



# PASTORAL CARE POLICY

Version: 2  
Policy Owner: CAO  
Approved by: CEO  
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## 1. PURPOSE/ SCOPE/RATIONALE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to support the wellbeing and safety of ākonga/learners enrolled at VHNZ) through compliance with The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code).
- 1.2 This policy sets out the obligations of VHNZ (as a tertiary provider) under the Code and identifies guiding principles for achieving outcomes required by the Code.
- 1.3 This policy applies to:
  - (a) All employees of VHNZ, including contracted staff, and secondees providing services for VHNZ, and those on fixed-term contracts (collectively referred to as Kaimahi in this national policy); and
  - (b) Where appropriate Ohu Kaitiaki/guardians, which extends to all operating at a governance level, including Board members.

### 1.4 Introduction

Vertical Horizonz New Zealand (VHNZ) is an NZQA approved Private Training Establishment (PTE). We deliver NZQA standards based short courses and programmes of study, including apprenticeships throughout New Zealand. We also deliver short courses overseas predominately in Australia, Pacific Islands, and the Middle East that may include NZQA standards.

Our programmes/apprenticeships and short course enrolments may include international ākonga/learners (e.g., working visa holders, RSE workers, etc), but are unlikely to include learners on a student visa. As such we must comply with The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code). To this end VHNZ is applying for NZQA approval as a signatory to the Code for International Learners.

At this stage VHNZ does not intend to offer NZQA accredited qualifications or credentials offshore. If this changes, VHNZ will comply with the NZQA Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2022 and its accompanying guidance document.

While this policy aligns with the Code and includes student accommodation and use of agents, VHNZ does not intend to provide accommodation or employ/contract agents at this stage.



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## 3. NGĀ TIKANGA/DEFINITIONS

| Term                          | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Student accommodation</b>  | Student accommodation which is exempt under section 5B of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Accessible</b>             | All ākonga/learners, especially disabled ākonga/learners, can interact with VHNZ in a way that is reasonable to meet their individual needs and promotes their independence and dignity.                                                                     |
| <b>Learner/ākonga/student</b> | All mean the same things and are used interchangeably. They refer to any person currently enrolled in study at VHNZ, including apprentices and trainees, training site-based, or on-line, and include both domestic and international learners. <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Learning environment</b>   | The diverse physical and digital locations (e.g., teaching and learning, communal, overseas, and student accommodation), contexts, and cultures in which ākonga/learners learn.                                                                              |
| <b>Practices</b>              | The policies and processes implemented by VHNZ to realise the outcomes set out in the Code.                                                                                                                                                                  |

<sup>1</sup> This includes secondary/tertiary pathway learners and on-standard enrolments (i.e., Corrections).



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|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wellbeing and safety</b> | Having a positive frame of mind, resilience, satisfaction with self, relationships, and experiences and progressing towards learning outcomes sought. It also means being healthy and feeling secure.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Learner voice</b>        | Is the expression of values, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds of individual groups or learners at VHNZ. Learner voice creates opportunities for learners to improve their learning experience and contribute to decision-making and mahi/work at VHNZ. Learner voice may be sought by VHNZ or volunteered by learners or learner representatives. |

### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 VHNZ takes a whole of provider approach to maintaining responsive wellbeing and safety systems for ākonga/learners across the organisation that:
- (a) Supports wellbeing and safety for ākonga/learners in their learning environment, including teaching and learning spaces (both physical and digital), ākonga/learner communal areas, and student accommodation; and
  - (b) Takes into account the contexts and cultures in which ākonga/learners learn.
- 4.2 VHNZ creates and maintains support systems for ākonga/learners in a way that upholds ākonga/learners mana and autonomy, and helps them to feel:
- (a) Safe – physically and mentally
  - (b) Respected for who they are
  - (c) Supported in their learning and wellbeing
  - (d) Connected with social and cultural networks.
- 4.3 VHNZ ensures appropriate procedures, guidelines, and induction materials are current and in place so that Kaimahi have clear guidance and are supported to understand what is expected of them to achieve the outcomes of the Code.
- 4.4 VHNZ recognises the areas of overlap that exist between the wellbeing and safety obligations it has to a work-based learner enrolled at VHNZ, and the obligations an employer has to the same person under applicable employment and health and safety legislation. VHNZ will work with employers to document respective responsibilities in the tripartite agreement. This must include:
- (a) What the overlapping areas are and the respective roles and functions in those areas; and
  - (b) The co-operation VHNZ requires from employers to support compliance with any additional requirements of the Code.
- 4.5 The rights and responsibilities of ākonga/learners are set out in VHNZ policies and procedures and other documents as advised by VHNZ. This Policy should be read in conjunction with those policies and procedures, and in the context of work-based learning, the tripartite agreement entered into between the learner, the employer, and VHNZ.



## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

| Role                                                                     | Responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| VHNZ national office, business divisions/units, and all Kaimahi/workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 below.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sections 5.1 to 5.5 set out responsibilities to all learners, both domestic and international.</li><li>Section 5.6 sets out additional responsibilities in relation to international learners.</li></ul> |
| Kaimahi/workers working in specific environments.                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sections 5.4 applies to Kaimahi/workers working in digital and learning environments.</li><li>Section 5.5 applies to Kaimahi/workers working in student accommodation.</li><li>Section 5.6 applies to Kaimahi/workers working with international learners.</li></ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### 5.1 A wellbeing and safety system

Maintain a wellbeing and safety system that upholds principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi and responds to the diverse needs of learners. This must include practices to:

- Set strategic goals and safety plans so that they:
  - Contribute to an education system that upholds principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/te Tiriti o Waitangi support and supports Māori achievement and aspirations, and
  - Seek to understand and support ākonga/learners cultural needs and aspiration.
- Set learner voice and wellbeing safety goals, plans, and practices that are regularly self-reviewed and reported on.
- Establish responsive wellbeing and safety systems that identify and address concerns around ākonga/learners wellbeing and have plans for assisting ākonga/learners to respond effectively in emergency situations.
- Provide Kaimahi/workers with ongoing training and resources that are appropriate to their role.
- Develop guidelines and procedures in a manner that aligns with the categories of requirements set out in 5.2. to 5.6 below.
- Fulfil whole of provider reporting requirements.



