

Pause
Breathe
Smile



Brought to schools
by Southern Cross

Pause Breathe Smile

Every Child Deserves the Tools to Thrive

pausebreathesmile.nz

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Mental Health Foundation
mauri tū, mauri ora OF NEW ZEALAND
www.mentalhealth.org.nz



100% free

Training in Pause Breathe Smile is free for educators from Primary and Intermediate schools throughout New Zealand, thanks to Southern Cross.

“We ask tamariki to focus, to listen, to learn – but we don’t teach them how. Pause Breathe Smile gives them the tools to do just that.”

— Grant Rix, Pause Breathe Smile Programme Director

Wellbeing is foundational to learning

Across New Zealand, tamariki are facing growing mental health challenges, with anxiety, emotional dysregulation and disconnection increasingly common. Teachers see the impact daily – in focus, behaviour, and learning.

How Pause Breathe Smile can help

Pause Breathe Smile equips tamariki with practical mindfulness skills they can use every day – to manage big emotions, focus attention, and respond with kindness and empathy. These skills help children build emotional resilience, improve relationships, and bring calm and focus to learning. With these tools in their kete, tamariki are better prepared not just for the next lesson, but for life beyond the classroom.

What is Pause Breathe Smile?

Pause Breathe Smile is New Zealand's own evidence-based, curriculum-aligned mindfulness programme designed to support the wellbeing of tamariki and their teachers.

We're helping build a healthier Aotearoa by equipping tamariki with essential mind health skills – now reaching over a third of all primary and intermediate schools across New Zealand.

Pause Breathe Smile weaves together mindfulness, Te Ao Māori perspectives, and hauora principles, making it both relevant, culturally responsive, and easy to integrate into classroom learning.



Backed by over 10 years of research and development, Pause Breathe Smile helps Tamariki learn practical skills that:

- Improve calmness, focus, and attention
- Regulate emotions
- Enhance self-awareness
- Improve conflict resolution
- Improve perseverance, helpfulness and self motivation
- Build positive relationships
- Foster compassion and kindness
- Reduce apprehension, anxiety and pessimism
- Reduce teacher stress



When tamariki develop the tools to understand and manage their thoughts, feelings and actions, everyone benefits – from the classroom to the whānau and wider community.

For educators and health professionals:

- 100% free for New Zealand primary and intermediate school educators
- Includes professional development, guided practices, a printed Educator Handbook, student journals, posters, classroom resources, and membership access to the Pause Breathe Smile app
- Proven to improve student behaviour, engagement, and teacher wellbeing

Learn to teach at your own pace



90-minute Ignition session:

- Regularly scheduled with our expert mindfulness facilitators on zoom after-school hours
- Overview of Pause Breathe Smile lessons and core components
- Includes best practice mindfulness in the classroom



On-Demand PLD:

- Nine self-paced training videos to learn how to teach Pause Breathe Smile in your classroom (approx. 10–15 min each)
- 24/7 Login access to all training videos and classroom resources on our website through the Members Resource Pātaka



Classroom Delivery Resources:

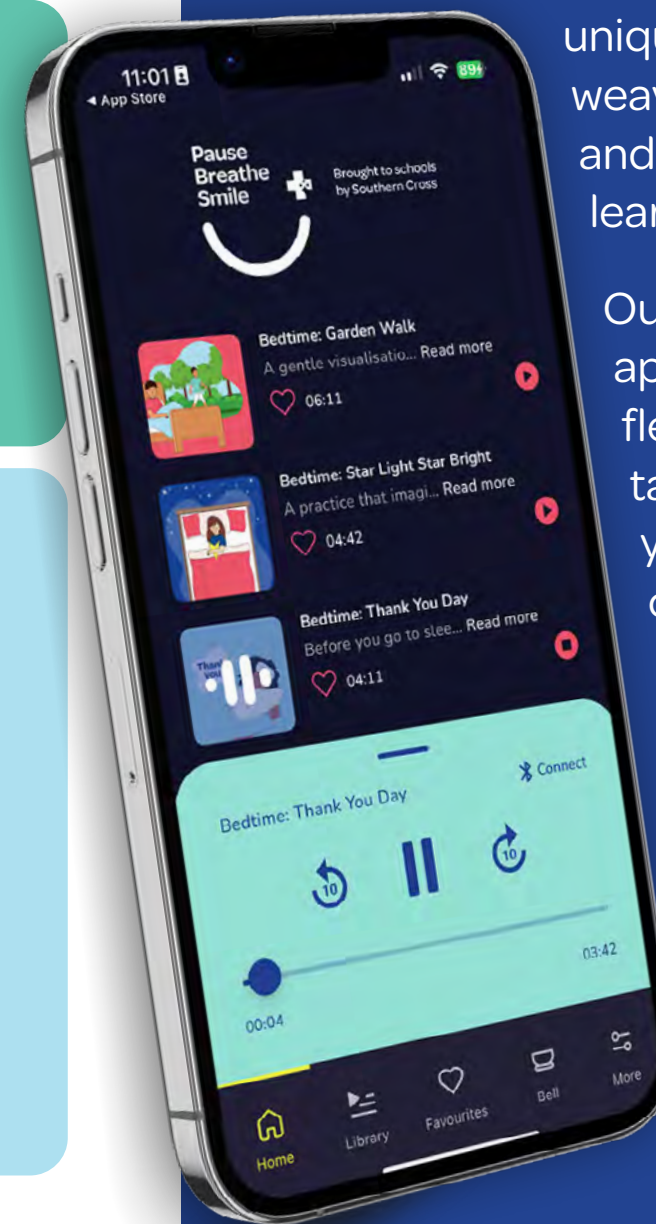
- Hundreds of mindfulness audio, video and print resources at your fingertips in both English and Te Reo Māori to engage ākonga and support their hauora
- Receive your own hard-copy of the Educator's Handbook: Manual of Pause Breathe Smile Lesson Plans
- Login access to the Pause Breathe Smile app
- Access our "Breathe" online course videos: introducing mindfulness & practices specifically for educator wellbeing



