



Child AND Youth VOICES



Our Team!



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Child
AND
Youth
VOICES

It is the role of the Children's Commissioner to advocate for the rights, interests and wellbeing of New Zealand children



- The role of Children's Commissioner was established in 1989 to be an independent advocate for children.
- Our vision is for every child in Aotearoa, regardless of their background, to grow up knowing they belong with their whānau and have what they need to live their best life.

Our Core Responsibilities



Honouring and embedding
Te Tiriti o Waitangi in all our work



Advocating for the rights, interests and wellbeing of mokopuna



Ensuring the voices of mokopuna are heard and acted on by decision makers



Monitoring places of detention

The Commissioner's four priorities



Education

We advocate for all mokopuna to have access to, and participate in, inclusive and equitable education.



Mental Wellbeing

We advocate for the mental wellbeing of mokopuna to be prioritised, so that they may thrive and flourish.



Ending Family Violence

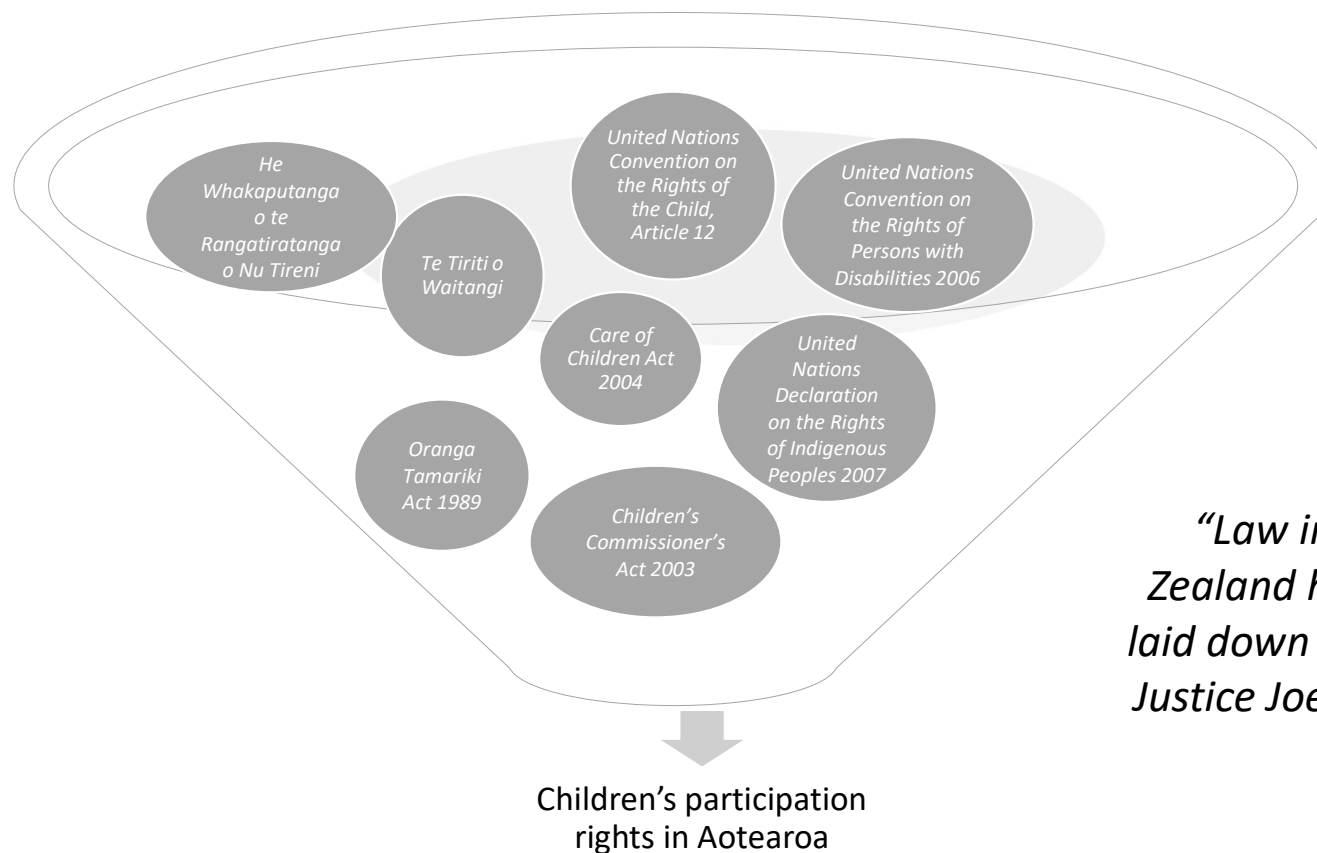
We advocate to end family violence and to help families heal.



