



The Children's and
Youth Ministry Code
of Ethics
SESSION 1A

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Disclaimer:

This document is intended as a resource for the church. The information it contains is not prescriptive. The Book of Order and its subordinate standards contain the Church’s official rules and directions. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Church’s Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.

INTRODUCTION

The Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics referred to in this document is based on the *Ara Taiohi Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand – Second Edition*. In discussion with Ara Taiohi, PYM and Kids Friendly have sought permission to modify the original document to better fit our children's and youth ministry context. Modifications include replacing the terms: Youth Work with either Children and Youth Work, or Children and Young People; rearranging the order of the 6 key principles, in order to assist the teaching of the Code of Ethics material; and a summary question of each of the 6 principles again to assist in the teaching of these principles. In addition, several additional codes have been added to address our specific ministry context. These additional codes are indicated in italics.

The original document: *Code of Ethics for Youth Work in Aotearoa New Zealand* can be found at:

<http://www.arataiohi.org.nz/code>

Why the emphasis on *The Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics (COE)* and not the *PCANZ Church COE*?

The Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics is a subset and an expansion of the *PCANZ COE*. It is more specific to the children's and youth ministry context. It has been written by a nationally appointed youth work body and keeps us aligned with national youth work standards. *The Children's and Youth Ministry Code of Ethics* encompasses all the relevant clauses from the PCANZ Code of Ethics. Its important to note that in a formal disciplinary process by the PCANZ *The PCANZ Code of Ethics* would be the primary code of ethics referred to.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This code of ethics makes reference to the following legislation:

The PCANZ Code of Ethics

Children's Act 2014 (previously known as the *Vulnerable Children's Act 2014* – renamed 21 December 2018)

Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 (also known as Oranga Tamariki Act 1989)

Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989 (also known as Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (renamed July 2017) see <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0031/latest/DLM7287302.html> for more details

Oranga Tamariki Act (also known as Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989; and Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989)

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 as well as

Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016

Human Rights Act 1993

New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990/ New Zealand Bill of Rights Amendment Act 2011

Privacy Act 1993 / Privacy Amendment Act 2013

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC or UNCRC) 1989

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) 2007

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948

The Code of Ethics for Children's and Youth work in Aotearoa is basically 6 big principles.

RELATIONSHIP - QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS - WHANAUNGATANGA

Study after study tell us that the information we want to share with children and young people is only as good as the quality of relationship we have with them. The old adage is true, people don't care what we know until they know that we care. That's why the first question we ask when we're faced with a challenging situation in our work with children and young people is *"How can we strengthen the relationship we have with this child or young person?"*

ENVIRONMENT - THE WORLD OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - TE AO RANGATAHI

This principle reflects the fact that wider social and economic contexts and dominant cultural values set the environment within which children and young people grow up. Great children's and youth development is shaped by the beliefs and values of our faith and the convictions of society as a whole. The second question we want to ask is *"How does my and this person's environment; beliefs, values, socio-economic and political contexts etc. influence and inform the way we do the ministry that we do?"*

STRENGTHS-BASED - HAKAMANATIA NGA UARA RANGATAHI

To develop children and young people we help them to recognize their inherent value and build on their gifts and strengths. There is still a place to address their weakness, but children and young people are more capable of facing these when they can work with their strengths to do so. The third question we want to ask is *"How can we utilise and develop this child or young person's strengths?"*

PARTICIPATION - URUNGA - YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Children and young people need to be given opportunities to have greater control over what happens to them, through seeking their advice, participation and engagement. The fourth question we want to ask is *"How can we encourage this child or young person to be actively involved in shaping and contributing to the ministry they are involved in?"*

NETWORKING – MAKING KEY CONNECTIONS - HONONGA

Children and young people thrive when they have positive connections with others in society. This includes their family and whānau, their community, their school, training institution or workplace and their peers. The fifth question we want to ask is *"Who are the other people and organisations this child or young person needs in their life to succeed?"*

DATA - GOOD INFORMATION - HAKAMANATIA TE WHANAKETANGA

Effective research, evaluation, and information gathering and sharing is crucial to the work that we do. The final question we want to ask is *"What information do we need to help us make the best decisions and actions possible for the children and young people we serve?"*

Adapted from the Ara Taiohi Youth Workers Code of Ethics. Additional codes are indicated in italics

RELATIONSHIP - QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS – WHANAUNGATANGA

“How can we strengthen the relationship we have with this child or young person, and build greater trust with the wider community?”

