

## Our Code, Our Standards: Consultation Summary

The document Our Code Our Standards: Draft Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession was released for consultation in March 2017. The consultation period ran for just over six weeks with 2,110 submissions received.

1,935 of these were through the online survey; the remainder were written submissions sent by email or in hardcopy, or using the downloadable submission template.

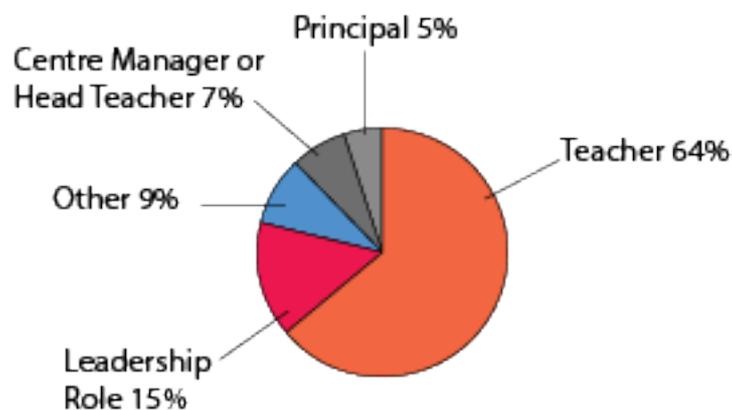
There were 23 group submissions which were a mixture of staff from schools or early childhood centres providing a collective submission, and submissions from the various representative bodies such as PPTA, NZEI, NZPF, ECC, IHC, New Zealand Kindergartens, and Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand.

This consultation builds on a long period of engagement with the profession throughout the second half of 2016 through a range of surveys, focus groups and face-to-face meetings and meetings with the respective Code and Standards working groups (composed of representatives from across the profession). The feedback and suggestions from these activities guided the approach to developing the draft Code and Standards.

We also took feedback from learners and their families and whānau in a separate survey.

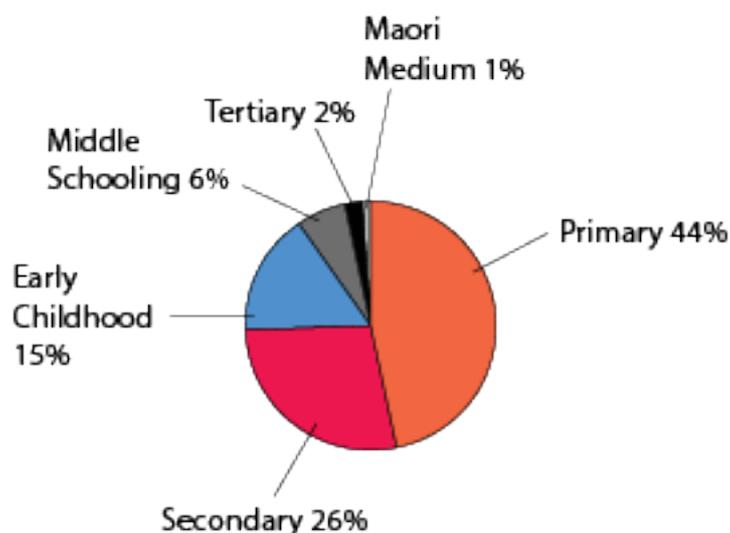
Here's who took part in our consultation...

### Educational Role



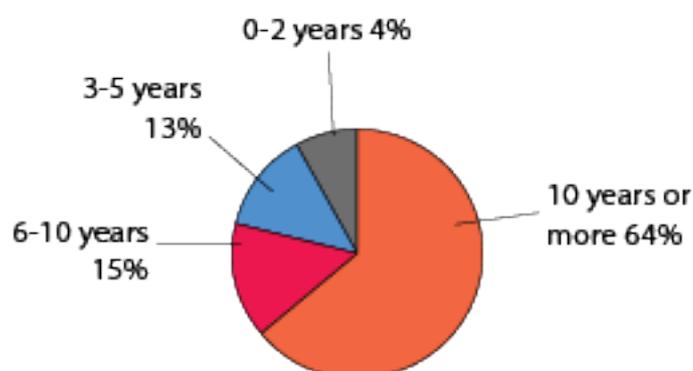
Most of the people who gave us their feedback on the Code and Standards are teachers who work directly with learners. The rest are in leadership roles. Those who identified as 'Other' represented a range of support roles (RTL, relievers, resource teachers, careers advisors etc) and specialist subject teachers.

## Education Setting



We had feedback from teachers and leaders across from a variety of settings. Most of those who made submissions were from primary schools, followed by secondary, early childhood, middle schooling, tertiary and Māori medium.

## Teaching Experience



Most of the people who participated in the consultation had ten years of teaching experience or more, with less participation from those who are newer to the profession. These numbers reflect the demographics of the profession. Finally, the vast majority of participants had teaching experience of 10 years or more, with those newest to the profession making up the smallest number of participants. This is what would be expected as it seems to reflect the overall shape of the profession as a whole.

