



Version 1 | Mahi Tuatahi

Effective Date | Whakamana tahito: June 2024 | Hune 2024

Next Review | ā houanga arotake: June 2026 | Hune 2026

Policy Owner | Rangatira Kaupapa Māhere: Chief Executive Officer

Key Accountabilities | Ngā Takonga Tuatahi: Chief Operating Officer, Senior Teachers

Introduction | Tīmatanga Kōrero

The purpose of this policy is to:

To ensure that the transition, to school from kindergarten, process is a positive experience for children and their whānau.

Applies To | Ko Wai Whakahāngaitia

This policy applies to all He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association (Whānau Manaaki) teaching teams.

General Principles | Mātāpono Whānui

1. Teaching teams will provide support for parents/whānau/caregivers through the transition to school process.
2. Each kindergarten will develop their own set of procedures for Transition to School to accompany this policy. These procedures will be developed in consultation with the community and, where possible, the local schools, and will aim to meet the unique needs of the children and the community.
3. Teaching teams will facilitate opportunities to develop and maintain positive and open relationships with the schools which serve their kindergarten community.
4. Where individual kindergartens' procedures include a kindergarten teacher taking children on visits to school, this will be treated as an excursion and all relevant regulations and safety procedures must be adhered to.
5. In some cases, the local schoolteacher or another parent may come to the kindergarten to collect children for a school visit. In this case, written permission specifying dates and times

of visits, must be obtained from the child's parents/whānau/caregivers for the kindergarten teachers to release the child into the care and responsibility of the schoolteacher or parent.

6. Children with individual needs including language barriers and abilities, and their parents/whānau/caregivers, may require extra or specific support for the transition to school process. Teaching teams will aim to support the child and parents/whānau/caregivers and ensure the specific needs of the child are met in the transition to school process.

Relevant Legislation and Regulations | **Whaitake Ture me Waeture**

- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008
- Early Childhood Regulations 2008
- MOE Funding Handbook

Related Procedures or Processes and Documents | **Pākanga Tūkanga me Pukapuka**

- Guidelines: Over 5-year-old placement transition from kindergarten
- Kindergarten Social Competency procedures
- Kindergarten Excursion procedures
- Inclusive Education policy and procedures

Policy Review Cycle | **Kaupapa Arotake Hurihanga**

This policy and related procedures are to be reviewed every two years. Whānau Manaaki may amend or cancel this policy or introduce a new policy, as it considers it necessary within the current cycle of the policy. Any amendments will be considered by the Policy Working Group and will need to be approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Board. The policy will continue the same review cycle.



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Procedures

1. Teachers will develop procedures for the transition of children from kindergarten to school. These procedures will be developed and reviewed in consultation with the community and, where possible, the local school, and will aim to meet the unique needs of the children and the community.
2. These procedures will acknowledge the individual needs of the child.
3. Teachers will refer to the Guidelines: Over 5-year-old placement transition from kindergarten when developing their procedures.
4. Where individual kindergarten procedures include a kindergarten teacher taking children on visits to school, this will be treated as an excursion and all relevant regulations and safety procedures must be adhered to.
5. Teachers will develop relationships with the schools their children will attend and provide information from these schools to parents.





Guidelines: Over five-year-olds placement transition from Kindergarten

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Key Accountabilities | Ngā Takonga Tuatahi: Chief Operating Officer, Senior Teachers

Introduction | Tīmatanga Kōrero

The purpose of these Guidelines is to:

- Set out the principles by which He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua and its employees will support Teachers to engage with whānau to create a “Transition from kindergarten plan” to support children who are staying at kindergarten after the term in which they turn 5
- Provide a reference document for both managers and employees regarding “Over Five-Year-old Placements Transitions to School” so this can be addressed in a fair, reasonable, and consistent manner.

Applies To | Ko Wai Whakahāngaitia

These guidelines apply to all He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association (Whānau Manaaki) teaching teams.

General Principles | Mātāpono Whānui

1. The Association acknowledges that whānau/families can choose to keep their child/ren at kindergarten until the age of 6 which is their legal Right in New Zealand. We appreciate that this is a parent’s/whānau/guardian choice and that this can have the best outcomes for our tamariki.
2. When families are transitioning from kindergarten to school it is important that they have the information that enables them to make informed decisions that support their child's learning.
3. Kaiako will have the information and guidance that they need to develop a plan that ensures a smooth and successful transition into school in partnership with whānau.
4. Tamariki transition to school is a smooth one where their mana is upheld and there are positive learning outcomes for the child and is in partnership with whānau.
5. If a child has enrolled and started school, they cannot (re)engage in an ECE service.
6. Many schools are moving towards Cohort entry where tamariki can possibly start after their birthday.
7. Teams need to ensure that their transition to school procedure reflects the over 5-year-old placement at kindergarten.



