



**Teaching
Council of
Aotearoa
New Zealand**

Matatū. Tū Mataora.

Stand tall. Shape the future.

Introducing the 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession



The context for these Standards

Teachers respect their trusted position in society and recognise the influence they have on learners, their understanding of the world and the future wellbeing of our society.

The 2026 Standards for the Teaching Profession describe the expectations of effective teaching practice. Together with Nga Tikanga Matatika | The Code of Professional Responsibility, which sets out the high standards for ethical behaviour that are expected of every teacher, they set out what it is, and what it means, to be a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Under Section 479 of the Education and Training 2020, responsibility for establishing and maintaining standards for ongoing practice for teachers sits with Matatū Aotearoa | The Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand (the Teaching Council).

The Teaching Council is the professional body representing teachers in early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling. The Teaching Council ensures quality teaching and high standards by registering teachers, setting and maintaining professional standards, and ensuring teachers are competent and fit to practice.

The first set of standards issued by the Teaching Council were the 2017 Standards for the Teaching Profession. The 2017 Standards were crafted by teachers, leaders and teaching experts to articulate the expectations and aspirations of our profession.

The 2026 Standards are intended to build upon the 2017 Standards, preserving many of their key features. The 2026 Standards were also developed in consultation with the profession.

The 2026 Standards are intended to be in widespread use within the sector from 2026 and come into formal effect for Teaching Council use for practising certificate renewal, endorsement, and requirements on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes from 1 January 2027.

A parallel process is being undertaken with leaders of the profession in Māori medium settings, as well as Māori leaders in English medium settings, to develop a new expression of the standards for the teaching profession in te reo Māori. This is expected to be finalised in 2026.

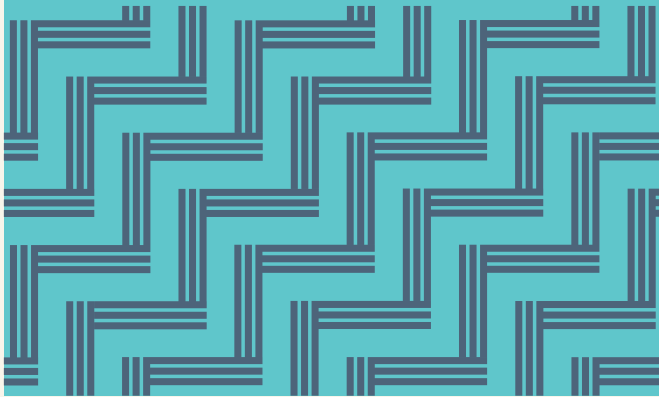
The standards apply to every certificated teacher, regardless of role or teaching environment. They do not apply to those who have been granted a Limited Authority to Teach.

Our values

These values underpin the Standards for the Teaching Profession. They define, inspire, and guide us as teachers.

WHAKAMANA

Empowering all learners to reach their highest potential by providing high-quality teaching and leadership.



MANAAKITANGA

Creating a welcoming, caring and creative environment that treats everyone with respect and dignity.



PONO

Showing integrity by acting in ways that are fair, honest, ethical and just.



WHANAUNGATANGA

Engaging in positive and collaborative relationships with our learners, their families and whānau, our colleagues and the wider community.



Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi



We recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document of our nation.

Signed in 1840 by leaders of hapū and the Crown, Te Tiriti o Waitangi affirmed Māori rights as tangata whenua and provided a place and a shape of governance for Pākehā in Aotearoa.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi provided a basis for ongoing, peaceful power-sharing relationships between the first peoples and all others who would come in later years.

Today Te Tiriti o Waitangi is seen as a commitment under which Māori and all other New Zealanders may live together in the spirit of honourable relationships, with the promise to take the best possible care of each other. This requires the injustices caused by colonisation to be addressed and all New Zealanders to engage in creating a positive future that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

New Zealand is an increasingly multicultural nation, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi is inclusive of today's new settlers. As with earlier immigrants, their 'place to stand' comes with an expectation that they will live here in a way that respects the commitments of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the position of Māori as tangata whenua.