Every classroom has its own rhythm, and kaiako know their learners best. Pause Breathe Smile flexes to fit your unique context, helping you weave mindfulness naturally and effectively into daily learning.

Our online Pātaka and app put practical tools, flexible lesson plans, and tailored resources at your fingertips—so you can adapt sessions for any age, timeframe, or moment of stress.

With the right tools, mindfulness becomes part of the everyday rhythm of your classroom.



1-day in-person, whole school training option can be booked subject to availability.

Calmer Classrooms across our country

Since partnering with Southern Cross in September 2020, Pause Breathe Smile has reached:



170K+
tamariki

Over 34% of total tamariki
aged five to 12

6.5k
app downloads

in the first two years following release



10,000+
educators



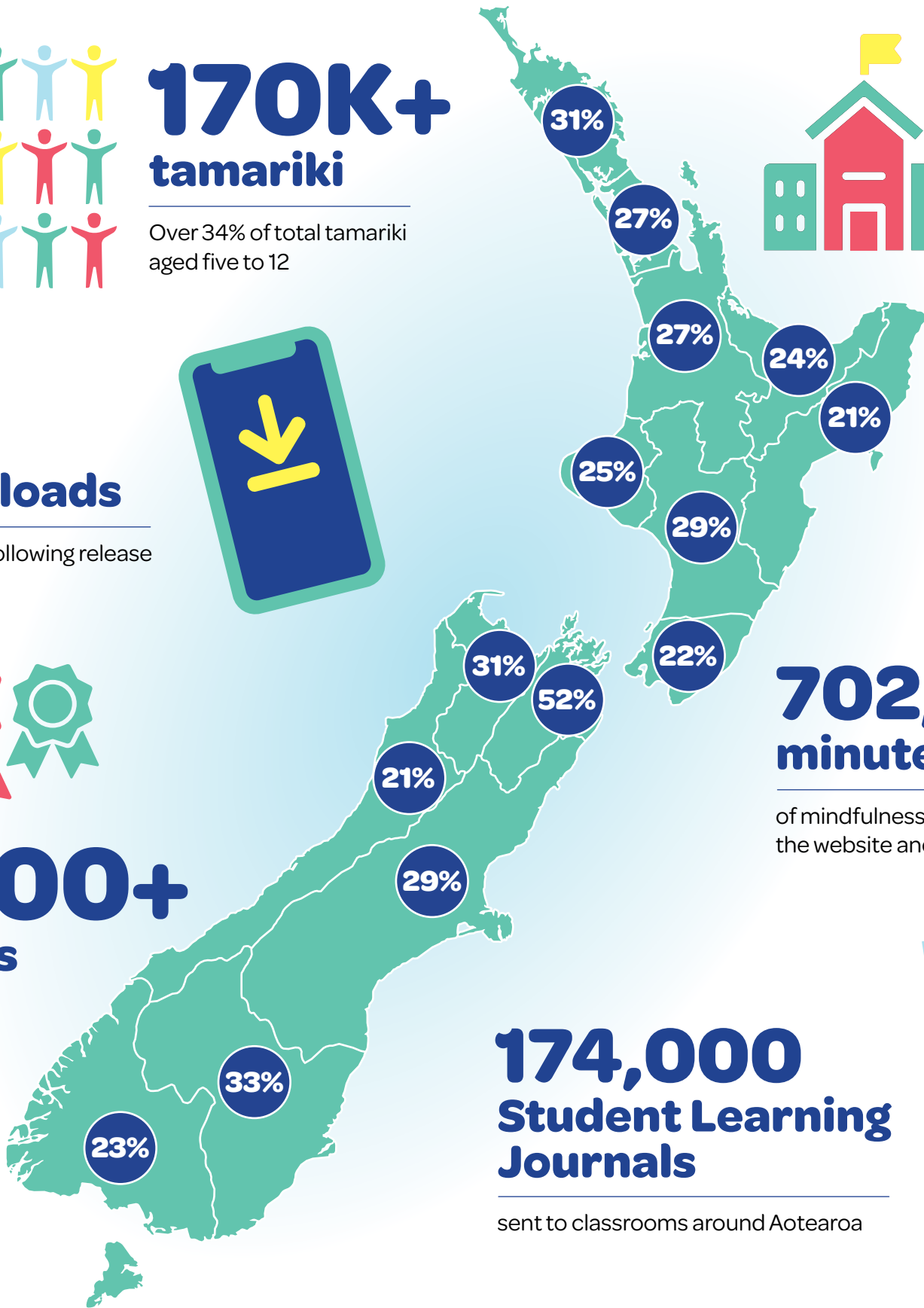
550+
schools

Over 27% of all primary
and intermediate schools



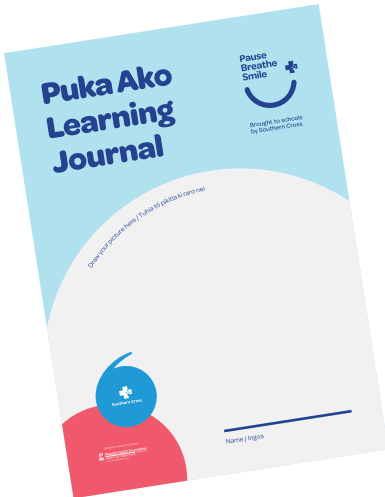
702,040
minutes

of mindfulness played on
the website and the app



174,000
Student Learning Journals

sent to classrooms around Aotearoa



What teachers say

One duty teacher found three of our newest new entrants out on the field lying down looking up at the sky and overheard one say “Let’s do some Pause Breathe and Smile”

This young boy said to his social worker “Sometimes when I stress out, I meditate.” The social worker said, “what do you mean?” And he said “I do Pause Breathe Smile.”

Hugely beneficial to fold back onto the resources and help our students to regulate and discuss their worries after the cyclone

“Ka poua tō haiku, kia toka taū moana”
“when you drop your anchor you become steadfast, like a rock in the crashing oceans”

The class is loving it – also the parents are hearing about it from the children

The benefit we find is that children are able to verbalise what they are feeling. “Drop the Anchor” is heard in the playground and around the village. It is also displayed in our rooms. Also you will hear children tell others or talking aloud to themselves “pause, breathe and smile”. We have found it complements our programs nicely.

