

Our Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Ao Māori

A message from the Board of Michael Park School

Our commitment

As set out in our Strategic Plan, the Board is committed to honouring the place of Māori as tangata whenua, the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are equally committed to celebrating diversity and providing every student with the opportunity to strive for excellence, realise their potential and develop a strong sense of social responsibility. We respect individual and cultural differences, while celebrating what unites us.

Our Strategic Plan also defines what it means to do things *our way*. We take pride in actions that bring mana to our school, our community, our whānau and ourselves. We foster a sense of belonging and care for every person in our kura, and we strive to **Relate, Create and Inspire**. These ideals are supported, strengthened and enriched by three values:

- **Manaakitanga:** showing respect and responsibility by uplifting the mana of every person, through empathy, tolerance and the celebration of diversity.
- **Whanaungatanga:** demonstrating participation, leadership and service by working with others and building connections across our community.
- **Tūmanakotanga:** demonstrating aspiration, high expectations and excellence, through a growth mindset, creativity, commitment and resilience.

A message from the Board

Late last year, amendments to the Education and Training Act removed the legal requirement for school boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Like more than a thousand schools across the country, the Michael Park Board wishes to reaffirm to our community that this change in legislation does not alter who we are. Our commitment to Te Tiriti continues, not out of obligation, but because it reflects the values of our school.

As a Steiner school in Aotearoa, we believe we are uniquely placed within the wider Steiner world to reflect and honour Te Ao Māori. Being grounded in this land allows us to draw on the richness of Steiner philosophy and Te Ao Māori together, and we regard this as a genuine point of difference for our school. We wish to share how this commitment is expressed in daily life at Michael Park, and some of the ways we are considering building upon it.

What we have established

Our waharoa. Our waharoa, is a powerful statement in its own right and bears the name Hīkoia te Hīkoi | Walk the Walk. We were honoured to be joined by kaumātua from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei at its inauguration, a reflection of the relationship we continue to build with mana whenua. We invite our whole community to connect with the waharoa and all that it represents.

Pōwhiri and kapa haka. Whole school pōwhiri are an integral part of how we welcome new students, staff and visitors. We are proud of our active, high school and lower school kapa haka groups, which is open to all who wish to take part.

Te Reo and the legacy of Whaea Andrea. The space for Te Ao Māori, kapa haka and Te Reo at our school was established by the late Whaea Andrea, a much-loved teacher whose legacy the school continues to carry forward. Over the past three years this space has experienced a genuine resurgence, as staff have stepped forward to keep her work alive. Class 1-5 Te Reo Māori lessons began last year, led by Whaea Kura, alongside Whaea Amanda's work with kapa haka as part of a wider effort to model and advocate for the language across the school.

Curriculum and festivals. Our curriculum weaves Māori mythology through students' learning, together with a strong emphasis on manaakitanga. Several of our festivals, including our Harvest Festival and Taku Rua festival, connect naturally with Te Ao Māori cultural themes and sit comfortably alongside our Steiner philosophy.

Learning about Te Tiriti. In Class 11, students study Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The class travels to Waitangi, to learn first-hand about our history of the signing on site. Our teachers create a space where students form their own views through open discussion, rather than being handed conclusions.

Looking ahead

The Board continues to consider how we can strengthen our commitment to Te Tiriti and further embed Te Ao Māori in our school life and we warmly welcome our community's views as we determine our continuing journey for Michael Park School.

We are a multicultural school built on a bicultural foundation, and we intend to continue walking this path deliberately, together with our community.

Ngā mihi nui,

The Board of Michael Park School

