

Integrate Pacific languages and practices into your classroom programme

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Co-design a culturally sustaining environment' from the Guide: [Supporting Pacific learners](#)

Includes:

- Support students to enjoy and express their cultural identity
- Build on cultural experiences
- Value and share languages
- Connect cultural heritage to learning
- Foster students own language
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting Pacific learners](#)

Strategy: [Co-design a culturally sustaining environment](#)

Suggestion: [Integrate Pacific languages and practices into your classroom programme](#)

Date

11 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-pacific-learners/integrate-pacific-languages-and-practices-into-your-classroom-programme

Support students to enjoy and express their cultural identity

Schools should reflect and accommodate the diversity of their students in their uniform policies. This can be achieved by including items of cultural or religious significance as part of the uniform and/or allowing adaptations. Include a specific provision in the policy permitting students to wear items of cultural or religious significance with, or instead of, uniform items (e.g. ie faitaga).

The Human Rights Commission

Source:

[School uniform guidelines – Te Kāhui Tika Tangata | The Human Rights Commission](#)

https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/5916/5344/0946/School_uniform_guidelines_WEB_VERSION.pdf

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Build on cultural experiences

Draw on the rich and meaningful cultural experiences of Pacific learners for teaching and learning.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/113978266>

[View transcript](#)

Source:

[Pasifika Education Community \(NZ\)](http://pasifika.tki.org.nz)

<http://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Engaging-with-Pasifika-parents-families-communities/Relevancy-and-Expectations>

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Value and share languages

Teachers who value and share the languages Pacific learners bring into the classroom, while building English language skills, are supporting them to succeed.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/113971761>

[View transcript](#)

Source:

[Pasifika Education Community \(NZ\)](http://pasifika.tki.org.nz)

<http://pasifika.tki.org.nz/Media-gallery/Effective-teaching-for-Pasifika-students/Language>

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Connect cultural heritage to learning

Some practical ideas to try in your classroom

- ✓ Invite students to bring an object or a photo from home that they can keep in the class, that best reflects their ethnic identity. This gives them physical space in the classroom for a connection from home.
- ✓ Encourage the students and their families to translate some positive learning phrases into Pacific languages, for class use. Provide opportunities for Pacific learners who speak Pacific languages to teach the class some basic vocabulary. Translate key words into students' home languages
- ✓ Establish classroom communication practices that include vocabulary from Pacific languages or Pacific cultural forms. For example, to gain attention use clapping sequences from Samoan culture (pati male po).
- ✓ Learn to pronounce your students' names correctly with their help. Model the correct pronunciation to the class. Encourage all students to use the correct pronunciation.
- ✓ Identify how you can specifically include a Pacific component into curriculum topics, such as including holidays and festivals that are important to your Pacific learners in learning activities.
- ✓ Engage with the Pacific school community and family to bring their knowledge and expertise into the school.

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Foster students own language

Rae Si'ilata, urges educators to create opportunities for students to bring their language into the classroom.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/190931605>

[View transcript](#)

Source:

NZC Online (NZ)

<http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Media-gallery/Cultural-diversity/Cultural-diversity-in-the-classroom>

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Useful resources



Pasifika dual language books

A series of texts to help new entrant Pasifika children transition to English medium schools. These early reading books come in five Pasifika languages (Gagana Sāmoa, Lea Faka-Tonga, Cook Islands Māori, Gagana Tokelau, and Vagahau Niue) and English.

Publisher: Ministry of Education NZ

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