

**TE AHU WHAKAMUA
- HOKI KI TE
MĀTAURANGA,
TE WHAKANGUNGU, TE
MAHI RĀNEI
MOVING FORWARD -
RETURNING
TO EDUCATION, TRAINING,
OR WORK AFTER CANCER**



Returning to kura/school

‘Going back into high school, you just really have to be realistic about how much time at school you can handle and it’s probably less than you think.’

Young person

If returning to school or kura and you’re worried about seeing friends, catching up on school work or managing fatigue, let your education provider know as soon as you’re ready so they can start coordinating your return.

Create a plan for your return to school/kura.

Set up a meeting with your caregiver and key staff including any of the following: your dean, school nurse (if there is one), guidance counsellor, AYA Key Worker, Charity Support Worker and/or Regional Health School teacher. To guide the meeting, we recommend completing the **Health Summary** sheet and taking it with you. This will inform what you put in your **Return to School Plan**. Both forms are at the end of this section.

Tip Remember to specify who you want your information shared with so that it remains confidential. If you feel uncomfortable having too many people in any meetings, just choose a couple and ask for the information to be shared.

Arrange a key point of contact. Nominate one key person as your point of contact and catch up with them weekly or fortnightly to review your plan. This person can then be responsible (with your permission) for communicating and sharing information with other staff members. This will stop you having to share information multiple times.

Tip Choose a person that you have a good relationship with so you can be honest about how you are feeling and what your needs are.

Set realistic expectations. If it is taking a while to get your energy back, plan a gradual return. This could mean just going a few days a week or reducing how many subjects you take, and slowly increasing as you feel up to it.

Meet with friends. Arrange to meet your mates before you start, especially if you have not seen them in a while. This can help you feel more connected and excited about returning. Many of your friends might want to know how they can help so be prepared to ask for what you need.

Tip Having a buddy at school can be helpful. This person can go with you to class, carry your bags or just be by your side if you need them. It can be helpful to identify this person before you return so teachers know they will be helping you in class when you need it.

Choose the best spot in class. If you find it hard to concentrate, or your vision or hearing is impaired, request to sit closer to the front.

Tip Ask your teacher if a friend can reserve a seat for you so you don’t have to rush to class.

I find it hard to get around school, what can I do about it?

If your classrooms are difficult to access, highlight this **before** your return, so your school can consider things like ramps, or assigning classes on the ground floor to help you. If getting around takes you a little longer, ask if you can leave 5 minutes early to avoid the crowded areas to allow time to get to class.

I have a Regional Health School teacher. What support can they provide?

There may be an option for you to complete some subjects at school and others with your Health School Teacher, especially if there are subjects you struggle with.



Speak to your Regional Health School teacher or ask to be referred to one so you can liaise with them about managing school work through a combination of learning from home and school.

Everyone keeps asking me about cancer - what should I say?

It can be hard to know what to say to classmates about cancer. Consider having your teacher or health provider talk to your class before you return or give a talk or presentation yourself if you feel comfortable doing that.



If you want to keep your medical history private, that's up to you. For tips on talking to your friends and whānau about cancer, check out our booklet 'Connecting with friends and Whānau after Cancer'.

I feel self-conscious about how I look.

You may still have visible signs of cancer and treatment like hair loss or scars. If you're feeling whakama (ashamed) or self-conscious, ask for a uniform exemption such as permission to wear a hat or long pants to cover up a scar, in your Return to Education Plan. As time goes on you will start to feel more confident about your appearance. Just give it time.



Check out our 'Body Image after Cancer' booklet. You can also print our uniform exemption cards and keep these with you to show teachers without drawing attention to the situation. You can cut these out on page 15 of this booklet.

I'm worried about keeping up and managing exams and assignments. What support can I access?

If you talk to your teachers they will most likely understand and give you an extension. In my last year of high school, they didn't make me do all the assignments. I got to pick the ones that I wanted to do that would give me extra credits in all the subjects I needed to get university entrance. Just talk to your teachers about it'.

Young person

Your school may be able to provide alternative exam arrangements for you such as organising a reader/writer to help. For more information about this, see the resources box on page 9.



