to encourage our rangatahi to see these professions as places where they belong.

Ruawai College serves a rural community, with approximately 50% of our students identifying as Māori. Many of our young people experience barriers linked to distance, access, socioeconomic disadvantage and limited local opportunities. These barriers are real. Equity is not about lowering standards. Students admitted through equity-focused pathways must still meet the same academic, clinical and professional standards as every other medical graduate. These pathways simply recognise that not every student starts from the same position.

For students in rural communities, the pathway to medical school can look very different from that of students in large urban centres with greater access to specialist tutoring, subject choice, university networks and enrichment opportunities. That does not make rural students less capable or less deserving.

Our health system also needs doctors and health professionals who understand rural communities, Māori communities and the people they serve. Representation matters, particularly for young people deciding whether these professions are possible for them. Public commentary that portrays equity pathways as an unfair advantage risks misunderstanding their purpose and undermining the achievements of students who have worked incredibly hard to succeed.

At Ruawai College, we want our students to know that becoming a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, psychologist or other health professional is within their reach. Their postcode should not determine their potential. Their rurality should not limit their ambition. Being Māori should not mean having fewer opportunities.

We will continue to support pathways that maintain high standards while creating fairer access to opportunity. Our rangatahi have the ability and the aspirations. They deserve a genuine opportunity to realise them.

Aidyn Rasmussen

Principal / Tumuaki