Monitoring Places of Detention

We independently and regularly monitor places where mokopuna are deprived of their liberty.

Children and young people have the right to express a view, and to have their view given due weight in decisions that affect them.



*“Law in New Zealand has been laid down in layers”
Justice Joe Williams*

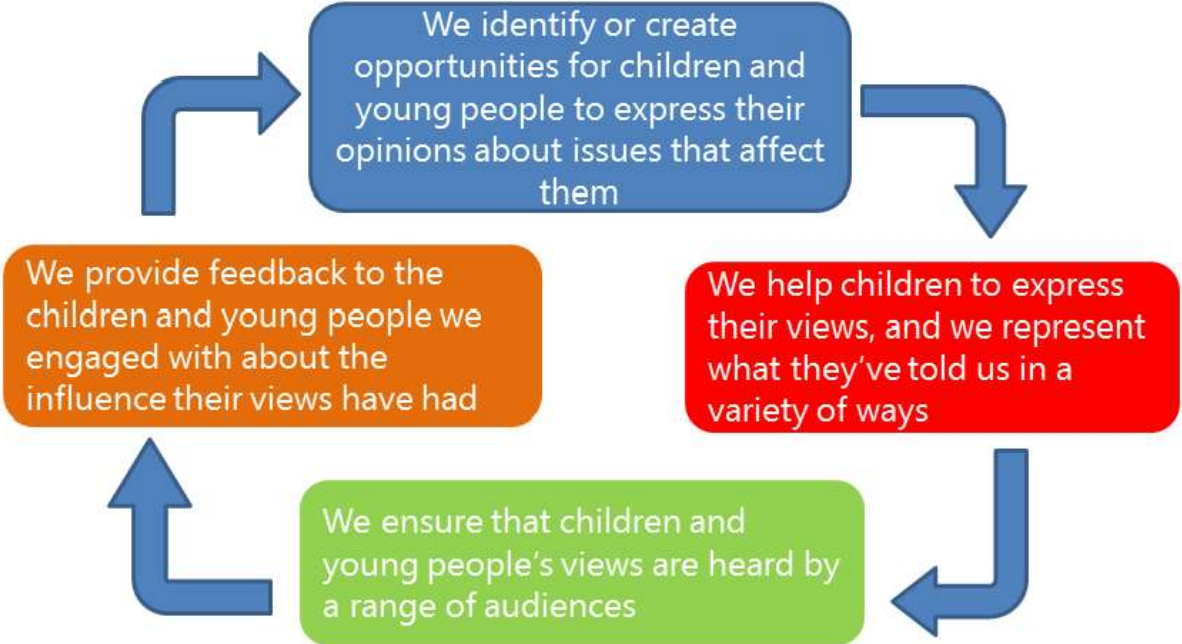
Children and Young people's voices are prioritised at the Office of the Children's Commissioner

- **Our Mai World vision** is to ensure that:
 - **children and young people are supported** to have their perspectives sought in the way that works for them, listened to, and given due weight in all decisions that affect them
 - **organisations engaging with children and young people are supported** to develop good practice, including appropriate ethical and consent considerations, fit-for-purpose methods of engagement (which consider children's development and diversity, including language and culture), and appropriate reporting of views
 - **resources and views gathered are shared** among government agencies, academics, and community organisations
 - **decision-makers have access** to, and give due consideration to, the views of children and young people.

How do we do this?