Ask your teacher if you can access extra tutoring support at home or school. Some cancer charities may also be able to help cover the cost of this for you.

Haere ki to heke mai me to māhunga ki runga.

Step into your future with your head held high.

My Return To Education Plan



My return date is:

My graduated plan includes these days/classes:

My key support people/contacts are (include Support Workers, friends, nurse etc):

When I feel tired or unwell I can:

The agreed resources and support I need to attend my classes are: *(example: comfortable seating, extra tuition, permission to wear a hat, reader/writer for exams)*

Other important information:

This plan will be reviewed on:

Notes



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About Me - My Health Summary



The type of cancer and treatment I had was:

Some of the challenges that I currently face are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Fatigue/extreme tiredness | <input type="radio"/> Hearing loss |
| <input type="radio"/> Pain | <input type="radio"/> Visual challenges |
| <input type="radio"/> Hair loss, scars or visible signs of cancer treatment | <input type="radio"/> Brain fog such as issues with concentration and memory |
| <input type="radio"/> Cognitive challenges, for example trouble finding words quickly | <input type="radio"/> Mobility challenges, e.g. using a wheel chair or crutches, or finding it hard to walk long distances: |
| <input type="radio"/> Other: | |

Things that would help with my transition to education:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Have a friend support me e.g carry my bag | <input type="radio"/> Skip Physical Education |
| <input type="radio"/> Leave class early to get to my next class | <input type="radio"/> Take a rest break during the day |
| <input type="radio"/> Return part-time | <input type="radio"/> Sit in a different chair |
| <input type="radio"/> Extra tuition and learning support | <input type="radio"/> Move around or stretch when I need to |
| <input type="radio"/> Be able to take medication when I need to | <input type="radio"/> Use special equipment to help me write or learn |
| <input type="radio"/> Access to a quiet space to sit or rest | <input type="radio"/> Seek extensions or help with exams |
| <input type="radio"/> Have a pass for toilet breaks | <input type="radio"/> Have a point of contact at school |
| <input type="radio"/> Sit up the front so it's easier for me to concentrate/ see the board | <input type="radio"/> Go to see the nurse or go to sick bay whenever I need to |
| <input type="radio"/> Other: | |

Things I'm worried about are:

Important Medical information

My doctor's name and contact details are:

My current medications are:

Allergies and how to manage them :



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RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR KURA/HIGH SCHOOL

Some cancer charities may be able to help with the cost of tutoring or equipment costs like a laptop. Talk to your support worker or youth worker for more information.

Regional Health Schools

Regional Health School provides community and hospital-based teaching if you are unable to attend regular school. There are 3 regional health Schools covering all parts of NZ: Northern Health Schools: www.nhs.school.nz Central Regional Health School www.crhs.school.nz and Southern Regional Health School www.srhs.school.nz.

Derived grades

If you are too sick to sit exams, or if treatment has had a major effect on your performance in an external assessment, you can apply to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) for a derived grade. A derived grade is based solely on your pre-existing results record, held by your school.

Special Assessment Considerations (SAC)

SAC provide extra help for approved students when assessed for their NCEA to give you a fair opportunity to achieve credits. The support is for internal standards and external standards (exams). Examples of SAC include being able to have a reader or writer, use a computer, have rest breaks or have enlarged papers to help with reading and vision.

Visit the NZQA website to find out more about Derived Grades and Special Assessment Considerations. www.nzqa.govt.nz

Ongoing Resourcing Schemes Funding (ORS)

ORS funding is available in schools for young people experiencing challenges in the following key areas: Learning, Hearing, Vision and Language and Communication. For more information about ORS, and about how to apply for funding, check out the ministry of Education website. www.education.govt.nz.

School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF)

SHHNF provides teacher's aide support for 6 weeks or more if a young person has a serious medical condition and needs help to attend school or kura safely. The Ministry's learning support team will work with you to plan your support needs. You can access this service if you have a physical disability that prevents you from participating in learning, or if you have difficulties with mobility and/or hand movement. The fund can help you access specialised equipment to help you walk, write and perform tasks requiring fine-motor skills. To find out more speak to your school about accessing the fund.

