

HOKOWHITU SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY (2026)**RATIONALE**

Hokowhitu School Board will achieve effective governance through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, policies, and processes that enable proactive and responsive decision-making.

GUIDELINESBoard Objectives

1. The Board has the following primary objectives, as defined by Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020, of ensuring:
 - a. Every student at Hokowhitu School is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.
 - b. Hokowhitu School is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and gives effect to relevant student rights; and takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school.
 - c. Hokowhitu School is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs.
 - d. Hokowhitu School gives effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including by working to ensure that its plans, policies, and local curriculum reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori; and taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori; and achieving equitable outcomes for Māori students.
2. The Board must meet its primary objectives through the following actions, as defined by Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020:
 - a. Having particular regard to the statement of National Education and Learning Priorities.
 - b. Giving effect to its obligations in relation to any foundation curriculum statements, national curriculum statements, and national performance measures; and teaching and learning programmes; and monitoring and reporting students' progress.
 - c. Performing its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible.
 - d. Complying with its obligations as a member of the Central West Kahui Ako/community of learning.
3. The Board also has the following legal obligations:
 - a. Acting as a good employer of all school staff, in accordance with all relevant collective agreements, as well as with the Human Rights Act 1993, Public Service Act 2020, and Employment Relations Act 2000.
 - b. Maintaining accountability for the school's finances, in accordance with the Crown Entities Act 2004 and Public Finance Act 1989.
 - c. Overseeing child protection, in accordance with the Children's Act 2014 and the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015.
 - d. Recognising its collective status as a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), and the status of individual Board members as officers of the PCBU with accountability for health and safety, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
 - e. Overseeing and monitoring the use of physical restraint, in accordance with Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2017.

- f. Overseeing responsibility for the school's holding of information, in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982, Local Government, Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, and Privacy Act 2020.
 - g. Supporting the educational and pastoral needs of international students, in accordance with the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice (2019).
 - h. Any other obligations as specified in legislation.
- 4. The Board will develop a three-year strategic plan, outlining its vision for the school and identifying aspirational but defined goals focusing on areas requiring change or improvement to meet its primary objectives, to take effect from 1 January of every year following a Board election (or any other starting date as determined by the Ministry of Education).
 - a. The development of the strategic plan will be informed by consultation with the school community, and the finalised strategic plan must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and published on the school website before 1 March in the year that it takes effect.
 - b. The Principal, in consultation with the Board, will annually develop an implementation plan setting that year's targets and actions for working towards the goals of the strategic plan, and establishing how progress will be monitored.
 - c. The annual implementation plan must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and published on the school website no later than 31 March each year.
 - d. The Principal, in consultation with the Board, will report on the previous year's progress towards meeting annual and strategic goals, including an analysis of variance and annual financial statements.
 - e. The annual report must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and published on the school website no later than 31 May each year.
- 5. The Board will maintain a full suite of policies that set the desired outcomes for Hokowhitu School.
 - a. All policies will be subject to cyclical review at least once within each Board term.
 - b. Policies may also be reviewed outside of the review cycle if required, for example due to changes in legislation or school circumstances.
 - c. All approved policies will be published on the school website and will be available in hard copy at the school office.

Board Membership and Conduct

- 6. The Board will consist of five elected parent representatives, one elected staff representative, and the Principal.
 - a. The Principal will ensure that secretarial services are provided to the Board.
- 7. A casual vacancy arises when a parent or staff representative resigns or leaves the Board for another reason, or if after an election or by-election there are fewer nominations than the number of positions available, so that the Board has less than its required number of representatives.
 - a. A casual vacancy for a staff representative must be filled through a by-election.
 - b. A casual vacancy for a parent representative may be filled either through a by-election or by selection.
 - c. A casual vacancy may not need to be filled if it arises in a triennial election year.

8. The Board may co-opt extra members to fill identified needs, such as skill, gender, or ethnic diversity, or to temporarily fill a casual vacancy.
 - a. A co-opted member must sign the eligibility declaration form before the Board is able to resolve to co-opt them.
 - b. The Board must pass a resolution for the co-option that specifies the length of the co-option, which cannot be for longer than the period until the next Board election.
 - c. The Board may not co-opt more members than there are elected parent representatives.
 - d. A co-opted member is a full member of the Board, with the same standing, voice, vote, and accountability as other members, and may hold a Board portfolio and/or be appointed to the role of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member.
9. Each Board member is expected to meet the standards of behaviour stipulated in the Code of Conduct for State School Board Members.
 - a. Board members will acknowledge their awareness of the Code of Conduct annually in writing.
 - b. An elected or co-opted representative may be sanctioned for significant or persistent breaches of the Code of Conduct, in accordance with Section 169 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

10. The Board must elect a Presiding Member and a Deputy Presiding Member, neither of whom can be the Principal or staff representative, at the first meeting following the triennial election and at the first meeting of the second and third years of the Board term.
 - a. The Principal will preside over any meeting where a Presiding Member needs to be appointed until a Presiding Member is appointed as the first order of business.
 - b. If the appointed Presiding Member is absent from a meeting, it will be presided over by the Deputy Presiding Member.
 - c. A new Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member must also be elected if the Board passes a vote of no confidence in them, or if they resign in writing, or if they cease to be a Board member.
11. The Board will allocate the following portfolios, which cannot be held by the Principal or staff representative, at the first meeting following a triennial election and at the first meeting of the second and third years of the Board term:
 - a. Finance and Audit
 - b. Grants
 - c. Personnel
 - d. Policy
 - e. Property
 - f. Risk and Compliance
 - g. Whānau Māori
12. Portfolio holders will ideally submit a report in writing at each meeting, and must submit a report in writing whenever information will be presented for the purpose of making decisions or monitoring progress.
13. A Board member may resign from a portfolio by writing to the Presiding Member, but their resignation from that role does not affect their place on the Board.

