



Newtown School: Bringing the Code to life

Transcript

Code of Professional Responsibility – Being a member of the Teaching Profession.

Mark Brown: Those conversations that we have every day are important about maintaining who we are as professionals. It's actually quite healthy to have a code that clarifies 'what does it mean to be a registered teacher?' That open discussion allows teachers to express what we expect of the highest standard in that profession.

Debbie Purves: I'm responsible to my learners and to my community to be professional, to be competent, to be knowledgeable, to be the best that I can be.

Nicki Read: It's practical. It's got things in it, you go 'Yes, I recognise that scenario, I recognise that language, I know these things are important.'

Mark Brown: They're very clear. They give examples of what is good behaviour, also examples of what we're not expecting or will not accept in our profession.

Nicki Read: It's about asking each other some critical questions. It's about being respectful. It's about having some gritty conversations so that the outcomes are better than they were before. It's being a little bit braver in the way we teach.

Alice Cooke Harvie: It's about being a good teacher and being a good human being. How can you really value the learners and the community that you are serving? These are things that you should be doing.

Debbie Purves: Teachers I've seen practise that intuitively but I don't think we should make an assumption that that is the case or that we will always be aware of that. Having that as a guiding practice is saying 'this is what you are, this is what you've signed up for.'

Mark Brown: Having a clarity of what we expect of those very high standards is part of our New Zealand education system. It gives confidence to our own profession, that our fellow colleagues are professional, it also gives confidence to those in our community whether they're parents or learners, that we have a high expectation of ourselves.

Nicki Read: These documents take you back to the heart of what's important. It's not complicated the



commitments you're asked to make, there's complication in perhaps how you outwork them but there's not complication in the purpose of what they're there for.

Our code: Reflecting on expectations. Ngā Tikanga Matatika: whakaroaro i ngā whaingā.

Mark Brown: It's an amazing starting point and reminder to who we are if we are professional teachers.

Kelvin Harper: It's the baseline document really. It's the first place to go when we need to address an issue, because it's quite clearly outlined that this is what we do as teachers.

Mark Brown: If we're honouring a commitment to our profession as a whole body, those things that may be creating issues for our young people or our colleagues need to be addressed in a positive way.

Kelvin Harper: Just because something has always happened doesn't necessarily mean it's the best practice. That's where the outlines in the code are good to refer back to because it is all about change and challenging and making sure that we're doing the right thing for each learner.

Mark Brown: It's about all leaders and everybody on a teaching staff, taking action and having those hard conversations at times.

Kelvin Harper: The longer you leave something the harder it is to change. The quicker you can identify the issue, the quicker we can nail it really.

Mark Brown: There is some strong advice and examples that we can make reference to, as either conversation starters or an opportunity to talk to somebody around what has happened. It gives the opportunity for those within our school, or leaders or colleagues, to be able to address some of those concerns.

Kelvin Harper: It takes the personal nature out of it, so it doesn't matter what sort of relationship you may have with this person. This is our code, these are our guidelines, this is what we do, so it just shapes those conversations and it gives clear actions of where we need to go next.

Commitment to the Teaching Profession. Ko te ngākaunui ki te Umanga Whakaakoranga.

Alice Cooke Harvie: We set up that culture at the start of the year that everyone's ideas are valued and listened to. And there are ways to respectfully disagree but we value everyone's ideas.

Nicki Read: There's real richness in throwing questions to each other. Not in a way that says you're right, you're wrong, but why are you doing that and where's it come from and how does that connect to our children. The big pedagogy ones - those sort of conversations, you can actually toss it up in the air and it all sort of flows. The little picky ones need a bit more of a kawa and a protocol around it.

Debbie Purves: I'm a better teacher when there are people around me holding me accountable for what my teaching practice is. I'm a better teacher when I am relied on by others to deliver something in tandem with them or even as part of a programme that is bigger than just me.



Alice Cooke Harvie: And because we've developed the ways to have those robust conversations we're actually setting up structures for them to happen. So not just saying 'oh we think these conversations will happen', we actually specifically have structures of people in pairs, people observing each other and giving that feedback.

Kelvin Harper: With Hannah and I having these conversations when she's talking about the students in her class, I'm questioning her but through my questioning I'm starting to think 'well what does it mean for me as a teacher as well? What do I actually believe in that's going to make this better? And so it's a two-way thing but the whole point is that everyone's getting a better understanding as we're going along.

Hannah Gilmore: No-one really lets you sit back and do nothing. It's what everyone's ideas and everyone's opinions have expected.

Debbie Purves: Our students get to have not just my strength, they get to have the other teachers' strengths as well when they are shared amongst us.

Commitment to Learners. Ko te ngākaunui ki ngā Ākonga.

Kelvin Harper: We look at it as, this is the community's child, how do we make a difference in their time here at this school? No matter if you teach them for one year, two years or you never teach them, you know about them, you know how to engage them in learning, you know their strengths and their challenges. Because we all need to be working on the same page for those students so they can reach their outcomes.