The Physical Disability Service

The Ministry of Education Physical Disability Service can help your school adapt to the environment to better meet your needs. To access support, you will need to have challenges with:

- moving safely around the classroom and the school
- taking part in learning activities, particularly physical ones
- using pencils, pens and other tools (including technology) and materials, especially if your disability causes problems with your handwriting
- managing basic tasks, such as changing clothes when you go swimming.

Speak to your school about the supports available, and how to access them.

Returning to study or training

‘Everyone goes through things at a different pace. Don’t feel bad because someone else had treatment and returned to work 3 months later and you’re still stuck at home a year later.’

Young person

While some of the tips in the returning to high school section might be helpful (like meeting with your friends or arranging a key contact at your place of study), attending a training course, university or polytechnic is different.

I feel nervous about studying full time after being off. What are my options?

Consider studying part time or, if you are at uni, only take 1 or 2 papers in the first semester so you can see how you go. This will give you the opportunity to ease into things as well as allowing you time to see how your energy levels are.



Don’t load yourself up with too much, too soon. Check out your financial entitlements around part time vs. full time study to make sure you are accessing all the financial support you are entitled to.

What support services are available if I am attending university or polytechnic?

Most learning institutions have **Student Support Centres**, which offer free and confidential support to all students enrolled. Make contact early, as they can help you overcome any obstacles that you may experience when re-engaging with study.



If you do not feel like you require support while studying, check out the services anyway, in case your situation changes.

Student Support Centres will help you access the following:

Disability Services. You may not think of yourself as having a “disability”, but a chronic medical condition like cancer is actually considered a disability. If you do choose to tell your education provider, you may have the right to access special support services. Disability Liaison Officers are available at most learning institutions to discuss your needs confidentially.

Learning Support. These services often provide workshops or tutorials to help you with study skills. They should also be able to assist you with the following:

- Alternative formats of learning, like recorded lectures.
- Access to specialist equipment and assistive technology such as laptops, microphones and speakers for the lecturer to assist with voice projection.
- Communicating with lecturers on your behalf regarding your support needs.
- Guidance on applying for alternative test and exam arrangements - this could include special equipment, a writer, or extensions for assignments.

Student finance support. Guidance and help with paying fees and managing general living costs. Student Support Services can help you find out what financial support you can access while studying.



Many learning institutions offer scholarships in the form of hardship funds, or scholarships for Māori & Pasifika. Check out the scholarship section on the website of your provider to see if you meet the criteria. You may also be able to access funding from your local iwi.

Healthcare. Most universities have a health centre where you can access a GP or nurse who can provide healthcare at subsidized rates. They should also have free counselling services available to support your mental and emotional wellbeing while you study.

Childcare on campus. If you have children, check out if there is a day care or nursery on campus where students can drop their child/children off while they attend class. Some university-affiliated kōhanga (daycare centre) and nurseries offer special rates and discount prices for students.

I'm starting a course that doesn't have a student support centre. What can I do?

Apply the same process as returning to school – complete the health summary and return it to a key contact at your education provider. Smaller courses often have the ability to provide a more tailored, personal approach to your transition. If you require help advocating for support, speak to your support worker, counsellor or AYA Key Worker to see if they can advocate for you.

'Finding the right support was tough; there are so many barriers that existed for us low-income earners. It was hard to get what was actually there.'

Young person

I am currently on a benefit - will this be affected when I return to work or study?

If you are currently on a benefit and are thinking about study, you may be able to get help from **Work and Income** through **StudyLink** but do note that your entitlements may change when you go into employment or study. If you are returning to **full-time employment**, your benefit will likely stop, but depending on your income, you may be eligible for other entitlements like the disability allowance, or family support payments.

If you are returning to work or study **part-time**, you may still be able to access your **current benefit**. For example, at the time this was written, those on the Job Seeker Allowance could earn \$160 a week in part-time employment before it impacted on the amount they received. However, those on the Supported Living Allowance couldn't work more than 15 hours a week or earn over a certain amount of money.



When your situation changes, so can your entitlements. We recommend you meet with a WINZ liaison officer to find out what you can access **before** returning to work. To find out more WINZ entitlements phone 0800 559 009 or check out their website www.workandincome.govt.nz. Contact www.studylink.govt.nz for more information about entitlements if you're studying.