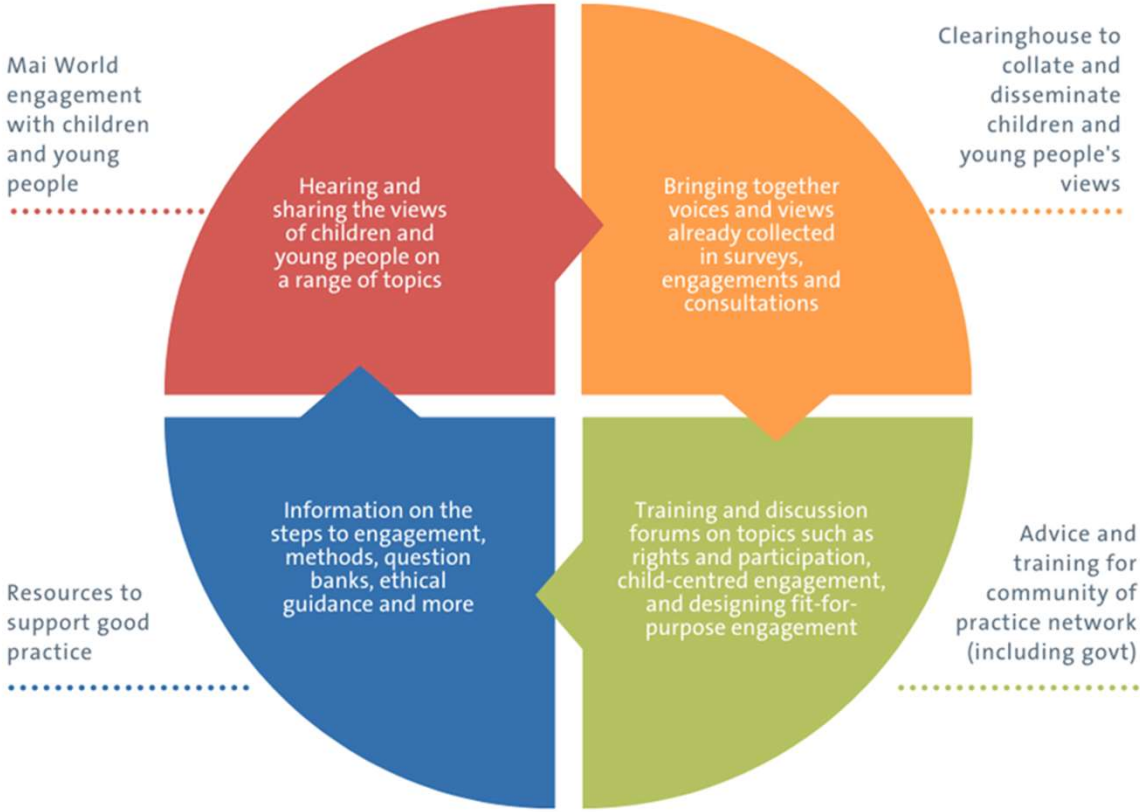
1. **Model Best Practise** - We do engagement ourselves, and collaborate with government and community
2. **Amplify and Influence** - We share the views we and others hear from children and young people, and help others do the same.
3. **Relationships with the village** - We have a strong community of practice network
4. **Develop and share tools and resources** - We provide advice and training for that community of practice network (including government).

How we support children's voice to be heard



Based on the Lundy model of child participation by Professor Laura Lundy
School of Education Queen's University, Belfast

We are continuing to grow our practice across four strands of work



School Voice Survey

What children did, do, outside of school

Child and youth voices on their positive connection to culture in Aotearoa

Children's Commissioner

Education matters to me: Key insights

A starting point for the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities

Listen to the voices of children and young people

January 2018

Children and Young People's Voices Project

Results from survey on the Official Languages of New Zealand

During 28 Oct - 13 November 2011, 451 children in 5 schools took part in a survey about the official languages of New Zealand.

Most children thought all students should have the opportunity to learn to read Māori and New Zealand sign language in school. You can re-use the factoid quotes from this report if you refer to the 'Children's Commissioner's School Voices Project'. Note that the children's written and spoken language have generally been corrected to make quotes easier to read.

Do you think all students at school are below:	all students below at school	I don't know
100%		



Tama-te-rā A
Voices of tamariki and rangā
March 2018

Mai World Child and Youth Voices
#maeworld #koreromai #beheard

Life in Lockdown:
Children and young people's views on the nationwide COVID-19 level 3 and 4 lockdown between March and May 2020

November 2020

Engaging children and young people in matters that affect them
May 2017

Mai World Child and Youth Voices R
#maeworld #koreromai #beheard



Should children be allowed to ride on footpaths?

Submission to the Parliamentary Transport Relations Committee
5 August 2016

"I think that it's much safer to ride on the footpath because children who are smaller are hardly don't completely understand the road rules."

BACKGROUND
Petition 2014/09 of Joanne Clenden, proposed a law change that would allow children under the age of 14 to ride on footpaths. In response to your request for our views on this petition, we invited students

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LIFE?