Guidelines for Kaiako when supporting Transition to school. (Over 5-year-old Placement)

It is important that kaiako and whānau consider over five placements on an individual basis where the child is central to all the decisions to be made.

When whānau are considering an over 5-year placement, Head Teacher in consultation with the family, team and Senior Teacher will develop a plan to support transition from kindergarten. The final plan will be shared with Senior Teacher, who will forward this to Chief Executive.

There can be many reasons that whānau choose to stay on at kindergarten. The following information can help guide the teaching team with these conversations ensuring the best outcomes for tamariki.

Whānau may think that their child/ren is “not ready” for school

It's important to talk with whānau about what they think will support their child as they transition to school. The following information may help you to understand their main concerns.

- You may be able to share anecdotes of their child progress that will highlight their child's strengths and learning dispositions that will support them well in a school environment.
- It can be difficult for families to gauge what is expected at school e.g. they may think they need to know their letters or be toilet trained– hence it's good to seek an understanding of their concerns and to respond to this.
- You may want to develop a resource that describes the behaviours/dispositions that support tamariki when transitioning into school e.g. self-help skills and make links to the school curriculum.
- Sometimes parents may not understand the benefits of transitioning on to school alongside their kindergarten peers. There is a real comfort going to school with people you know, even when you don't play with them. When a child has diverse learning needs – it can sometimes be their peers that have an appreciation of the child's ways of being and they will feel comfortable to use and support inclusive practices they have noticed at kindergarten. Peers can often support the school with ongoing interventions that were used at kindergarten e.g. using core board, NZSL, or just understanding who this child is.

Whānau may be considering Home school or attending Montessori/Steiner (which starts at 6 years of age)

Whānau may choose a Service that doesn't start at 5 years of age. Take time to talk with whānau about what staying on at kindergarten may look like for their child and include this in the plan.

Staying on longer can sometimes be challenging for children especially when all their peers/friends have left for school. Share how the tamaiti is participating at kindergarten with a view to evaluating how well this is working for their child termly.

Home school officially starts at 5 years, however, they don't enrol them until age of 6 as this is when Ministry of Education officially funds this.

Families from overseas are used to children starting at 7 years of age so may think that 6 years of age is the normal starting age in New Zealand. Kaiako may want to share that while tamariki can stay at kindergarten until 6 years of age, most tamariki start school at 5 years. They may not realise this trend so just having a conversation around this would be important.

Kindergarten has a child with a disability or have Ministry of Education Learning Support (MOELS) involved and not familiar with the processes or expectations at this time.

We encourage Kaiako to ask their Keyworker from MOELS what their role will be in the school transition so you can work together in partnership. This can be varied from region to region, hence gaining clarity around these roles will be important. Effective communication with all parties involved at this time will help your team navigate transition well.

Usually, an individual planning meeting with all parties takes place 4-6 months prior to starting school. This plan will identify actions that need to be considered. The plan would include the following things. It is important that you know who is responsible for each action.

- Whānau choosing a school.
- Writing applications for funding e.g. Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) or High Health.
- Visits to the school.
- Request for ongoing specialist support in school are made e.g. Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).
- Developing visuals for child e.g. transition to school social story.

If team are supporting an application for Ongoing Resource scheme (ORS) they can find resources and a "loom" about writing an ORS application (funding) on StoryPark Teachers Toolbox. It's important to note that ORS funding can only be used at school, the child cannot use this funding at kindergarten if the family change their mind and choose to stay on at kindergarten after 5 years of age.

We encourage whānau to share information about their child when choosing a school as this will help parents to develop an understanding of the school's inclusive approaches to education.

Resources can be limited in schools. This may sometimes be communicated as a barrier. Schools have an obligation to demonstrate how they commit to inclusion.

Kaiako/whānau may be unfamiliar with the roles of each specialist service and the funding pools involved during this time. We encourage teachers to look at the resources attached to this document as this describes each of these. You can also talk with our Whānau Manaaki Learning Support Team in your area or your Senior Teacher.

Kindergartens can also ask their “Learning Support Coordinator” (LSC) if they can support with this transition, if available in your area. These people are in schools and their role is to support school transition. They work differently in each area – Contact the SENCO in your local school to help you.

You may also find that your Kāhui Ako can also provide support with transition – connect with them and discover what it looks like in your area.

Whānau may find it difficult to make decisions about schools and how to manage this transition.