## **5.2 Diverse Learner Voices**

Operate practices that seek to understand and respond to diverse learner voices. This must include practices to:

- (a) Proactively engage with diverse ākonga/learners and ākonga/learner communities to actively hear voices through formal and informal mechanisms, which must include:
  - (i) Practices to develop, review and improve learner wellbeing and safety strategic goals and plans.
  - (ii) Appropriate and accessible resources to support ākonga/learners and their communities to develop the necessary skills to participate fully in decision-making processes.
  - (iii) Provide ākonga/learners with timely and accessible information to increase transparency of decision-making at VHNZ.
- (b) Promote and publicise complaint and dispute resolution processes available to ākonga/learners, and provide an accessible and culturally responsive concerns and complaints process which must:
  - (i) Enable ākonga/learner complaints to be addressed in a timely and effective way, and
  - (ii) Include annual reporting on complaints and their outcomes, disaggregated by diverse learning groups, including the ākonga/learners experience with the complaints process.

## **5.3 Physical and mental health**

Operate practices that seek to support ākonga/learners to be safe and well by understanding and responding to ākonga/learners physical and mental health needs. This must include practices that:

- (a) Enable ākonga/learners to identify and manage their basic needs (including housing, food and clothing) by providing information on how to access relevant support services, and their rights and obligations as tenants.
- (b) Promote physical and mental health awareness by providing information, advice, and opportunities for ākonga/learners to make positive choices in these areas.
- (c) Provide information and advice that enables ākonga/learners to access medical and mental health services, report any concerns they have for their peers, respond to an emergency, and engage with relevant Government agencies, and
- (d) Identify and respond to ākonga/learners who need additional support through proactive monitoring and responsive services.

## **5.4 Physical and digital learning environments**

Ensure wellbeing and safety practices are in place for physical and digital learning environments so that they are safe, inclusive, and accessible, and designed to support positive learning experiences of diverse learner groups. This must include practices that:

- (a) Protect ākonga/learners from discrimination, racism (including systemic racism), bullying, harassment and abuse.





- (b) Provide ākonga/learners with opportunities to participate and share their views safely, connect with others, build relationships, support each other, welcome their friends and whānau/family, and develop social, spiritual and cultural networks.
- (c) Use te reo and tikanga Māori to support Māori ākonga/learner connection and identity and culture.
- (d) Support ākonga/learners through their studies, and
- (e) Identify and where possible remove barriers to accessing facilities and services.

### **5.5 Student accommodation**

Ensure wellbeing and safety practices are in place so that student accommodation promotes and fosters a supportive and inclusive community which supports the wellbeing and safety of residents. This must include practices to:

- (a) Provide residents with clear, sufficient, accurate and transparent information about the type and nature of accommodation and services provided.
- (b) Work with residents to help them to understand their responsibilities in a communal environment, including those relating to diversity.
- (c) Provide residents with learning and peer support around self-care and wellbeing, and providing support to other residents, including what action to take in an emergency.
- (d) Ensure accommodation staff are fit and proper person/s for their role, and that they receive ongoing wellbeing support, and
- (e) Ensure appropriate oversight and support of residents, including for escalation of issues when they occur.

### **5.6 International learners**

International learners undertake additional obligations to respond to the distinct needs of international learners (including prospective learners) and safeguard the status of VHNZ as a signatory to the Code. Requirements<sup>2</sup> must include practices that ensure:

- (a) Prospective international learners receive clear, accessible, accurate, and sufficient information to make informed choices about the study and services provided, and the obligations they will enter under an enrolment contract.
- (b) International learners have opportunities to participate in well-designed and age-appropriate orientation programmes and continue to receive relevant information and advice to support achievement, wellbeing and safety.
- (c) International learners are safe and appropriately supervised in their accommodation, and
- (d) Effective communication with the parent or legal guardian of learners under 18 years.

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<sup>2</sup> The requirements listed relate to Pastoral Care obligations and in no way diminish the responsibility of VHNZ to comply with all other requirements of the Code in relation to international learners, including managing agent relationships and ensuring clarity on the terms of the contract of enrolment.



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## 6. RELEVANT COMPLIANCE/DOCUMENTS

- NZQA The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Ākonga/Learner) Code of Practice 2021
- NZQA Offshore Programme Delivery Rules 2022 and Guidance 2024
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Children's Act 2014
- Residential Tenancies Act 1986, section 5B.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and Regulations
- Privacy Act 2020 or the Health Information Privacy Code made under the Act.

## 7. AUDIENCE

VHNZ Staff, Contractors and Learners.

## 8. RELATED PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS

- VHNZ Health and Safety Policy and Procedures
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Equal Education Policy
- Training Delivery Policy
- Student Complaints/Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Programme Withdrawal Policy
- Student Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Student Information Policy
- Student Guidance and Support Policy and Procedures
- Programme Advisory Group Policy
- Student Entry and Enrolment Policy
- Programme/Course Evaluation Policy
- Privacy Policy.