Children and young people's views on wellbeing



What's important to you in the Gen

Our Kind of School

Students, whānau, staff, and school community rates on what makes positive, inclusive, safe school environments where learning is empowered and respected.

November 2021

Children's Commissioner

February 2019

February 2019

He manu kai matauranga:
He tirohanga Māori

Education matters to me!
Experiences of tamariki and rangāwhā Māori

Detailed report 1 of 6

Education matters to me:
Emotional wellbeing

Detailed report 2 of 6

Education matters to me:
Transitions

Detailed report 6 of 6

Education matters to me:
Engagement

Detailed report 3 of 6

Education matters to me:
Progress and achievement

Detailed report 5 of 6

Education matters to me:
"If I were the boss" - Improving our education

Detailed report 4 of 6

How we approach engagement

Participation projects

We start by asking these questions.

- 1) *What are we trying to achieve?*
- 2) *Who should we be hearing from?*
- 3) *Have they been asked before?*
- 4) *Who can best engage with the children?*
- 5) *What method of engagement will best support these children and young people to share their views?*
- 6) *How can we ensure their voices are heard and have an influence?*

Example of a Mai World full engagement process

Commissioning

- Identify Opportunity
- Pitch for project
- Seek agreement to start work

Preparation and scoping

- Develop a project plan
- Scoping
- Ethics and consent process
- Target participants
- Clarify timelines
- Budget and processes
- Workpower

Design Engagement

- Engagement content
- Identify methods of engagement
- Design engagements
- Complete ethics processes
- Participants
- ID participants
- Connect with partner organisations (confirm their involvement)
- Design analysis

Engagement

- Preparation for engagement
- Execute engagements
- Carry out robust recording processes
- Record all spending and complete administration for project management

Analysis

- Prepare for analysis processes
- Recruit externals and those who facilitated
- Carry out analysis hui
- Carry out analysis
- Document it

Reporting

- Ensure the voices of children and young people reach audiences and have impact

Communications strategy

Project management and Administration

Ethics Process and Considerations

People management

Evaluation

Our Kind of School

Student, whānau, staff, and school community views on what makes positive, inclusive, safe school environments where bullying is prevented and responded to.

November 2021



Who we talked to

- Visited 4 primary schools and 1 kura kaupapa Māori, and talked with:
 - 250+ students, predominantly in years 5-8.
 - Approximately 70 staff members, including school leaders, teachers, teacher aides, administrators and other specialist support workers.
 - 45+ whānau members and community members who volunteered at, or provided a service through, their school, including Board members at each school.

How we went about it

- Selected schools based on a range of well-being measures, including how they modelled the elements of an inclusive, safe, positive school/kura environment.
- Had a 'co-decide' approach with the principal of each school.

We found six key insights



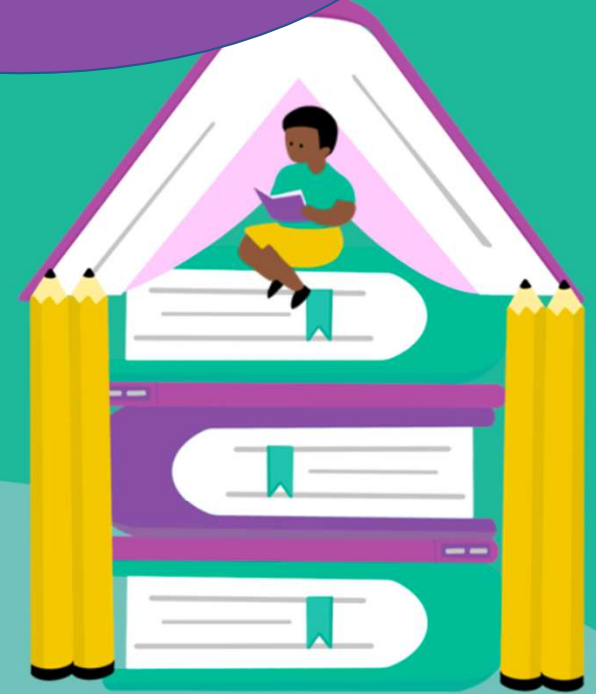
1. Knowing, and meeting the needs of, each student



- School staff spent time getting to know students within the context of their whole life and whānau and worked with them to provide whatever support they needed, in their learning and beyond.
- Schools recognised that staff teach, and students learn, in different ways and demonstrated a willingness to accommodate these needs.