We encourage whānau to make “informed decisions” when considering a school. Kindergartens should have information to support whānau and their decision. Where possible, it can be helpful for parents to visit two different schools in their area – even if they are not keen on the closest school. When visiting two schools, whānau can compare the two and thus effectively evaluate what they want for their child and how each school connects with their own values. When visiting one school it can be difficult to make this judgement – as they have nothing to compare it to. Parents may find it difficult to articulate what they want in a school however can feel it when they visit the schools. You may also want to link them to MOE documents that provide information around transition.

Some whānau may find it difficult to navigate a transition to school as they find status quo of the kindergarten routine works for them as a family. Some families may like extra support in planning school transition. Set a time to meet with them and involve other services they may want. They may want help to identify the possible barriers and look for solutions. Having a plan in place and a time frame can provide them with comfort. Sometimes families just don’t know where to start and it can be overwhelming space to navigate.

A child is just learning to socialise and has made a significant friend at kindergarten.

Sometimes whānau or kaiako may see a significant development in a child’s learning that could get lost if they transition to school at 5 years. You recognise that staying on for another term would help them to consolidate this learning and make a difference to them. This is where a plan with the family will be helpful, so this becomes the focus. Evaluate this and then decide when it is best to move on to school.

A school may inform whānau that it might be best if the child stays on at kindergarten (even though parent wants their child to start at 5 years)

In some cases, schools may have communicated to whānau that it could be best for their child to stay on at kindergarten because it’s their legal right. This advice can sometimes be given when a school may not feel ready for the child. Kaiako need to be able to advocate for these families at this time as you will have already established relationships with the school. We would encourage Head Teacher to contact the principal and meet with the support of keyworker if MOELS if they are involved.

We also encourage you to connect with your Senior Teacher as they too can support this process. It may be that our Whānau Manaaki Learning Support team becomes involved. This is where you are an advocate for the family and supporting their decisions– All children have the right to attend their

local school at the age of 5 if they choose to. We must be mindful that the school will have their own procedures about transition. Communication is important at this time.

Family may want their child to start kindergarten after their child has turned 5 years of age. They may have transferred from another centre or have not engaged in ECE services.

When this occurs, it will be important that the Head Teacher consider what is in the best interest of the child and the family. As you have no history with the family it will be difficult to evaluate this, setting up a time to meet may be a good idea. Head Teacher should not feel rushed in this process just because the family wants a place. If the child has transferred from another centre, it is important to ask parents if information /portfolio can be shared to support this process.

When a child is a diverse learner, it's important to connect with specialist services involved so strategies and interventions can be shared prior to child starting. A meeting will support the process and provide an opportunity to set some next steps for this transition.

You may want to look at your own procedure around transition in your kindergarten ensuring that it outlines your processes for transitioning tamariki into the kindergarten. It's helpful for the Head Teacher to refer to these procedures so that expectations with families are clear.

Parents just want their child to be at kindergarten.

The Head Teacher supports ongoing conversations to unpack their reasons and develops a plan with whānau, the teaching team and Senior Teacher.

Guidelines Review Cycle | Kaupapa Arotake Hurihanga

These guidelines are to be reviewed every two years. Whānau Manaaki may amend or cancel these guidelines or introduce new guidelines, as it considers it necessary within the current cycle of the guidelines. Any amendments will be considered by the Policy Working Group and will need to be approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Board. The guidelines will continue the same review cycle.

Relevant Legislation and Regulations | Whaitake Ture me Waeture

- He Mapuna te Tamaiti – Ministry of Education 2019
- Ministry of Education document “Providing Positive Guidance – Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services 1998”
- Education (Early Childhood) Regulations 2008
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008
- He Whānau Manaaki (WMK) Strategic Framework
- Section 59 Crimes Amendment Act 2007
- Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum
- Kindergarten’s own Social Competence procedures
- Professional Relationships: Creating a Respectful and Collaborative Team Culture Kit
- <https://ero.govt.nz/news/should-children-in-nz-start-school-on-their-fifth-birthday-or-with-their-friends-new-research-finds>



Related Procedures or Processes and Documents | Pākanga Tukanga me Pukapuka

- [Starting school \(education.govt.nz\)](https://www.education.govt.nz) Pamphlet to support families with children with learning needs
- [Continuity of learning: transitions from early childhood services to schools. May 2015 \(ero.govt.nz\)](https://www.ero.govt.nz)
- [The team that will support your child – Parents.education.govt.nz – Practical information about education for parents and carers](https://www.parents.education.govt.nz)
- [Transition-to-school 75078_2.pdf](#)