What other support can WINZ provide?

WINZ has a range of schemes to support your return to study or the workplace. These schemes can change often so it pays to check their website. Some of the current support plans available include:

Training Incentive Allowance. You can apply for the Training Incentive Allowance (TIA) if you are getting certain benefits. The TIA can help pay for things to help you study, like tuition fees, books, equipment and transport. It can also help cover the costs of childcare and any extra care expenses during your study. You do not need to pay this money back. You can apply for TIA while you are studying a course from levels 1 to 7 of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

Course Participation Assistance. You can access this through WINZ if you are doing a short course (less than 13 weeks) and have associated costs to pay. You do not have to pay this money back.

Mainstream Programmes. If you want to work, but have a disability or health condition, including a mental health condition or neurodiversity, you can access one of WINZ's Mainstream Programmes. There are several programmes to choose from, including internships and paid work experience. You need to be a client of Belab (see the list of organisations) and meet the criteria.

These programmes can help you get into paid work and support you towards getting employment.

Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment. If you have children, are under 20, and are in full-time education, training or work-based learning, you may be able to get the Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment (GCAP) to assist with the cost of childcare.

Modification Grant. A Modification Grant is a payment which assists people with disabilities and can help pay for workplace changes or equipment that assists you to stay in, or get work.



Again, as entitlements can change, be sure to check with WINZ to see what you can apply for.

Workbridge. Workbridge is New Zealand's largest free employment service for disabled people or those with an injury or health condition. Workbridge supports people to find employment. They offer the following confidential services:

- Help finding the right job with the right employer
- CV development and interview skills training
- Preparing you and your future employer for your new job
- Tools and training to help with confidence building
- Help accessing tools and support to help you succeed at work
- Ongoing support for you and your employer.

Check out the website www.workbridge.org.nz to see if you meet the criteria. You can fill in the online form or phone 0508-858-858.

What other help can I access while I am studying?

If you are keen to start a training scheme or get back to work, there are organisations that can help. Some even offer financial assistance to get you started or work with your employer to help you transition into employment.

Belab. Previously named Be Accessible, Belab offers various programmes and services to people who have challenges with accessibility (those who are differently abled), and who are keen to get into education or employment. Belab offer the following:

- Paid work experience and internships
- Career pathways
- Skills development
- Mentoring and guidance

Eligible candidates include those who:

- Are living with an access need or disability
- Are a New Zealand/Aotearoa citizen or resident
- Are not in receipt of ACC payments
- Are on, or are eligible for, a benefit.

For more information www.Belab.co.nz or phone 09 309 8966.

If you require help advocating for the support you need, speak to your support worker, counsellor or AYA Key Worker to see if they can advocate for you.

Returning to mahi/work

I was enormously privileged to be supported by my employer during and after my treatment financially, mentally and socially. My support network was everything for me, and maintained my positive state-of-mind that got me through treatment and helped me quickly bounce back. I immersed myself in work as a way of coping and it worked out alright.

Young person

Starting a new job or returning to a previous one is exciting and you may be looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. You may also worry about how you will manage, or be grappling with fatigue or feelings of low self-confidence or self-doubt. All of this is completely normal.

Returning to your previous mahi. If you are returning to the job you had prior to your diagnosis, talk with your employer about possible options for a gradual return. **Flexi-time, job sharing, or working from home** may help you ease back to mahi. Once you do return, set up regular meetings to check in about how the plan is going.

Tip You may require a note or letter from your healthcare team to advocate for a graduated return to work plan. You can also request a support person for any work meetings you might have. This could be a Youth Worker from CanTeen, friend or family member. See the links below for more advice about your rights in the workplace.

If your role changes. In some cases, the job you had before may no longer be possible. Make sure you and your employer are clear about what your current capabilities are and whether your current work environment is a good fit for you.

Tip If you are unable to do the job you did before, ask if there are other roles available or whether your employer can support you in finding a new position.

Employee Assistance (EAP). Many organisations have Employment Assistance Programmes and you might be able to access free counselling. Talk to your Human Resources Department (HR) or manager to find out how your workplace can support you. These sessions can help you manage any emotions returning to work brings up for you, and can help you develop goals for your return to work.