Research that makes a difference

Pause Breathe Smile is backed by years of peer-reviewed research showing real benefits for both students and teachers. Our research journey began over a decade ago, before Pause Breathe Smile had an official name. Tamariki from this study suggested Pause Breathe Smile, and it has been our name since then. Following this first initial study, multiple independent studies have built a strong evidence base:



Classroom trials showed **calmer classrooms**, better focus and social skills, and less teacher stress.

2014

PBS outperformed an emotional literacy programme, with **greater wellbeing gains** and sustained mindfulness.

2016

Study with 124 students found **significant mindfulness and wellbeing gains**, with mindfulness lasting over time.

2017

96% of teachers reported better wellbeing – calmer, more self-aware, more engaged.

2018

Independent evaluation found positive impacts for both **Māori and non-Māori students**.

2020

Large-scale, multi-year study showed one year on from PLD **+17% wellbeing, +10% flourishing, -7% languishing**; students more focused, resilient, and hopeful.

2023-25

Exploring how Pause Breathe Smile is implemented in schools, identifying what works well and where to improve so the programme continues to deliver meaningful wellbeing outcomes for tamariki and teachers.

2025-26

Bring Pause Breathe Smile to your school

Pause Breathe Smile is proven to strengthen wellbeing, focus, and resilience for tamariki across Aotearoa.

Join the growing movement of schools making a lasting difference.

**Start today – train your whole school
(recommended) or take part individually.**

Register your interest to train [here](#).

Download the **Pause Breathe Smile app** and try some tracks for yourself.

Decide if your whole school will train, or just you individually.

Contact our team if you need more information.