As teachers, we are committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and we understand this has implications in all of our practice.

Te Whare o Te Matatū Aotearoa | House of the Teaching Profession



Te Whare o te Matatū Aotearoa is a living expression of the Teaching Council's commitment to the teaching profession and its responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is a place and space where everyone is welcome, where the mana, hauora | wellbeing, competence, and confidence of teachers and leaders are nurtured and grown. The whare stands on the foundation of Tiriti partnership. The partners are represented front-facing and prominent on the maihi of the whare - Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti.

At the heart of the whare are four central pou, representing the core values of the profession and the Teaching Council. These pou hold up the whare, just as our shared values uphold our collective professional identity and purpose. The values are set out on page three.

Through this whare and the refreshed standards, the Teaching Council affirms its role as kaitiaki of a profession that is inclusive, principled, and committed to the success of every ākonga in Aotearoa.

Ngā Pātū o Te Whare | Wall of Identity

The Tiriti partnership is visually expressed and defined further within Te Whare o te Matatū Aotearoa through Ngā Pātū o te Whare | Wall of Identity. The tukutuku panels woven into the structure of the whare reflect the richness of identity, culture, and belonging within the profession. They remind us that every teacher, leader, and ākonga has a place here.



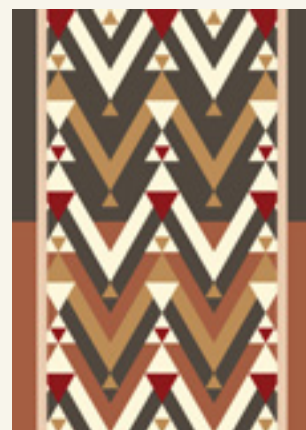
Tangata Whenua



Tangata Tiriti



**Tangata Tiriti
Tagata o le Moana**
(Pacific peoples)



**Tangata Tiriti
Tagata Aramoana**
(Multicultural)



Ngā Pātū o te Whare | Wall of Identity is a powerful symbol that honours the diverse identities, roles, and deep sense of belonging among kaiako in Aotearoa New Zealand. It brings together Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti (including Tagata o le Moana and Tagata Aramoana), recognising their unique contributions and shared commitment to inclusive, culturally grounded education.

Ngā Pātū o te Whare affirms that every kaiako has a place and a purpose. It encourages kaiako to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi, lead with cultural humility, celebrate ancestral wisdom, and embrace diverse stories—fostering learning environments where all ākonga and kaiako feel seen, valued, and at home.

These are Our Standards



The Standards for the Teaching Profession are made up of eight standards that describe what high-quality teaching practice looks like and what it means to be a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Standards are purposely designed at a high level so every practitioner can apply them to suit the context they are working in.

Each standard contains a set of focus areas that provide additional detail. The focus areas are intended to interpret each standard and support teachers to identify and develop high quality practices in their settings.

The way that the focus areas should be used to interpret the standards will be set out in Teaching Council policy and guidance, such as:

- the Initial Teacher Education Requirements
- the Elements of the Professional Growth Cycle, and
- the Registration and Certification Policy, including the Endorser Guidelines.

Standards for the Teaching Profession



The purposes of the Standards for the Teaching Profession are to:

- describe the essential professional knowledge in practice and professional relationships and values required for effective teaching
- promote high-quality teaching and leadership for all learners across all education settings
- set the standard expected for teachers to be issued with a practising certificate
- provide a framework to guide our career-long professional learning and development as a teacher
- promote the status of the teaching profession through making explicit the complex nature of teachers' work
- strengthen public confidence in the teaching profession.