Tip EAP is confidential and most employers normally cover the cost of a few sessions.

Re-evaluating the future. Many young people report that cancer makes them re-evaluate the kind of job they want. If you think you might benefit from support and advice about different career options, a career advisor, counsellor or coach can help you figure out what your interests are and what skills you have.

Tip Speak to your AYA Key Worker or enquire about EAP at your workplace. There may also be services in the community you can access for career support.

Know your rights. It is good to think the best of your workplace before you return to your mahi, but knowing your rights where to go for support can be helpful should things change.

Fill in the Return to Work form, or take a photocopy and fill it out with your employer. You can also fill in the Health Summary at the beginning of this section and bring it with you if you choose to.

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

'Employers can't discriminate in hiring or firing, paying, training or promoting an employee because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex or sexual orientation, marital or family status, employment status, age, religious belief, political opinion, disability, or participation in certain union activities, or if they are affected by family violence. This also includes people who are applying for jobs.'

www.employment.govt.nz

Disability discrimination happens when you are treated unfairly or harassed because of your illness or its side effects. It is illegal to discriminate against anyone based on their medical condition or disability - this includes anyone with cancer. There are several ways you can be discriminated against:

- Not being offered a job or being fired from your job
- Being treated unfairly at work
- Not being able to enrol in higher education
- Not being offered the same opportunities as others
- Being unable to access public buildings such as libraries, hospitals or government offices.

Your Rights. Remember you have the same rights as everyone else in the workplace and should be given equal opportunities regardless of your health condition.

Do you need to tell your employer you had cancer? No, not necessarily but you must answer any questions honestly. Some jobs may ask for your medical history because they need to know you are fit and well to carry out the job. If your employer asks questions and you are unsure about the answers, talk to your healthcare team for more information.

Resources for legal advice and rights in the workplace

Employment NZ is a government website with useful information to help you work out your entitlements and rights in the workplace. It is a generic website with some online learning tools to help you navigate the processes and laws in relation to employment.
www.employmentnewzealand.govt.nz

The Human Rights Commission can help you understand your rights. If you have faced discrimination, the commission can help you find out if the discrimination is unlawful and they can support you to resolve the issue with your employer. Phone **0800 496 877** for support.
www.hrc.co.nz.

Youth Law is an organisation for young people. You can learn about your rights at work and access free legal support for any challenges you might be facing. Check out their website www.youthlaw.co.nz or call **0800UTHLAW (884529)**.



Notes

Uniform exemptions. If you wear a uniform or need to comply with a dress code and feel self-conscious, or are worried about being judged, or treated differently, fill in these exemption cards and keep them with you.

✂ --- **Cut out the double sided card below, add your name and place it in your wallet, pocket or bag.** This is a discrete way to communicate with a person (for example; employer, teacher, shop assistant) the reason you may be not complying with a dress code.



CANNOT ADHERE TO DRESS-CODES FOR MEDICAL REASONS

We ask that you please be sensitive to these circumstances



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We ask that you please be sensitive to these circumstances

Keep your uniform exemption cards somewhere handy like your wallet



For more information on AYA Cancer go to:
www.ayacancernetwork.org.nz
or email AYACancer@adhb.govt.nz



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My Return-To-Work Plan



My return date is:

Days of work are:

My key contact at work is:

I can liaise with them about the following:

Other important contacts at work include (example: Human Resources, EAP Scheme, Health and Disability Support):

Things I need assistance with at work include (example: comfortable chair, reasonable time frames for deadlines, regular breaks for stretching or to help manage fatigue):

My support person/advocate is:

