

Offer social and emotional supports

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Embed social and emotional learning' from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

-
- Includes:**
- Respond to ākonga needs
 - Foster buddy systems
 - Build networks of support
 - Tools to manage emotions
 - Encourage peer-to-peer support
 - Support student friendships
 - Useful Resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Embed social and emotional learning](#)

Suggestion: [Offer social and emotional supports](#)

Date

19 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/offer-social-and-emotional-supports

Respond to ākongā needs

Identify areas of need and strengths in your classroom.

Offer a kete of emotional supports that ākongā can use when they need them.

- Visuals to support key strategies.
- Frameworks for understanding emotional states, such as the zones of regulation.
- Language to use when emotions are heightened.
- Breathing techniques to give time to think and process emotions.
- Systems for taking time out or a movement break.
- Protocols for using calming areas.
- Thinking frameworks to help students to solve problems as they arise, such as the learning pit.
- Calming activities box with familiar and favourite items.
- A sensory kete – see [Sensory kete– Sparklers](#).

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Foster buddy systems

The tuakana-teina relationship provides the model for a buddy system. The older or more expert tuakana helps and guides the younger or less expert teina as these learners create digital stories.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/61992804>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Enabling e-Learning \(NZ\)](#)

<https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Future-focused-learning/Digital-stories/Teaching-digital-stories-using-tuakana-teina>

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Build networks of support

Build networks of support to help ākongā to maintain their safety and wellbeing, especially in unstructured times such as break and lunch periods.

Ideas for providing appropriate supports.

- Check in with students regularly.
- Prepare a routine for break times.
- Make sure the student has access to safe supervised areas, such as the library, during unstructured time.
- Appoint peer buddies and role models who can support the student in the playground.
- Ensure that all duty teachers are aware of the student's needs and how to best support them.
- Ensure students know how to get help if they need it.
- Have a 'silent mentor'. This could be a teacher who informally checks in two or three times a week during break times.
- Where possible, or necessary, have a senior student or adult walk to and from school with them.
- Ensure that people, such as relievers, aides, bus drivers and sports coaches, know how to support them.

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Tools to manage emotions

Support students to recognise how their emotional state impacts their learning.

Introduce a range of approaches that students can access independently, such as:

- moving to a quiet calm space
- playing with a fidget object
- getting some fresh air
- taking a movement or exercise break
- listening to music
- taking a food and water break
- buddy time
- access to a mentor for support
- leaving the room
- practising a breathing technique.

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Encourage peer-to-peer support

To support a peer prepare for their first school camp, students at Houghton Valley School made a book using digital photos with captions.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/113344263>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Enabling eLearning \(NZ\)](#)

<https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Snapshots-of-learning/Snapshots-of-Learning/Hapara-Teacher-Dashboard-and-Google-Apps/Inclusion-in-the-classroom>

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Support student friendships

Encourage students' attempts to make friends by offering useful and timely guidance.

- ✓ Be a positive role model and respect individual differences. Model respect, caring, patience, and positive interactions.
- ✓ Promote connections around common interests.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for ongoing student connections.
- ✓ Help students to join ongoing group activities by finding appropriate roles for them.
- ✓ Help keep student interactions going – explain the actions of students whose social skills are just developing.
- ✓ Share information about emergent friendships with whānau so they can arrange for students to get together outside of class.

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Useful Resources



Mitey Programme

Mitey is an evidence based, school wide approach to teaching mental health education to children in NZ schools.

Publisher: Mitey Foundation

[Visit website](#)

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