



Altum

CLASSICAL ACADEMY

Democratising
excellence

Information Pack

Welcome to Altum Classical Academy

We understand that choosing a school is one of the most significant decisions you will make for your child. You are likely here because you are looking for something different: perhaps even an education that challenges the mind, nourishes character and respects the role of family.

The term, 'classical education', refers to an approach to education rooted in the ancient Hellenic notion of 'paideia'; later adopted and refined by the Romans in their emphasis on 'humanitas'; and carried through to modern times by the evolution of formal schools, universities with colleges of study, and an education founded in the liberal arts. Altum offers a knowledge-rich education that combines the best of the past with a vision for a flourishing future; fees-free.

In this pack you will find:

- How the classical model differs from modern schooling
- A glimpse of our curriculum and bookshelf
- A "day in the life" of an Altum student
- Essential information about Altum
- What our parents are saying





“Our mission is to give students the time-honoured master keys that will open the doors to their best future. Great heights await.”

Christian

Christian Pera,
Altum Classical Academy Principal

Why choose classical?

Modern education often focuses on skills without content. We believe you cannot think critically if you have nothing to think about. The best of the past still shapes wise, capable young people today. A classical education forms habits of attention, discipline and moral judgement.

A classical school builds strong minds and upright character through a knowledge-rich curriculum. The content is drenched in excellent literature and enduring ideas. It uses proven methods to prepare students for modern life, armed with strong literacy, clear reasoning and depth of character.

Standard modern schooling	The Altum way
Inquiry-based learning: students often “discover” knowledge themselves.	Explicit instruction: teachers are experts who actively teach and guide learning.
Digital-first: high reliance on laptops/tablets (BYOD).	Low-tech: pen, paper and books. Technology is a tool, not a teacher.
Open plan classrooms: large, noisy “modern learning environments”.	Dedicated classrooms: calm, structured spaces designed for focus.
Fragmented subjects: subjects often taught in isolation.	Integrated humanities: history, literature and art are woven together.
Focus: “21st century skills”	Focus: wisdom, virtue and knowledge.





“Altum Academy exists to democratise excellence — opening the doors of a knowledge-rich, classical education to every child, forming disciplined minds, virtuous character and a community where genuine learning is pursued with joy, rigour and shared purpose.”

Michael

Dr Michael Johnston,
Altum Academic Charitable Trust Chair

A look at our curriculum

Altum Classical Academy will follow the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) in respect to phases, knowledge and practices; alongside charter-specific adaptations outlined below:

Course	Primary Resources	Charter-specific Adaptations	Allocation
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source texts will be drawn from English Literature Canon. Emphasis will be on texts written in, or translated to the English language from antiquity to the Modern Period. The influence of the Judeo-Christian Tradition on English Literature will be explored and celebrated. Further emphasis will be placed on the agreed classics of The Canon – Shakespeare, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four hours
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – Mathematics & Statistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per NZC in all respects. Focus on fluency and depth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four hours
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per NZC in all respects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four hours
Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – Social Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The greater emphasis will be on the study of history and classics. The progression of core contexts will include: personal whakapapa; New Zealand History; Classical Antiquity; The Middle Ages; and the Modern Era. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hours
Te reo Māori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – Learning Languages – te reo Māori 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The acquisition of te reo Māori is a priority for all Altum students. Specific emphasis will be given to the evolution of te reo Māori into a language that is both spoken and written. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hours
Latin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambridge Latin Course Lingua Latina Per Se Illustrata 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The acquisition of Latin is a priority for all Altum students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hours
Pillars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NZC – Health & Physical Education, & Social Sciences In-house Resources 	<p>The progressive study and development of the 'Pillars of Character':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustworthiness Respect Responsibility Fairness Caring Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two hours
Games / Music / Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house Resources NZC – Health & Physical Education, The Arts, Music Community Engagement 	<p>The compulsory, self-directed participation in games (of sport and of strategy), visual arts, performing arts, and music.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three hours

Our bookshelf

At Altum, we don't read snippets; we read whole books where our students encounter the greatest minds in history.

Here's a sample of books you would find on our shelves:

English Literature

Romeo & Juliet - William Shakespeare

Macbeth - William Shakespeare

The Secret Garden - Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Jungle Book - Rudyard Kipling

Lord of the Flies - William Golding

The Wind in the Willows - Kenneth Graham

Danny the Champion of the World - Roald Dahl

Private Peaceful - Michael Morpurgo

The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe - C.S. Lewis

The Hobbit - J.R.R. Tolkien

The Happy Prince and Other Tales - Oscar Wilde

Robinson Crusoe - Daniel Defoe

Brave New World - Aldous Huxley

Animal Farm - George Orwell

Frankenstein - Mary Shelley

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone - J.K. Rowling

Alone on the Wide Wide Sea - Michael Morpurgo

NZ Literature

Pōrangī Boy - Shilo Kino

The Flight of the Fantail - Steph Matuku

The Garden Party - Katherine Mansfield

American Literature

Of Mice and Men - John Steinbeck

The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Old Man and the Sea - Ernest Hemingway

Charlotte's Web - E.B. White

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn - Mark Twain

White Fang and The Call of the Wild - Jack London

To Kill a Mockingbird - Harper Lee

International Literature

The Count of Monte Cristo - Alexandre Dumas

The Diary of a Young Girl - Anne Frank

Anne of Green Gables - L.M. Montgomery



A 'day in the life' of an Altum student

At Altum, English and Mathematics are part of the daily routine; Science and Humanities occur three times a week, and Pillars of Character, Latin and te reo Māori are learnt twice a week.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	Science	Pillars of Character	Pillars of Character	Mathematics	Testing
9:55	English	Science	Humanities	Humanities	Fine Art
11:10	Mathematics	English	Science	Te reo Māori	House Competition
12:05	Humanities	Mathematics	English	Latin	House Competition
1:40	Latin	Te reo Māori	Mathematics	English	School Service
2:35	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education	School Ends 3 pm
3:15	Electives e.g. Music, Athletics or Diorama	Electives e.g. Calligraphy, Debating or Gardening	Electives e.g. Chess, Cooking Club or D&D	Electives e.g. Latin Club, Maths Club or Running Club	
4:00	Prep	Prep	Prep	Prep	
4:30	School Ends	School Ends	School Ends	School Ends	





In the classroom

An Altum classroom is a calm, orderly yet lively place. Teachers teach explicitly; so students learn through discussion, memory work, close reading and problem-solving.