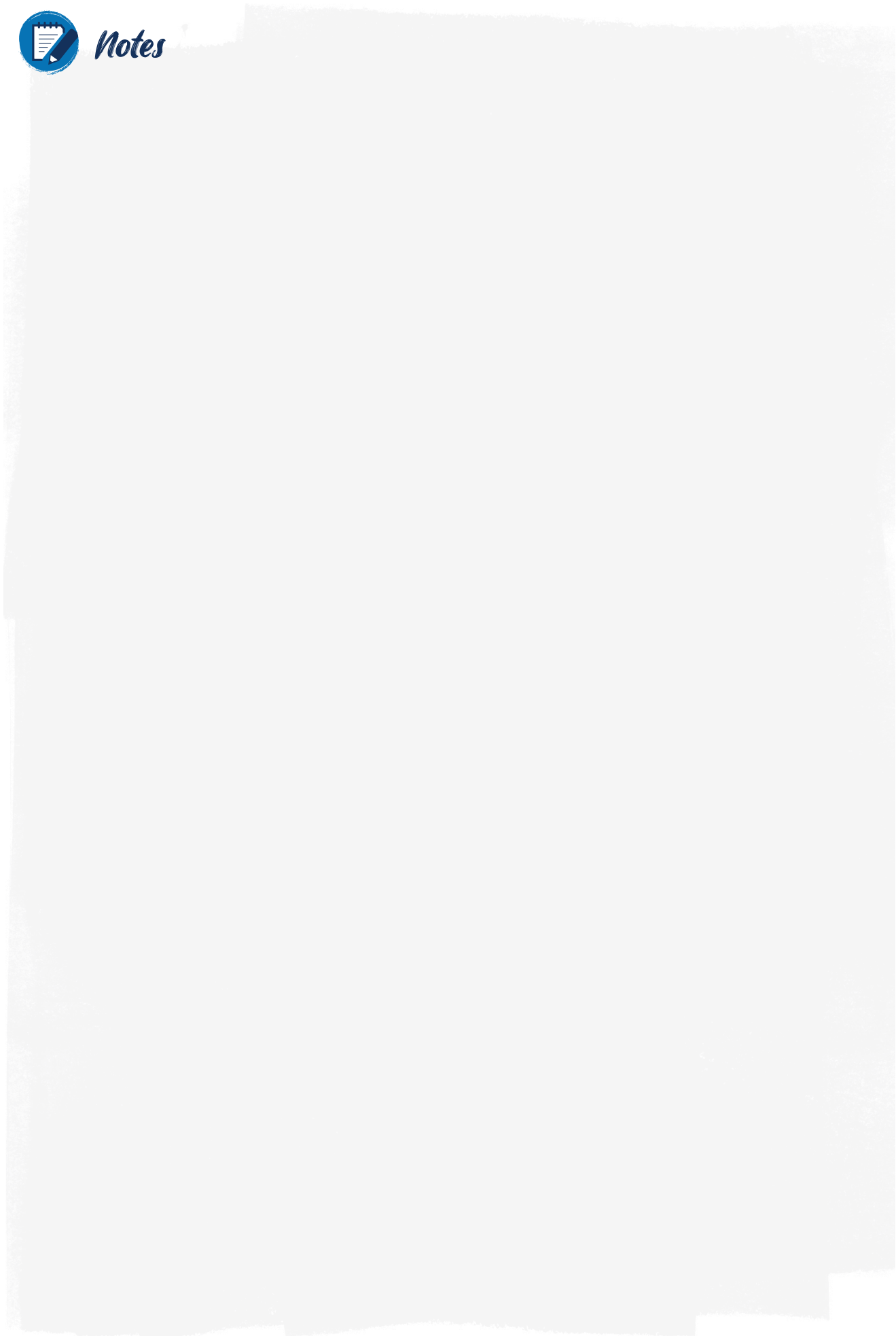
My Return-to-Work Plan will be reviewed on:

Current entitlements through WINZ or other financial entitlements I can access whilst working are:

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Practice good self care

Stepping into work, education or training is exciting. Remember to take care of yourself as you move forward and apply the self-care tools and wellbeing tools you've gained from this resource to help you.

Return To School/Work/Study Checklist	Yes / No
I have spoken to my healthcare team about my transition to work/study/training	
I have made contact with my employer/education provider and arranged to meet about my return	
I have completed a summary for my teachers/lecturers/employer around my health needs	
I have a transition plan that makes me feel comfortable about returning	
I have spoken with WINZ, and am aware of my financial entitlements	
I have reached out for additional support available through organisations such as Workbridge, Student Disability Services or Regional Health Schools	
I have all the information I need to feel comfortable returning to education/work	

Notes
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*Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata,
ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tina.
Seek out those distant horizons,
and remember how far you have come.*