

Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua Board of Trustees

Residential Care Policy

Purpose

This policy ensures the kura provides safe, high-quality residential care that supports the wellbeing, learning, and development of all students. This policy outlines the board's responsibilities, the kura care obligations, and the systems in place to ensure residential operations meet legal, regulatory, and Ministry of Education requirements.

Policy Statement

The kura has a Philosophy of Care and is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and culturally responsive residential environment where students feel valued, supported, and able to achieve their highest possible educational and personal outcomes. Residential care is delivered in partnership with whānau, caregivers, and relevant agencies, and is governed by clear systems for safety, wellbeing, behaviour support, and continuous improvement.

The Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua board ensures residential operations comply with all relevant legislation, including the Education and Training Act 2020, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, Children's Act 2014, Privacy Act 2020, Human Rights Act 1993, Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005 and Employment Relations Act 2000.

Guidelines

1. Residential Care Objectives

The residential care at Te Whānau o Ōtūmatua aims to:

- provide a safe, stable, and supportive living and learning environment
- promote student wellbeing, belonging, and positive relationships
- support learning, behaviour, and social development
- ensure continuity between kura (whare ako), residential care, and home
- uphold the rights, dignity, and mana of every student
- provide culturally responsive care that reflects the identities and aspirations of students and their whānau

2. Governance Responsibilities

The board:

- oversees the quality and safety of residential care
- ensures residential operations meet Ministry of Education expectations for residential specialist schools (incl. hostel licensing)
- monitors risks specific to residential settings (e.g., night-time safety, absconding, medication management)
- receives regular reporting on:
 - student wellbeing and care plans
 - staffing levels, training, and supervision
 - incidents, near misses, and safety concerns

- residential enrolments and transitions
- ensures residential policies and procedures are current, accurate, and implemented
- maintains a Schedule of Delegations that clearly defines management responsibilities

(See: Governance, Management and Board Responsibilities Policy)

3. Student Safety and Wellbeing

The kura ensures:

- all staff and volunteers are safety-checked under the Children's Act 2014
- a current **Child Protection Policy** is implemented
- students have access to pastoral care, guidance, student advocate and support services
- residential environments are physically and emotionally safe
- behaviour support is trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and aligned with kura values
- restrictive practices (if any) follow legal and ethical guidelines and are monitored by the kura leadership and the board
- students' rights are upheld at all times

(See: Child Protection Policy, and Student Support and Wellbeing Procedure)

4. Residential Staffing and Training

The kura ensures:

- staffing levels are appropriate for student needs and supervision requirements
- staff receive training in:
 - Three Pillars of Trauma-Informed Practice
 - The Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events
 - Team Teach, de-escalation and behaviour support
 - child protection
 - cultural responsiveness
 - emergency procedures
 - safe overnight supervision
- staff understand their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct and relevant legislation

5. Support and Wellbeing Plans

Each student has an individualised **All About Me** document which incorporates the Support and Wellbeing plan that:

- identifies strengths, needs, and goals
- outlines behaviour support strategies
- includes cultural considerations and whānau aspirations
- is developed collaboratively with ākonga, IEPC, teacher, whānau and relevant agencies
- is reviewed regularly

The kura supports transitions into and out of residential placement through coordinated planning with whānau, agencies, referrers and the Ministry of Education.

6. Age, Gender and Cultural Considerations

- There will be gender specific residential accommodation. Separate facilities such as toilets, bathrooms and showers will be used in residential and where ako settings.

- In cases of non-binary or gender-diverse ākonga, individualised accommodations will be considered based on preferences and needs, with full respect for privacy, culture, dignity and safety.
- Wherever possible, ākonga will be given the opportunity to work with same-gender kaiako for personal and/or sensitive matters to ensure comfort, cultural values, and personal boundaries are respected.
- Whare Tauawa (for male ākonga) follows a Māori kaupapa to support Māori ākonga connecting to and being proud of their culture. It is also open to interested non-Māori ākonga.
- Residential and class placements will consider age, developmental level, and cultural considerations with safety and ākonga wellbeing paramount.

7. Daily Residential Operations

Residential operations include:

- safe routines for meals, hygiene, sleep, learning and recreation
- structured and unstructured activities that support social and emotional development
- Medication procedure for medication management, including secure storage and accurate record-keeping
- clear expectations for behaviour, safety, and respectful relationships, through kura-wide Student Code of Conduct
- supervision plans that ensure ākonga safety at all times

8. Responding to Incidents and Concerns

The kura has clear whole kura procedures for responding to:

- behaviour incidents
- injuries and illness
- absconding
- bullying or harassment
- allegations of harm or abuse
- digital safety incidents
- concerns raised by ākonga, kaiako, or whānau

Responses follow the principles of natural justice and ensure the mana and dignity of all involved.

Serious incidents may require involvement from external agencies such as:

- New Zealand Police
- Oranga Tamariki
- Ministry of Education
- health or disability services
- Work Safe

(→ See Concerns and Complaints Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy, and Business As Usual, and Health and Safety Manual)

9. Policies and procedures

The residences are an integral part of the kura and as such the residential team works within the kura-wide policies and procedures, this is made clear to staff during their induction.

10. Continuous Improvement

The kura:

- reviews residential operations regularly
- uses feedback from ākonga, whānau, kaiako, student advocates and agencies to improve practice
- monitors trends in incidents, wellbeing, and achievement
- participates in ERO reviews hostel licencing evaluations and implements recommendations

11. Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed according to the **Board's Review Schedule** or earlier if required due to legislative change or identified need.

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