14. Board members may be reimbursed for reasonable Board related expenses provided the nature and amount of the expenses are agreed in advance with the Principal and the Presiding Member (or the Principal and the Deputy Presiding Member in the case of the Presiding Member).

Board meetings

15. The Board will meet at Hokowhitu School twice per term, usually in weeks three and eight, with the ability to schedule additional meetings if circumstances require.
- The Principal will, in consultation with Board members, set the time, date, and location of Board meetings at least one term in advance.
 - Board meetings may be rescheduled for compelling reasons, but a new meeting date and time must be chosen that all Board members are able to attend.
 - Board meetings may be held electronically for compelling reasons, provided that all Board members are able to access the technology needed.
 - The public will be regularly advised of the date, time, and location of Board meetings in the school newsletter and/or email and/or through the school app.
 - The Presiding Member is responsible, in consultation with the Principal, for preparing the meeting agenda.
 - The meeting agenda and documents will be made available to the public two full business days before the meeting.
 - Minutes will be kept of all Board meetings, including any public excluded business, recording key points of discussion, resolutions, and action points.
16. All Board members are required to attend all Board meetings.
- A Board member who cannot attend a meeting must submit their apologies in advance.
 - A Board member must submit a request for prior leave in writing to the Board in advance of their first absence, which the Board will discuss in the public-excluded part of the meeting without being obliged to grant the request.
 - A Board member who misses three consecutive meetings without obtaining prior leave in advance from the Board ceases to be a member and a casual vacancy occurs.
17. The Board will act to avoid any potential, actual, or perceived conflicts between the interests of the school and its members' personal, professional and business interests.
- The Board shall maintain a register of all members detailing any interests, relationships or holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest.
 - Board members will also have an opportunity at the start of each meeting to declare any conflict of interest with the agenda items.
 - Board members who identify a conflict of interest with any agenda item shall be excluded from the relevant part(s) of the Board meeting.
 - If so many Board members are conflicted that a quorum cannot be formed, the Board will form a committee of non-conflicted members with appropriate delegation.
18. The Board will make its decisions in accordance with the following protocols:
- The Board can only conduct business while there is a quorum present of more than half the Board members currently holding office, or in the case of electronic meetings while a quorum of Board members is able to communicate with each other simultaneously.
 - All formal decisions will be proposed in the form of a motion, and taken by open voting by all Board members present

- c. In case of a tied vote on a motion, the Presiding Member is able to exercise a casting vote in addition to their deliberative vote
 - d. Digital motions by email may only be carried if passed unanimously by all Board members currently holding office, and the wording of the motion must be included in the minutes of the next meeting.
19. Board meetings are open to the public, including staff members, but public participation in meetings is at the discretion of the Board.
- a. The Board may resolve to exclude the public from some or all of its proceedings in, accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, but must make the reason(s) for excluding the public clear.
 - b. The Board may resolve to allow persons to remain after the public has been excluded if they possess knowledge that is relevant to the matter under discussion.
20. Board members will be paid an honorarium of \$75 per meeting, and the Presiding Member will be paid an honorarium of \$100 per meeting, in accordance with Inland Revenue guidance.
- a. Honoraria payments will be made after the completion of the last Board meeting at the end of term 2 and term 4.

Board Committees

21. The Board may establish an ad hoc committee to provide advice, perform Board functions, or exercise Board powers.
22. A Board committee must be established by a resolution of the Board that specifies its delegated authority, membership, and terms of reference.
- a. A Board committee must have at least two members, at least one of whom must be a Board member.
 - b. No person with a potential or actual conflict of interest should be appointed to a committee.
23. An appointments committee will make all permanent teacher appointments, comprising the Principal, the Board's Personnel portfolio holder (or another Board member), and one staff member, in accordance with the Appointments Policy.
24. If the Principal decides to suspend a student, the Board will resolve in writing to form a committee of three members (not including the Principal) to hold a suspension meeting, in accordance with the Delegations Policy.

Board Bylaws

25. The Board retains the authority to make bylaws (school rules), in accordance with the Delegations Policy.
26. The Board must undertake consultation with the community when making a new bylaw, or changing an existing bylaw, which will have disciplinary or other consequences for students who do not conform to it or will have implications for students' legal rights.

School Term Dates, Hours, and Closures

27. The Board will determine, on the advice of the Principal and in accordance with Ministry of Education requirements, when Term 1 starts and Term 4 ends for the following school year.
28. The Board will determine, on the advice of the Principal and in accordance with Ministry of Education requirements, any pre-arranged days when the school is closed for instruction.
29. The Board may resolve to close the school in an emergency.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/HANDBOOKSLegislation

- Education and Training Act
- The Education (School Board) Regulations 2020
- Official Information Act
- LGOIMA

Guidelines

- nzsta.org.nz/nzsta-governance-framework/nzsta-governance-framework-policies/
- <https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/administration-and-management/school-annual-reports>
- Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023
- National Education and Learning Priorities

School Policies, Procedures, and Other Documents

- Board Procedures for Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Board Procedures for Policy Review
- Board Code of Conduct
- Delegations Policy

APPROVAL DETAILS

Review frequency: Three yearly
 Ratification date: 21 October 2025
 Review date: Term 4 (October) 2028

 Presiding Member

 Principal