Across all domains

Standard 1: Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership

Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Focus area 1.1 Understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Focus area 1.2 Understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages, and cultures of partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Focus area 1.3 Design teaching and learning experiences that reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in New Zealand including affirming for all learners the knowledge, identity, language, and culture of te ao Māori and tangata whenuatanga.¹

Focus area 1.4 Practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori, including in support of positive engagement with Māori learners and their whānau and communities.

1. Tangata whenuatanga (place-based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge) is one of the five cultural competencies outlined in [Tataiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Maori learners](#) (Education Council and Ministry of Education, 2011), .

Domain: Professional knowledge

Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it

Understand how to design learning based on content, curriculum, and pedagogical knowledge.

Focus area 2.1 Understand the content

Demonstrate a developed understanding of the knowledge relevant to the content being taught.

Focus area 2.2 Understand how to enact the curriculum

Know how to teach the mandated curriculum² and its progressions in learning, effectively and in a way that supports every learner to succeed.

Focus area 2.3 Understand evidence-informed teaching strategies and practices

Know how to apply research, evidence, and innovations related to pedagogy, inclusive teaching, and the teaching of particular content.

Focus area 2.4 Understand how to foster literacy and numeracy as foundational capabilities

Demonstrate understanding of oral language, literacy, and numeracy as foundational capabilities that are integrated throughout all learning areas and levels, and knowledge of relevant evidence-informed teaching practices that are effective at fostering these proficiencies.

2. For teachers in state schools, the mandated curriculum refers to national curriculum statements and foundation curriculum policy statements issued under section 90 of the Act (at the time these standards were approved these statements make up the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

For teachers in early childhood education, the mandated curriculum refers to the early childhood curriculum issued under section 23 of the Act (at the time these standards were approved this is the Te Whāriki curriculum framework).

For teachers in charter schools and private schools, the mandated curriculum refers to the curriculum for teaching, learning, and assessment developed by the school (which is required to meet tuition standards at least equivalent to those at state schools of the same year level).

The Teaching Council acknowledges that Māori medium education may also be undertaken using other curricula including *Te Aho Arataki Marau*, *Te Marautanga o Te Aho Matua* and *Te Marautanga o ngā Kura ā-iwi*.

Domain: Professional knowledge

Standard 3: Know the learner and the learning process

Understand the learning process and the diversity of learners' strengths, needs, languages, cultures, identities, and interests.

Focus area 3.1 Understand how learning happens

Demonstrate a developed knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social factors that affect how children and young people learn, and their application to teaching practice, informed by the science of learning.

Focus area 3.2 Understand how diverse needs can be met

Demonstrate understanding of the diverse needs of learners - including those associated with neurodivergence, disabilities, and trauma - and of the learning strategies that can support them, while being willing to seek specialist support where needed.

Focus area 3.3 Understand culturally responsive teaching

Demonstrate an understanding of how to richly contextualise teaching and learning experiences to learners' culture, backgrounds, and interests to bring the curriculum to life and help them progress their learning.

Focus area 3.4 Understand own assumptions and beliefs

Critically examine how one's own assumptions and beliefs, including cultural beliefs, impact on one's practice, and on the achievement of learners including those with different abilities and needs, backgrounds, genders, identities, languages, and cultures.

Domain: Professional practice

Standard 4: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

Plan for learning, teach, and respond to learners during teaching to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.

Focus area 4.1 Set high expectations

Set high expectations for the learning outcomes of every learner.

Focus area 4.2 Prepare learning experiences that are coherent and well organised

Use a mixture of forward planning and planning in action to ensure that the curriculum is enacted in an intentional way for each learner.

Focus area 4.3 Advance the progress and achievement of all learners

Teach in ways that ensure sufficient progress for the diverse range of learners, providing additional support or extension when needed.

Focus area 4.4 Use and adapt teaching strategies

Make use of a range of evidence-informed teaching strategies, approaches, and learning activities and use them adaptively in response to the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

Focus area 4.5 Enable learning-focused capabilities

Enable learners to be active participants in their learning, so that they are well placed to develop self-regulation, agency, collaborative capabilities, self-reflection, and critical thinking.

