

Kōrero, Kai, and Connection

When whānau feel welcome, informed, and truly valued, tamariki flourish. This strategy is all about creating a school vibe where whānau are partners, not just visitors. Think open doors, open hearts, and plenty of kōrero.

CULTURE



- **Whakatau & Mihi** – Always greet with warmth and respect — first impressions count!
- **Whanaungatanga** – Get to know whānau. Listen to their hopes and dreams for their tamariki.
- **Two-Way Communication** – Use all the tools! Face-to-face, phone calls, emails, and socials.
- **Whānau Voice** – Host hui, run surveys, or just have a chat at the gate — and follow through on what you hear.
- **Inclusive Events** – Plan fun, welcoming events that reflect culture and showcase student learning.
- **Transparency** – Keep it real. Share the wins and the work-ons.
- **Partnership Mindset** – Recognise whānau as the first and forever teachers.

Provide Kai. Never underestimate the power of good kai and a kōrero.



Weave it in!

Imagine a school where every student feels seen, heard, and valued. A culture that truly reflects *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* brings this vision to life — embracing **Partnership, Protection, and Participation**, so all tamariki thrive.

CULTURE



- **Whakawhanaungatanga** – Build genuine relationships with local iwi and hapū.
- **Everyday Reo & Tikanga** – Make te reo Māori and tikanga part of your daily rhythm.
- **Te Tiriti Lens** – Review your policies, curriculum, and practices through a Tiriti-informed perspective.
- **Professional Learning** – Invest in professional learning for staff on Te Tiriti and how it shows up in practice.
- **Equity First** – Champion fair and inclusive outcomes for every learner.

Keep the kōrero flowing! Regularly seek feedback from Māori staff, students, and whānau to keep improving and stay aligned. In turn, let them know what you have heard and what you intend to do with the feedback.

Think it! Say it! Smash it!

Without direction, even the best teams can get stuck reacting instead of leading. Clear, focused goals help schools steer with purpose. It's not about doing *everything* — it's about doing the *right* things, well.

CULTURE



- **Pick Your Priorities** – Identify 3–5 key focus areas that align with your school’s vision.
- **Set SMART Goals** – Make them Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.
- **Spread the Word** – Communicate your priorities clearly with staff, students, and whānau.
- **Check In Often** – Review progress regularly and make adjustments to stay on track.
- **Celebrate the Wins** – Acknowledge milestones to keep energy high and progress steady.

Leverage your team! Align goals with staff strengths to build buy-in, boost confidence, and power up progress.



Think Fast, Lead Smart

In the whirlwind of school life, decisions come at you fast. Great leaders balance logic, values, and voices to make future-focused calls that earn trust.

CULTURE



- **Do Your Homework** – Gather the facts, context, and key info before diving in.
- **Think Big Picture** – Consider how your decision affects students, staff, and whānau.
- **Seek Diverse Voices** – Ask around for different perspectives.
- **Make the Call** – Use the best info you have and trust your process.
- **Say It Straight** – Communicate the decision clearly, and explain the why behind it.

Hit pause. When time allows, take a moment to reflect before locking in a big call – a short pause can lead to powerful clarity.

Lead for Today, Plan for Tomorrow

Great leaders juggle the *now* and the *next*. While putting out fires, they're also planting seeds. Balancing urgent needs with future goals ensures steady progress, strong culture, and a school that thrives long-term.

CULTURE



- **Triage Wisely** – Tackle what's urgent, but don't lose sight of your long-term vision.
- **Talk Future** – Involve staff in kōrero about long-term vision and direction.
- **Let the Data Talk** – Use insights and feedback to shape future-focused plans.
- **Spend Smart** – Allocate time, energy, and resources for both today and tomorrow.
- **Check the Compass** – Reassess priorities regularly to stay aligned with the big picture.

Zoom out. Lock in time each term to step back from the day-to-day and refocus on long-term strategy — it's like a WOF for your school's future.



Build it Daily!

Rome wasn't built in a day—and neither is a thriving school culture. Strategic vision is a marathon, not a sprint. Consistency, intention, and a clear view of the destination make the difference.

CULTURE



- **Lead with Alignment** – Let your daily decisions reflect your school’s vision and values.
- **Model the Magic** – Be the culture you want to see. Actions speak louder than policies!
- **Connect the Dots** – Help staff see how their mahi contributes to the bigger picture.
- **Track and Celebrate** – Measure progress and shout out the wins — even the tiny ones.
- **Flex With Purpose** – Adapt when needed, but keep steering toward your vision.

Start each day by asking: “How does this decision contribute to the bigger picture?” That’s how long-term change takes shape — one mindful moment at a time.

Values in Action

When values guide decisions, identity and trust grow stronger. By aligning actions with your school's values and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, you create a culture of trust, clarity, and shared direction. It's leadership with heart and backbone.