Nicki Read: It has to be all of us contributing, watching out for, caring, education, supporting, regardless of who you are and what needs you have and what support you need. That has to be a really powerful commitment.

Kelvin Harper: They need to feel safe and confident to challenge themselves, so they need to feel that every day when they come into this school they know what they're coming in to, there's no surprises. It doesn't matter what interaction they have with any teacher, their expectations and what they expect of the teacher are the same.

Fraesar Williams: I te tuatahi me whakamana te tamaiti, nā reira me whakamihi i te tamaiti i te tuatahi kia whakapiki o rātou wairua ki kōnei.

Alice Cooke Harvie: We want to set up straight from the get go 'we all have power, we all have a voice and those voices are always heard.'

Kelvin Harper: And it's easy to have the harder conversations to get them back on track, when you've got that positive relationship with them from day one. To get their peers involved as well just strengthens what we're all trying to do.

Fraesar Williams: Kia whakamaumahara hoki ki o rātou turangawaewae, ahakoa kei roto mātou i tēnei taone nunui me te tokomaha o ngā ngā tangata nō iwi kē, nō whenua kē, kia kore rawa rātou e wareware he tangata whenua rātou. Kia mohio mai anō ratou kāore e roa ko rātou ngā rangatira o āpōpō, ngā kaiako o āpopo.



Nicki Read: Teaching about Treaty principles is not just a 'here's my unit, now I'm done'. There's experiences we give the children that definitely enrich and deepen what they make sense of.

Hannah Gilmore: We need to constantly keep asking those questions to the kids, so it's continued to be discussed, it's continued to be something that's live and being learned all the time.

Nicki Read: One of the phrases we use is 'diversity is a gift rather than a barrier' and that is a choice about how we speak, how we see others. It's about commitment to me knowing you first before the needs and labels that you might have attached to you. Here's the whole picture of this child, now where shall we grow with them.

Commitment to families. Ko te ngākaunui ki ngā whānau.

Nicki Read: Because we're a multi-cultural community I think you have to be pretty committed to knowing the people that are part of our school and that means a deep respect for who are you, what is your family value, how do you live and how am I going to show that you have my respect and I want to learn from who you are.

Mark Brown: Our whānau – grandfathers, grandmothers, aunties and uncles – are the most important people in our young tamariki's lives. This is their school.

Alice Cooke Harvie: It's that setting up from the start of 'your voice is valued because you are the first teacher'. We all have a really important part to play and a voice to be heard.

Fraesar Williams: He hohonga pai tērā mō ngā whānau kia taea te kite he aha ngā mahi o a rātou tamariki.

Debbie Purves: We talk with the families about who their child is. They see a child that we don't necessarily get to see so they fill in that part of the puzzle, and we share with them the part of the puzzle that we see of their child.

Kelvin Harper: With every child being so unique you can't assume different things about different cultures, you have to get to know each child, and even between generations. Some of our Somali community came from Somalia and now I'm teaching the younger siblings who were born and raised in New Zealand who are trying to connect back with their culture. Their needs are a lot different to what their parents needs were.

Alice Cooke Harvie: I'm committed to being able to make authentic connections with our community and not just surface connections. And I don't think we can authentically do that until we're actually being learners ourselves and making a commitment ourselves to learn more about the language, the culture and the practices.

Kelvin Harper: The big difference with Māori is that they're the indigenous people of New Zealand so when we do have any events it's an important part of New Zealand that that culture is not just represented but embraced. Other cultures understand and embrace them as well.

Commitment to Society. Ko te ngākaunui ki te hapori whānau.

Nicki Read: The principles of the Treaty weave through everything that we do. It's in our values, it's in our participation with each other.



Alice Cooke Harvie: It's about saying 'This is what happened, what impact does that have on us. What can we do to make positive decisions at school ourselves to uphold the Treaty?' And it's about that equity and it'd about really, really persevering to keep that culture strong within us.

Fraesar Williams: Kia whakatō ki roto i te tamariki, i ngā tamariki, kia timata o rātou whakaaro Māori, kia huri o rātou titiro ki tā te Māori ki tēnei ao.

Kelvin Harper: We have to make them aware of the changes around them but also the fact that they've got a voice and they can make change. Whether it's a five year old writing to a local dairy about selling lollies, to Year 6s writing to the Prime Minister about single-use plastic bags, everyone can make a difference and they've got a role to play in making a difference and making change. And challenging what has been the norm.

Debbie Purves: We often use New Zealand contexts but depending on the issue, we might use overseas contexts as well, and look at an issue and then go 'this is what this issue is, this is what these people have done. What can we do?' What impact can we have? What does this mean to us?

Kelvin Harper: These students are Newtown. They are going to be the future MPs of this area, they need to value and be proud of where they live. That's understanding who they are and what they do within this space. This is who I am, this is where I belong and I feel safe. The flow-on effect of that is they're going to respect and look after this environment as well.

