



Ruawai Kindergarten Green-Gold Reflection Statement

Here at Ruawai Kindergarten we have a living, evolving vision, where the tamariki are valued and we promote a culture of respect, independence, and responsibility. Our tamariki are capable confident, competent tamariki that know they make a difference in our wider community. We view tamariki, kaiako, whānau and community as equal partners in the teaching and learning process (Ako & Whakawhanaungatanga).

The Enviroschools Guiding Principles are woven into all aspects here at Ruawai Kindergarten: These are interwoven through the every day curriculum and are embedded within our Philosophy, Procedures and our annual planning. Sustainability is part of all our decisions and everything we do, our children lead by example, sharing with others. This is always at the forefront of our ideas, practices and planning, such as investigating sustainable ways to eradicate rats from the learning environment – where we removed all poisons and replaced with rat trapping.

We have a strong sense of connection to the environment and know we can effect change for a sustainable world by being enthusiastic. Our tamariki are empowered to make a difference through the sunflower project. Kaiako set the provocation and our children helped lead this process in their way, which has resulted in continued learning opportunities for our Kindergarten, and wider community. Documentation of this process will be shared with the local schools, as present and past children were involved. Our children receive seeds as part of their graduation process. The enquiry and action in our Kindergarten is mainly led by children, with strong support from adults and has been an effective part of our curriculum. Our tamariki ensure that everyone knows the importance of no food wrap, no plastics and recycling, upcycling, and reducing waste. The tamariki are responsible for the well-being of our orchard, mara kai, and heihei.

We have been able to measure many changes from our action and show that we are making a difference. From Silver reflection to Green-Gold we have whakawhanaungatanga in terms of our Kindergarten, our community and our environment. Ko te tiakitanga te awhi, me te manaaki o te whenua o te tangata – caring for land and people. We are unique here at Ruawai Kindergarten - to have an education hub. Isolation has not stopped us in ensuring that we connect with our community, either by visiting, or our community coming into the Kindergarten in a variety of ways. We are very fortunate to have intergeneration connections here at Ruawai Kindergarten - Brian Henderson (aka Hendee) comes into the Kindergarten, doing many projects and maintenance, becoming a regular contributor to our ever-evolving learning environment. The feedback we receive from our wider community is testament to the difference we are making, we have a sense of empowerment. We enter a number of incentives; Te puna puaia, healthy heart, growing and caring for sunflowers we came first for the tallest and widest, which we were rewarded with a number of sustainable resources, eg soil to top up our mara kai. We are making ripples through community

talk, which is positive and affirming, there is a sense of wairua. The Kindergarten is well featured in local articles, enviro website and we have other Kaiako visit our Kindergarten, with positive feedback.

The environment is more vibrant and healthier; it feels like a living ecosystem that can support our community towards sustainability as we help contribute to the community in a variety of ways. We have zones of learning with the emphasis on the natural environment, connection with Papatūānuku, natural earthy zones, loose parts, art resources that have been brought back to nature is the essence of Ruawai Kindergarten.

Māori perspectives are enriching our journey and have become embedded with our curriculum, Te Ao Māori is deeply at the forefront of our daily practices. Our Kaiako are dedicated to professional development increasing, reflecting in their knowledge of Te Ao Maori, which includes te reo, tikanga practices for Kaiako to enrich the lives of our tamariki. We are valued as our willingness to genuinely thread te ao Māori influences within our teaching practices and throughout our programme i.e. whānau whakawhanaungatanga, waiata Māori, pūrākau and pakiwaitara (Māori legends as well as stories with a Māori influence), karakia, kindergarten pepehā, and use of whakataukī etc. Through how and what we do in our ways of our own knowing, being and doing naturally reflects te ao Māori as the underpinning of all what we do within our programme (from a child's perspective and involvement), within our practice, documentation, and physical environment.

Our Kindergarten is involved within our community, honouring the diversity of people within it as we acknowledge the cultures that are part of our Kindergarten – maramataka has an influence on our teaching practices. We hope to increase our contributions to wider community by being involved in a new community garden project which will be utilising the ground just outside our Kindergarten. As a team and Kaipara cluster we would like to work with Para Kore – working towards zero waste, and we wish to further establish our relationships with the college, extending invitations to our learning environment as well as theirs.