“Instead of, like, the teachers controlling it you can suggest ideas to the teachers.” (student)

“Teachers help us learn and look after each other. We are all like a big family.” (student)

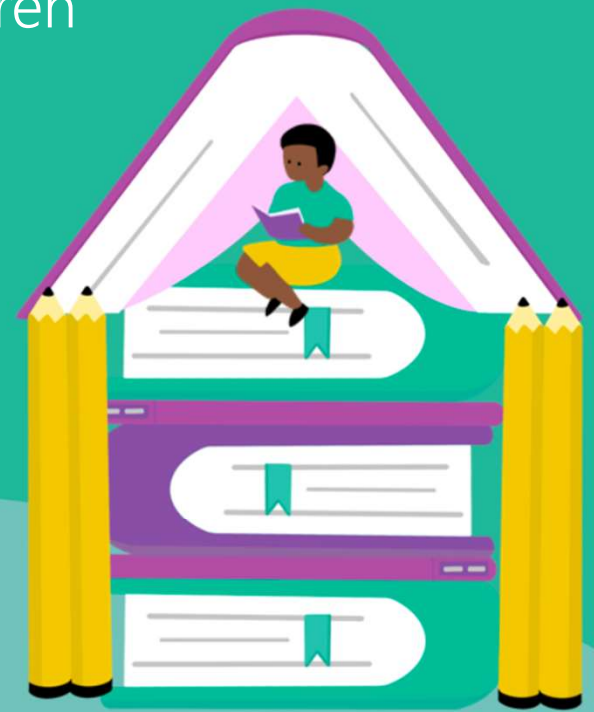


2. Strong and respectful school/kura leadership, which lays the foundation for a positive school/kura culture



- The leaders at all the schools built relationships, and are well known, trusted and approachable, including for students, staff, whānau and in the wider community.
- They took a continuous improvement and inquiry process approach to change and are open to ideas from students, whānau and staff on how to improve the school. For example, how their principal's trust in their staff to support their students makes a positive difference.

“If you can create a safe place for the teachers, as they learn, they have to feel safe, confident, that they’re not bullied; everything’s trickle down... If you’re not providing a safe, confident, comfortable area for your teachers, children are never going to feel loved, because they can see you’re not expressing love to your colleagues”
(staff member)



3. Commitment to tikanga and te reo Māori in the classroom, culture, and community of the school/kura

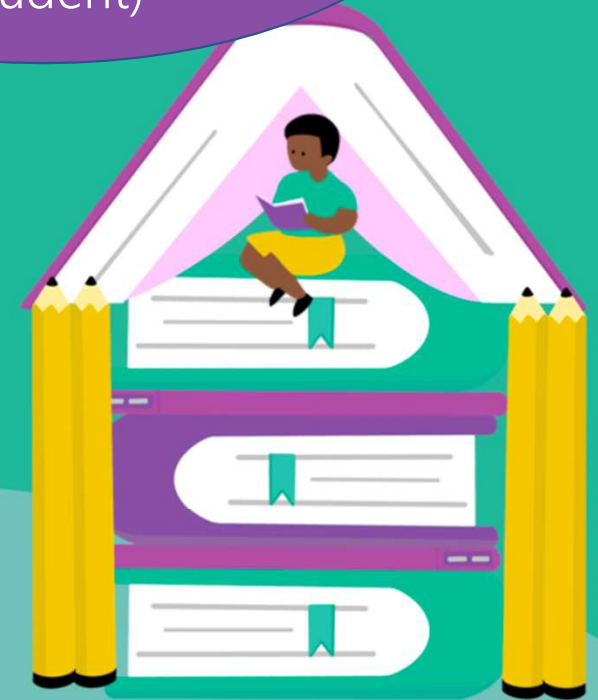


- The schools and kura had structured frameworks and practice that incorporated both tikanga and te reo in different ways into the classroom.
- Some schools had woven the history of local iwi and tīpuna into their teaching.

“Ko Koro Kauri tētahi wāhi tino pai hei whakataū i taku wairua. Ko tērā taku raukura mauri.” “Ko te whakapapa o Koro Kauri, ko te manaaki i ngā rākau katoa.”