1. Te Kawenga - Your Primary Relationship

1.1 In the children's and youth ministry context, taking into account the youth leader's legal obligations, cultural considerations, obligations to the whānau/family and despite the many competing demands on them, the leader's primary relationship is with the children and young person they engage with.

1.2 The ministry relationship begins when the leader engages with the child or young person as a leader, and ceases by necessity or by agreement (expressed or implied). The seamless nature of ministry is acknowledged and leaders will manage transitioning between different forms of relationship with care.

1.3 Where a conflict of interest exists between more than one child or young person, it will be resolved in ways which minimise harm to all parties, but with particular consideration to those least advantaged by the outcome.

2. Wehenga Tūmanako - Behaviour

2.1 Leaders will be positive role models. This Code covers any behaviour, whether connected to their work or personal time, when it relates to or affects a leader's practice.

3. Ārahitanga - Your Conduct

3.1 Leaders will perform their work honestly and impartially, and avoid situations which might compromise their integrity.

3.2 Leaders will carry out their work in an efficient and competent manner.

3.3 Leaders will avoid words and actions (e.g. dress, flirting, offensive language, put-downs, body language, and unnecessary or inappropriate touch) that could be misunderstood or cause offence.

3.4 Leaders should avoid activities which would bring children, young people, fellow leaders, their organisation, or ministry into disrepute.

3.5 Should a leader be in a situation that may be considered unethical, they will notify the people they are accountable to, look at ways to minimise any negative consequences, and put in place strategies to avoid similar situations in the future.

4. Puatatanga - Being Transparent

4.1 Leaders will be open, honest and accountable to children and young people.

4.2 Where a programme and/or organisation operates from a particular value basis, this will be clearly stated.

4.3 Leaders recognise they may be in situations with children or young people which could leave either party vulnerable. Leaders will be open and honest with their supervisor, their organisation, colleagues and appropriate others about these situations and work to generate preferable alternatives.

5. Whakaae Tika - Obtaining Informed Consent

5.1 Leaders will fully inform children and young people (and their whānau, school or employer where appropriate) of the ministry they are offering and the nature of any proposed involvement, including any significant risk(s).

5.2 It is important to obtain informed consent from the appropriate person to participate or cease their involvement in children's or youth ministry and this may need to be written. For specialised activities, with moderate to high risk, written informed consent must be obtained.

5.3 Leaders will fully inform children, young people and guardians of their rights regarding complaints processes.

6. Noho Matatapu - Confidentiality

6.1 The child or young person's ability to trust the leader to hold information in confidence is fundamental to the relationship.

6.2 When it is clear that confidences might be shared, the leader will explain the boundaries of confidentiality. These boundaries will take into account the requirements of their organisation, the child or young person's culture, understanding, and the setting the ministry is carried out in (such as rural and specific cultural communities).

6.3 Limits to confidentiality, which may lead to disclosure, apply when:

- The child, young person or someone else is in danger
- There is an emergency situation
- It is required by legislation or the courts
- The child or young person is incapable of consenting.

6.4 When information is disclosed, the leader will endeavour to obtain the child or young person's permission, ideally working with the child or young person to do so. Where this is not possible leaders will inform the child or young person of any disclosure.

6.5 Where information is disclosed, only the minimum required for the purpose should be given.

6.6 Leaders will comply with the Privacy Act 1993, and in particular will ensure collection, storage, access, correction, use and disclosure of information is dealt with in accordance with this Act.