## Feedback on the Values

There was particularly strong support for the values that are intended to underpin both the Code and the Standards, with 84% of participants indicating they are in favour of the values as they are.

There were a few additional suggestions, such as:

- There needs to be more direct translations of the Māori terms. The English descriptive statements that are associated with each word are not direct translations, which is confusing

- The word 'tikanga' was understood to refer to customs or protocols and was not widely understood as being associated with 'doing the right thing' or 'integrity' in the way it has been used here
- Add 'Ako', the concept of reciprocity in the teaching and learning relationship.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- making minor adjustments to refine the phrasing of these values.

## Feedback on the Draft Code of Professional Responsibility

Here are some of the key themes and issues raised in the feedback from the consultation on the draft Code of Professional Responsibility...

Generally, there was strong support for the draft Code, with 64-71% of responses saying the draft Code and commitment statements captured the expectations we should have of the teaching profession either 'completely' or 'almost completely'.

Here's how people responded when asked whether the Code and its commitments capture the expectations of ethical practice for teaching in New Zealand... (On the rating scale, 5 = completely, 1 = not at all):

Rating	Code overall	Commitment to the profession	Commitment to learners	Commitment to families and whānau	Commitment to society
5	24%	24%	28%	30%	27%
4	40%	40%	41%	41%	38%
3	23%	22%	21%	20%	20%
2	9%	9%	8%	5%	10%
1	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%

In relation to the draft Code and the guidance materials, a range of recurring key themes emerged through the written feedback. These included the following:

- It's too negative. There are too many detailed negative examples, and these outweigh the positive examples. It suggests a low-trust approach
- The draft Code intrudes too far into the personal lives of teachers
- The references to biculturalism fail to sufficiently acknowledge New Zealand's increasingly multicultural society
- The Code also needs to protect the teachers' rights to speak out and advocate against the system when necessary
- Balancing the potential tension between encourage respect for others, while also supporting the development of independent critical thought.

### Key Feedback Themes

Here's a more detailed list of the key themes that emerged from the feedback on the Code, and some of the changes we're considering for the final version...

#### 1. It seems too negative and implies a low-trust view of the teaching profession.

The most common piece of feedback we heard was that the examples of inappropriate behaviours in the Code guidance are too dominant. It was suggested that this detracts

from the aspirational nature of the Code, and does little to raise the status of the profession. Some respondents expressed that they found it insulting that these behaviours need to be spelled out at all.

Others indicated they found having specific examples really useful and planned to use them in conversations with their colleagues in order to create a common understanding of these expectations.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- Separating the guidance from the Code
- Clarifying the purpose of the guidance, which is to be a resource to support schools, centres and teachers to have reflective conversations together about what each commitment statement in the Code looks like in their context
- The development of a website to support the Code, with examples and other resources such as scenarios, reflective questions and links
- Improving the balance between positive and negative examples.

## **2. The draft Code intrudes too far into teachers' personal lives**

Another common theme in the feedback was an objection to the references to what teachers do in their private lives, outside of the learning environment. Some respondents felt that this principle impinged on their personal and civil rights, and that the personal lives of teachers should not come under scrutiny unless the law is broken.

A number of participants argued it was unnecessary to make reference to personal lives or illegal activities as they were all already covered either by law or by a commitment to maintaining a high standard of professionalism. Teachers don't need to be told that posting photos of drunken exploits in a publicly accessible social media platform isn't professional.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- To remove references to 'personal' and 'illegal' behaviour from principle 1.1 - *Demonstrating a high standard of professional behaviour and integrity*, and from principle 4.2 - *Behaving lawfully and demonstrating high standards of integrity*. Incorporate the key elements into a revised principle 1.1
- To provide examples, reflective questions, and scenarios in the online resources that will support teachers to develop a common understanding of the expectations of what constitutes professional behaviour and integrity.

## **3. The Treaty of Waitangi and biculturalism are acknowledged in the draft Code at the expense of the increasingly multi-cultural composition of New Zealand society**

Some of the survey respondents took issue with the use of the word 'biculturalism', which is seen as being exclusive of multiculturalism. Some of the comments on this theme included the following:

- "There needs to be a strong bicultural heritage fostered. However NZ is also a multicultural mix. How is this reflected?"
- "Tangata Whenua have pride of place as first settlers but New Zealand continues to develop increasing multicultural diversity."
- "Aotearoa New Zealand is increasingly multicultural in origin. Treaty based multicultural society?"

There also appears to be some confusion about the relationship between the education system's commitments under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the expectation that teachers meet the needs of their diverse learners. Such feedback frequently addressed these two issues

(Te Tiriti and multiculturalism) in ways that suggested they are in competition with each other. As one respondent put it, “Does meeting my obligations under the Treaty mean ignoring the needs of the other cultures in my class? What does it mean to live in a Treaty-based, multicultural society?”

For many other participants, there was a strong support for ensuring we embed the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in teachers’ practice, but a feeling that the Code also needs additional references to New Zealand’s multicultural context.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- To include examples in the guidance that specifically reference multiculturalism
- To acknowledge multicultural aspects of diversity more explicitly in other appropriate aspects of the Code and the guidance
- To provide a clearer Tiriti statement in the Code and Standards.