(Koro Kauri is a good place for me to settle my spirit. It is my peaceful life force. The history of Koro Kauri is to protect all the trees)
(student)

“Every day we do karakia and waiata and kapa haka and we learn stories. We learn about supporting each other.”
(student)



4. Connecting with and including whānau and wider community in school/kura life



- There was a strong sense that the schools were at the heart of their communities. Whānau involvement in school is supported. At some schools, whānau work closely with the school on key aspects of learning and decision making, such as curriculum.
- We heard from whānau about the difference it makes when staff spend time getting to know them and communicate regularly about their child's school journey.

“Parents now feel comfortable with emailing regularly asking for the school to feed kids – whereas previously would keep the child at home. Quite a large contingent now, become socially acceptable to ask.

Relationship with the families and treating them with respect, responding positively when parents do ask, has enabled this to happen. Real culture of making people feel comfortable to ask for support – by being non-judgemental and treating people with respect.”
(staff member)



5. Valuing and celebrating staff and student diversity

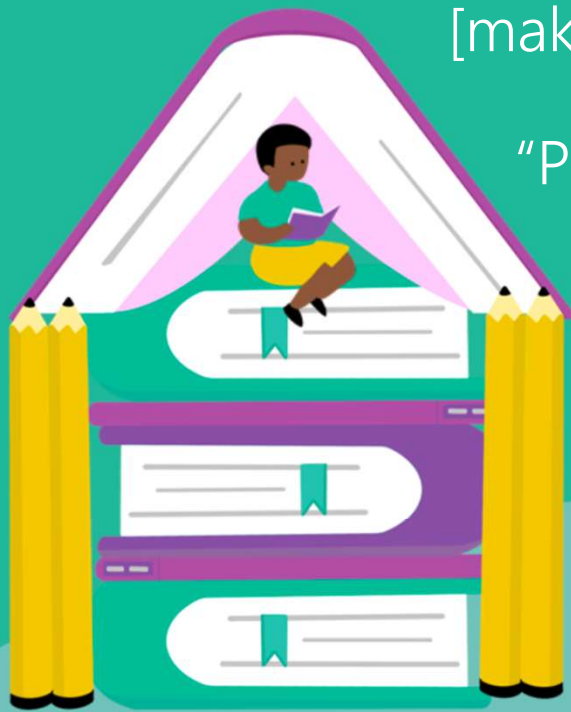


- All the schools valued and celebrated staff and students' diverse ethnic backgrounds, languages and cultures in a range of ways; from designing a local curriculum to reflect mana whenua histories, displaying flags in the school staff room, to holding events and performances.
- Schools also took a strength-based and inclusive approach to supporting disabled students and/or those with learning support needs. As with diverse ethnic backgrounds, languages and cultures, these were seen as something to be accepted and valued.

“Kapa haka – learning about our stories and our culture”
[makes students feel accepted, respected, and connected]

“Pasifika roopu” [helps students make friends at school]

“Including us and our culture”
[makes students feel like they belong at school]



6. Quick and effective responses to bullying incidents



- Bullying was uncommon, but when it did happen, it was followed up quickly and effectively, drawing on the strong relationships between staff, students and whānau.
- Responses focused on finding out the root cause of the behaviour, e.g. unmet student needs, and on restoring relationships between the people involved.

"Adults should help students, talk to them daily about some things they might be having trouble with". (student)



"I feel they bully because they got bullied once and they just want to bully back." (student)



"Definitely ... When I was at my old school and I'd get hurt they'd say sort it out by yourself. At this school they actually help you." (student)



What did we learn from this project?

1. Students have valuable insights into what safe, positive, inclusive environments look like. All students should have the opportunity to be heard at school.
2. Strong school leadership is critical to creating safe, positive and inclusive school environments
3. Getting to know and involving students and their whānau in school life helps create positive, inclusive, safe environments
4. There is no one-size-fits-all response to bullying; effective bullying responses are built on strong relationships between staff, students and whānau
5. It isn't only about resources – but they certainly help

How the findings might apply to secondary schools

Considerations to take into account in a secondary school context:

1. School size and challenges this creates in knowing all students well
2. Principal workload/competing demands
3. Te Reo and tikanga being less ingrained in the curriculum
4. Challenges to connecting meaningfully with whānau
5. The need to consider a broader range of differences and ways of valuing these – gender, sexuality etc.
6. Different context in which bullying occurs – social media use, adolescent development etc.

Thanks!

<https://www.childrenandyoungpeople.org.nz>

<https://www.facebook.com/childrenscommnz>

<https://twitter.com/OCCNZ>

<https://Instagram.com/childrenscommnz>