Location

66 Albemarle Road, Northland, 6012, Wellington.

As we have no zone, our students come from all over the Wellington region.

Wise use of tech

Personal devices are not permitted at school. Screens are used, but their use is minimal and purposeful. Students may occasionally use class laptops for research and coding, but they also learn how to research and think without relying on digital shortcuts.

Transport

Because our students come from far and wide we offer a shuttle service from Wellington Station to and from our campus.

The essentials

What is a charter school?

A charter school is essentially a state-funded independent school. Our schools are first and foremost subject to the same rigorous compliance standards as any other school, which ensure the highest standards in health and safety, student welfare and achievement, and operations. However, when it comes to how we achieve the agreed outcomes of our organisation, we have the freedom to be innovative and proactive in ensuring that our stakeholders get great results. In short, we provide much needed state-funded choice. This system creates a highly effective, outcomes-driven environment where school autonomy and agency are balanced for the benefit of all concerned.

Costs

It's free. Charter schools are government-funded, so there is no tuition fee. Families may incur school costs such as uniforms or extracurricular activities, but there are no fees for attendance.

Dress Code and Uniforms

Students wear a simple, neat uniform that reinforces a sense of belonging and removes distractions.

Year Levels

We are both an intermediate and high school. In our founding year we opened for Years 7 to 9, and will add a year group each year, bringing us to Years 7 to 13 in 2030.

Ethos

The tenets we draw from the rich classical educational tradition, are:

- The true mastery of a focused set of key educational disciplines via stepped, deliberate learning stages.
- The pursuit of academic rigour, industriousness, and high standards of behaviour.
- The development of critical thinking and the practice of respectful, open-minded challenging of ideas.
- The development of moral, intellectual, and physical balance.
- The commitment to personal character development, active contribution to our community, and our civic duties.

What makes us unique is our acceptance that we cannot, and should not, attempt to be all things to all people – rather we must excel at embodying these tenets and serving those who value them as we do. Because these things are the very foundation of great, properly educated people and successful societies, we do not leave them to chance. You will find them in every aspect of our school's functioning.

Why parents choose Altum

- Small class sizes
- Knowledge-rich curriculum
- Strong teacher-led instruction
- Character and virtue formation
- Low-tech environment
- Secure, structured routine
- Strong sense of community
- Fees-free

Our school's promise to your family: each Altum Classical Academy graduate will leave school:

- Knowledgeable: Equipped with a broad, rigorous foundation of essential ideas, stories, facts and cultural understanding.
- Articulate: Able to write and speak with clarity, confidence, precision and thoughtful insight across contexts.
- Virtuous: Formed in moral character, practising integrity, service, responsibility and respect in daily life.
- Disciplined: Developing strong habits of focus, perseverance and self-control that support long-term academic success.
- Future-ready: Prepared to thrive in senior schooling and modern life through resilience, reasoning and adaptable skills.



What our parents are saying

Feedback from some of our founding families.

If there was one thing you wished other families knew about Altum, what would it be?

“This is the school we were hoping and are grateful for.”

“Altum has the loveliest bunch of kids, with the most genuine, caring staff.”

“Altum Academy is providing a level of education that is generally associated with a large fee schedule. I am so grateful for my child to have the opportunity to learn at a high standard.”

“Altum is doing what Altum is saying.”

“[[It was] the engagement and connection between Christian and our child, which gave us confidence in the focus on welfare and excellence. Meeting the teaching faculty gave us confidence in their ability and commitment.”

“The growing culture of excellence, mutual respect and support among students and staff. Everyone has chosen to be part of this community, and it is manifest in the social and educational environment of the school.”

“I love it how my son comes home each day and says ‘School was fantastic!’. At some point I’ll stop being surprised by this. It’s just so different and it makes me happy.”

“One thing I wish other families knew about Altum is that it’s one of the few schools where students in Years 7 and 8 aren’t just passing time — they’re truly learning. The school not only teaches real knowledge but also puts a lot of emphasis on guiding students to become responsible and grounded young people.

What has surprised me the most is how quickly the kids have adapted. They’ve told me they’re learning so much more than before, but they’re also really happy. Altum strikes a wonderful balance: there’s strong academic support, but also a vibrant student life. There’s a math club, opportunities to play DnD, and students can even start their own clubs — like the cooking club. It’s a place where they can grow both academically and personally, while still having fun and following their interests.”

“The daily effort that all the faculties are putting in to help our kids to grow and be independent knowledgeable and disciplined. It’s commendable.”

“My son is always speaking about the things he learns at school. He is interested in the subjects and is enjoying learning.”



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Ready to apply?

Spaces are strictly limited to ensure small class sizes.

1. Visit our website: www.altum.school.nz
2. Join the mailing list: stay updated on the latest school news.
3. Contact us: admin@altum.school.nz

