

# Build collaborative relationships with families to support learning, safety, and wellbeing

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Foster positive relationships and partnerships' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

See your classroom through whānau eyes

Questions to ask families

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Value parental knowledge

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Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Foster positive relationships and partnerships](#)

Suggestion: [Build collaborative relationships with families to support learning, safety, and wellbeing](#)

Date

25 April 2024

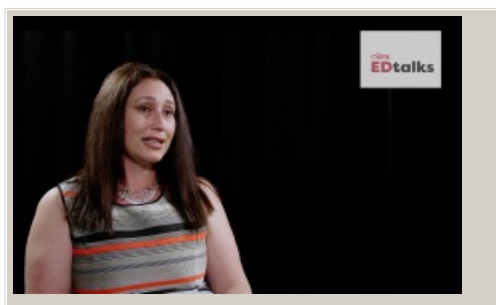
Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/build-collaborative-relationships-with-families-to-support-learning-safety-and-wellbeing](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/build-collaborative-relationships-with-families-to-support-learning-safety-and-wellbeing)

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## See your classroom through whānau eyes

What will give parents and whānau confidence that your classroom and school is a safe place for their child?



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/205147189>

Closed Captions

Source:

[EDTalks \(NZ\)](#)

<http://edtalks.org/#/video/seeing-your-school-through-the-eyes-of-maori-parents>

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## Questions to ask families

Communicate with family and whānau to understand the strengths and needs of your students. Use this list as a prompt.

For Māori students, learn about their tribal structures and cultural practices:

- Whakapapa (genealogy).
- Who they consider to be whānau.
- Tikanga – cultural values and practices they use (language, customs, traditions).
- About their marae.

People in the student's life:

- Important people in the student's life.
- The best methods and times to communicate with parents and whānau.
- Professionals working with the family and whānau.
- Parent, family and whānau hopes and priorities for them.
- Questions they have and the support they would like from the school.

Practical elements:

- The language/s spoken at home.
- Student's medications and allergies.
- What they do at home to support learning.

Personal preferences:

- Their likes, interests, what they're good at, need help with, and can do independently.
- Their dislikes, what can upset them, how they express this, and their calming skills.
- Their favourite hobbies, books, songs, sports, TV programmes.

Discuss times when things have gone well for the student and determine the contributing factors.

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## Share information wisely

Schools must always consider how the information they share is received and understood.

The child's safety, ongoing learning, and wellbeing must be of paramount consideration when communicating behaviour progress.

- Take a no-surprises approach – don't "save up" conversations for parents and whānau. Instead keep in regular contact and work collaboratively to provide timely support for students.
- Choose language carefully for school reports.
- Ensure a call from the teacher isn't just about challenging behaviour.
- Home-school communication books should be restricted to specific examples of behaviours that support learning and wellbeing, steps in the right direction, persistence, practising a skill, and so on. Include positive ways the parent can help with specific examples.

Consider tools such as [Seesaw](#), which enable students to share their work and experiences in real time with both teachers and parents/whānau.

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# Value parental knowledge

Invite parents and whānau to share approaches that work well at home.

Use these to build continuity and strengthen engagement.

- ✓ Use phrases and communication techniques that are effective and successful at home.
- ✓ Ask whānau about their child's strengths and what supports and motivates them.
- ✓ [Engage in conversations](#) to identify potential barriers and ask families for solutions based on their personal experiences and expertise.
- ✓ Connect learning to known interests, such as favourite colours, sports, and music into the class.
- ✓ Invite whānau to bring objects and items from home that are meaningful and offer support for their children.
- ✓ Consider visuals that can be used both at home and school to support understanding.
- ✓ Consider furniture options and physical supports that work well (for example, chairs, table heights).
- ✓ Align eating and personal routines with what happens at home.
- ✓ Identify successful calming strategies and replicate these (for example, objects, cushions, quiet spaces).

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## Reflective question

Consider how your collaboration with whānau influences your practice.

We've got to stop thinking we know what whānau want and just ask. Because whānau will tell you, as a school, an institution, it's what you do with that after they say it which is the important step.

And it's how we ask, and it's how often we ask. And it's how many opportunities we provide for people to be safe in terms of responding openly, honestly, and frankly about what we are doing.

**Benita Tahuri and Keriana Tawhiwhirangi**

Source:

[Te Mangōroa](#)

<http://temangoroa.tki.org.nz/Video-stories/TMK-Whanau-involvement-1>

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## Useful resources



### Whānau involvement at Hiruharama School

Video featuring a discussion of whānau involvement between a wide range of voices, including student, teacher, parent, principal, facilitator.

Publisher: Te Mangōroa

[Visit website](#)



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