CULTURE



- **Name It to Claim It** – Clearly define and communicate your school's core values.
- **Use the Filter** – Weigh decisions against your values and Te Tiriti principles.
- **Whakawhiti Kōrero** – Involve staff and whānau in conversations about what these values look like in action.
- **Walk the Talk** – Make sure policies and everyday practices reflect these commitments.
- **Accountability = Integrity** – Hold yourself and others to living the values, especially when it's hard.

In tricky moments, reflect on how potential resolutions align with school values and Te Tiriti obligations.



Review, Refresh, Realign

What hit the mark last year might miss the moment now. Schools evolve, and so should their goals. Regular check-ins keep your strategy sharp, your team focused, and your mahi meaningful.

CULTURE



- **Set Checkpoints** – Schedule regular review times with staff and leadership teams.
- **Measure and Adjust** – Track progress and tweak timelines or targets if needed.
- **Spot the Blockers** – Name the roadblocks and pivot where necessary.
- **Keep it Clear** – Communicate changes openly so everyone's on the same page.
- **Celebrate the Steps** – Recognise milestones to keep energy and momentum alive.

In staff meetings, zoom in on one key goal at a time. It's less overwhelming, more focused — and spreads the load in all the right ways.

Lead with Clarity

Clarity cuts through the noise and keeps the team moving forward. When leaders speak clearly and confidently, teams know where they're going and how to get there. Direction + Purpose = Momentum.

CULTURE



- **Say It Straight** – Communicate decisions and expectations with clarity and confidence.
- **Explain the ‘Why’** – Help your team understand the reasoning behind changes.
- **Tackle Uncertainty Early** – Don’t let rumours grow—address concerns up front.
- **Stay Consistent** – Keep your messages aligned across emails, meetings, and casual chats.
- **Invite Questions** – Create a safe space for staff to ask, clarify, and stay in the loop.

Anticipate questions and be ready to answer them proactively.

Strong Schools Grow Strong Leaders

Leadership isn't a title - it's a mindset and belongs to everyone. By spotting and supporting potential in others, you build a school that's resilient, collaborative, and ready for anything.

CULTURE



- **Spot the Spark** – Keep an eye out for staff who show initiative and passion.
- **Mentor Magic** – Pair emerging leaders with mentors who'll guide and grow them.
- **Lead a Little** – Offer chances to lead projects, initiatives, or teams.
- **Share the Load** – Promote a culture of shared leadership and mutual support.
- **Shine the Spotlight** – Recognise and celebrate leadership in all its forms.

Rotate the mic! Give different staff the chance to lead—it builds confidence, capability, and community.

Collaboration as a Superpower

Collaboration fuels connection, creativity, and collective success. When leadership is shared and every voice matters, magic happens. Empowering staff to contribute builds trust, team spirit, and a school culture where everyone feels they belong and where great ideas can come from anyone.

CULTURE



- **Create Safe Spaces** – Build a culture where open kōrero and trust are the norm.
- **Say Yes to Initiative** – Encourage staff to step up and take part in shaping decisions.
- **Teamwork Time** – Make room for team-based problem-solving and shared challenges.
- **Celebrate the We** – Acknowledge and highlight the wins that came from working together.
- **Lead Side-by-Side** – Model collaboration by rolling up your sleeves and joining the mahi.

Ask often: “Who else’s voice needs to be heard?”
You’ll be amazed what happens when everyone has a seat at the table.

Strong Relationships = Strong Learning

It's not just about what you teach—
it's about who you're teaching. Building
real relationships helps students feel
safe, motivated, and ready to grow.
A little connection goes a long way in
unlocking potential!

CULTURE



- **Know the Whole Child** – Take time to learn about your students' interests, whānau, and dreams.
- **Create a Vibe** – Build a respectful, inclusive space where students feel safe to be themselves.
- **Be Steady** – Show consistency and fairness so students trust you've got their back.
- **Feedback that Lifts** – Make it personal, encouraging, and focused on growth.
- **Build the Village** – Encourage teamwork and peer support to strengthen relationships across the class.

Remember the little things—like a student's favourite hobby or a staff member's coffee order. Being seen is powerful.



Celebrate Growth

It's not just about who finishes first—
it's about how far each student comes.
Recognising growth helps build
confidence, fuel motivation, and create
a classroom culture where effort is
celebrated just as much as outcomes.

CULTURE



- **Spot Growth** – Acknowledge academic and personal progress.
- **Shout It Out** – Publicly celebrate wins to boost morale.
- **Goal-Getter Moments** – Break goals into steps and celebrate each.
- **Praise With Purpose** – Be specific about effort and improvement.
- **Mirror Moments** – Encourage reflection and goal-setting.

Use the magic words: “I’ve noticed...”

e.g., “I’ve noticed how much more confident you are sharing your ideas!”. It builds pride and a growth mindset.