#### **4. The draft Code needs to protect the freedom to speak out against policy or practices that are not in the best interests of a learner’s wellbeing or that may impact negatively on teaching and learning**

Many teachers emphasised the important role they need to play at times (both individually and as a profession) in advocating on behalf of learners and their communities and for effective teaching and learning policy and practices. They wanted to see this role acknowledged and endorsed within the Code.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- To include a reference to engaging in conversations about best practice policy and advocating for the needs of learners and colleagues as positive examples that support the relevant commitment statements.

#### **Other Themes**

Overall, the consultation generated some great discussion among the profession about issues affecting teachers. Some other themes that came out of the feedback included environmental sustainability, teachers’ commitment to their own wellbeing, questions about whether the commitment statements are in the right order, the need to protect teachers from abusive employers and vexatious parents or caregivers, balancing respect for the views of others with the development of independent critical thought, and plenty of detailed suggestions about specific words and phrases.

#### **Title Of The Code**

There was strong support for the proposed title Code of Professional Responsibility, with 72% of participants in favour of using this title.

Among those who disagreed, the main alternate suggestions were:

- Code of Practice
- Code of Ethics/Professional Ethics
- Code of Professional Conduct
- Professional Code/Teachers’ Professional Code/Professional Code of Teaching

Other suggestions included the need to add a direct reference to ‘Teaching’ in the title; the need to include a Te Reo translation; and some debate over different word preferences between the words Conduct, Ethics, and Professional in the title.

# Feedback on the Draft Standards for the Teaching Profession

Here's an overview of the key themes and issues raised in the feedback from the consultation on the draft Standards for the Teaching Profession...

There was extremely strong support for the draft Standards: 83% of participants felt that the Standards accurately describe quality practice overall.

When asked if the individual standards adequately describe this aspect of quality practice, here's how they responded...

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Suggested change</b>
1. Demonstrate commitment to tangata whenuatanga and bicultural partnership and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.	76%	17%	7%
2. Use critical inquiry, collaborative problem solving and professional learning to improve professional capability to impact on the learning and achievement of all learners.	82%	5%	13%
3. Establish and maintain professional relationships and behaviours focussed on the learning and well-being of each learner.	85%	5%	10%
4. Create and maintain learning-focussed environments which are collaborative, inclusive and safe.	84%	5%	11%
5. Design learning based on professional knowledge, assessment information and an understanding of each learner's strengths, interests, needs, identity, language and cultures	82%	6%	12%
6. Teach and respond to learners in a knowledgeable and adaptive way to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.	83%	6%	11%

Alongside the strong support for the draft Standards, a number of really useful comments and suggestions were added through the feedback that was provided.

## Key Feedback Themes

### 1. Addressing multi-culturalism and diversity

Similar to the discussion in the feedback on the draft Code, feedback on the first Standard primarily relates to the use of the word 'bicultural' and questions about how this relates to and acknowledges New Zealand's increasingly multicultural society. In some cases, respondents felt the commitments to Te Tiriti and our increasingly multicultural society were competing with each other.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- To include broader, more explicit statements that acknowledge the needs of diverse learners
- To include additional examples relating to different learning needs and ethnicities
- To provide a glossary for key te reo Māori terms in the Standards.

## 2. Headings and Titles

There were some comments regarding the headings and titles, both for the draft Standards, and for the indicators.

There was concern that using the word 'indicators' increases the risk of them being perceived as checklists and it was suggested that they would be better as examples or questions to guide discussion. Some also found some of the Standards headings confusing.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- To change the title of the indicators
- To improve the headings from each of the Standards
- To develop guidance material to help clarify what each standard means in practice.

## 3. How Leadership is Represented in the Standards

Another key theme in the feedback related to how the role and status of leadership is presented in the Standards. The references related to both formal leadership roles or positions within schools and centres, and the leadership every teacher demonstrates as an ongoing part of their teaching role. It was felt that these distinctions weren't clear enough in the way the draft Standards are currently phrased.

Some of the proposed changes are:

- Strengthening the emphasis on leadership in the Standards so it weaves through the actions of every teacher
- Clarifying that both the Code and the Standards apply to all registered teachers – teachers, principals and other school leaders alike.

## Other Themes

Some other themes that came up in the feedback were how the Standards align to other key documents (such as Tātaiako), how the Standards will be implemented (and when they will begin to take effect), and more specific references to curriculum knowledge. There were also lots of detailed suggestions regarding specific wording and phrases.

## Next Steps

We thank everyone who took time to participate in our consultation for the draft Code and Standards. The input provided will shape the future of the teaching profession in New Zealand.

Since the consultation wrapped up in May, we've been busy analysing all of your feedback and continuing to collaborate with our working groups, governing Council and other stakeholders to finalise the Code and Standards.

The final *Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession* will be released by 1 July 2017. The next step will be to develop a range of supporting resources and materials to assist centres, schools and teachers to put the Code and Standards into practice.