7. Āhua Tika - Boundaries

7.1 Leaders will create and maintain culturally and age-appropriate physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual boundaries. Leaders have an ethical responsibility to hold each other accountable in this regard.

7.2 The purpose of this is to:

- Ensure a safe space for all
- Build confidence in their role as a leader
- Avoid unhealthy, dependent relationships.

7.3 Leaders will endeavour to ensure that young people understand the limits and boundaries of the relationship.

7.4 Leaders have a personal responsibility to process boundary issues with their support network, including within supervision.

8. Manatū Tangata - Sexual Boundaries

8.1 Sexuality is an integral part of human development. Leaders need to promote positive attitudes to sexuality and relationships, respecting the child and young person's needs, values and beliefs, with consideration to the child or young person's whānau and cultural environment.

8.2 The relational nature of ministry makes it a high-risk practice. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, both in the ministry environment and relationship.

8.3 Leaders will be aware of compromising thoughts or situations and ensure that strategies are in place to help them deal safely with these situations.

8.4 Sexual acts between leaders and children and young people they connect with in their capacity as a leader are never acceptable.

8.5 Leaders will not enter into a romantic relationship with a child or young person during the time they are working together.

8.6 In the youth work setting, once the youth work relationship has finished, youth leaders will not enter into a romantic and/or sexual relationship until the power relationship is determined to no longer influence personal decision making. This decision will be made in consultation with their support network, including supervision.

8.7 Sexual acts are never a valid form of therapy, education or assistance.

8.8 Leaders will not engage in sexual harassment; nor will they tolerate sexual harassment of others (sexual harassment as defined in the Human Rights Act 1993 is acknowledged).

9. Noatanga - Knowing Your Limits

9.1 The leader's relationship has limitations.

9.2 Leaders have a responsibility to be conscious of the limits of their role, skills and competencies, and must carefully consider whether they can take on a particular role or task.

9.3 In situations beyond their role and/or skill-base, leaders will refer to and/or seek assistance from networks available in the wider community. They also have a responsibility to follow up a referral a short time after it is made.

10. Utu Painga - Personal Agendas

10.1 Leaders will not abuse their ministry relationships for personal, professional, political or financial gain.

10.2 While leaders may agree or disagree with other's beliefs, values, priorities and behaviour, they will treat all people with respect and dignity.

10.3 Leaders will not abuse their position to manipulate children or young people to their political, religious, ethnic or cultural beliefs, or to specific communities.

10.4 Religious instruction must be carried out in a manner that is appropriate to the context and setting.

11. Ahua Korero, Ahua Taonga - Exchanges between Children or Young People and Leaders

11.1 Any exchanges between children and young people and leaders will be transparent and handled with sensitivity (acknowledging gifts/koha usually have emotional and/or cultural significance).

11.2 Giving and receiving of cash should be approached with caution.

11.3 Leaders will be aware of issues of dependency, favouritism, corruption and rescuing in this context.

12. Ahua me te Oranga - Diversity and Cultural Safety

12.1 The ministry relationship is one of mutual respect.

12.2 Leaders will understand that all aspects of children and young people's lives are influenced by the values of the cultural contexts they belong to. A child or young person's cultural context can be centred around:

- Geographical community (e.g. their home, neighbourhood, place of study, work place, marae or church)
- Identity-/whakapapa-based community (e.g. culture, ethnicity, marae, iwi, hapū, whānau, spirituality or faith, their gender or gender identity, sexuality, or people of mixed abilities)
- Community of interest (e.g. various youth subcultures, children and youth organisations).

12.3 Leaders are encouraged to reflect on and seek to understand their own cultural contexts and those of the children and young people they work with, and to be aware of how these relate to each other.

12.4 When conflict exists between the cultures of the leader and the child or young person, the leader will do everything in their power to ensure the most appropriate people and/or organisations are involved. