## Check & Connect Te Hononga

A manual for Aotearoa New Zealand | He aratohu mā Aotearoa

### **Brief overview**



Positive \* Behaviour for Learning



#### Kei roto i a koe tōu ake mana.

# Within each of us lies the seed of potential.

Check & Connect | Te Hononga is a two-year mentoring initiative for secondary students who are in the early stages of disengaging from school or at risk of dropping out altogether. Check & Connect originated at the University of Minnesota and has been adapted for the Aotearoa New Zealand context by the Ministry of Education. It is part of the Ministry's Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) suite of initiatives that support the wellbeing and learning of students.

The Check & Connect manual is for schools that are considering or planning to implement Check & Connect. Its major sections cover:

- · the roles, relationships, and processes involved in implementing Check & Connect
- · detailed guidance for mentors
- how schools can evaluate their use of Check & Connect and ensure the initiative's fidelity.

The 'Check' in Check & Connect refers to the process where mentors systematically monitor attendance, achievement, and pastoral data to support problem solving. 'Connect' refers to the way mentors provide personalised, timely responses to help students solve problems, build skills, and enhance their competence.

In 2016, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) evaluated the outcomes from Check & Connect trials. Participating students and their mentors believed positive gains had been made and that the student-mentor relationship had a strong positive impact on how students felt about school and on their motivation and success.

*[I liked] being able to open up to someone who I trust. Being able to have someone understand what I go through with teachers. ...* 

I think the things that worked best for me were seeing someone that I could talk to every week and her checking on my progress and helping me through things I found hard. And she motivated me all the time.

#### Implementation overview

Scope the initiative through a bicultural lens, explain and promote it to the school board and staff, and determine who will lead. 2 **Understand** risk factors, determine indicators of disengagement, set risk criteria and 'high-risk' thresholds, and create the monitoring form. Understand 3 Use indicators and data to identify and nominate potential candidates. Scope Nominate 4 Approach or advertise for potential mentors, select and appoint them, Appoint and support staffing as necessary. 5 Match students and mentors, Match engage with whānau, and seek consent from whānau and students. Support 6 Provide ongoing **support** and Implement supervision for the mentor. Commu Implement the weekly 'check' Evaluate process. Mentor 8 **Respond** constructively, depending on risk level, with basic and intensive actions and strategies. 9) Engage in ongoing **communication** and relationship building with whānau and others in a position to support the student. 10 **Evaluate** initiative implementation (and, ultimately, initiative success).