Focus area 4.6 Māori succeeding as Māori

Specifically support the educational aspirations for Māori learners, taking shared responsibility for these learners to achieve educational success as Māori.

Domain: Professional practice

Standard 5: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

Develop a culture where learners feel safe, have their needs met, and are focussed on learning, with appropriate use of equipment and technologies.

Focus area 5.1 Support learners to feel safe to participate in learning

Build genuine, respectful relationships with and among learners so that all learners feel their identities, languages, cultures, and abilities are valued and respected, fostering trust, cooperation, and confidence to participate fully in learning.

Focus area 5.2 Ensure the learning setting meets diverse needs

Establish workable routines and learning environments that support different physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development needs to ensure access to learning for all.

Focus area 5.3 Manage the learning setting and promote positive behaviour

Develop a shared understanding of positive behaviour, with clear boundaries and a framework for effectively responding to challenging behaviour, including a range of preventative and restorative approaches.

Focus area 5.4 Use equipment and technologies appropriately and effectively to support learning

Have strategies in place for any equipment and technologies utilised, including digital devices and artificial intelligence, to be used safely, responsibly, ethically, and in ways that contribute positively to teaching and learning.

Domain: Professional practice

Standard 6: Assess, provide feedback, and report on learning

Use regular and consistent assessment to inform teaching and share information on learner progress.

Focus area 6.1 Monitor the extent and pace of learning

Make effective and regular use of high-quality assessment and/or aromatawai practices to gather, analyse, and use appropriate information about the pace of learners' progress.

Focus area 6.2 Identify progress and respond to learners' needs

Use information on learner progress, in relation to goals or outcomes that have been identified, to design clear next steps in learning and identify additional support, extension, or adaptations to teaching practice that may be required.

Focus area 6.3 Provide constructive and understandable feedback

Ensure learners (and/or their parents/caregivers and whānau, as appropriate) receive and understand ongoing feedback about their progress, and use this information to enhance their engagement with learning.

Focus area 6.4 Communicate assessment information

Communicate clear and accurate information to parents/caregivers and whānau that identifies progress, strengths, and areas for development.

Domain: Professional engagement

Standard 7: Engage in professional learning

Improve professional capability through evidence-based reflection, professional learning, and engagement with colleagues.

Focus area 7.1 Participate in a continuous cycle of professional growth

Reflect on the effectiveness of practice in an ongoing way to ensure a cycle of improvement and development, informed by evidence from a range of sources including learner perspectives.

Focus area 7.2 Undertake professional learning to improve practice

Participate in professional learning, targeted to identified professional needs and school/service/system priorities, and adaptively apply this learning in practice.

Focus area 7.3 Engage with colleagues to improve practice

Invite and respond to feedback from colleagues and other education professionals, collaborate to address challenges, and engage in learning-focused collegial discussions or networks.

Domain: Professional engagement

Standard 8: Engage in productive professional relationships

Work constructively with colleagues, parents/caregivers, and the community to support the learning and wellbeing of each learner.

Focus area 8.1 Relate effectively with parents/caregivers and whānau

Build positive, respectful, and culturally appropriate relationships with parents/caregivers and whānau focussed on the learning, engagement, and wellbeing of learners.

Focus area 8.2 Cooperate in the interests of learners

Collaborate reciprocally with leaders, teachers, and other colleagues, and engage professionally with external agencies and the wider community, to meet the needs of each learner.

Focus area 8.3 Actively contribute to the wider educational setting

Work collegially to support ongoing improvement to organisational culture and practice, showing leadership particularly in areas of responsibility or expertise.

Focus area 8.4 Communicate effectively

Use clear, open, and professional oral and written communication that assists everyone to play their part in supporting learning and wellbeing.



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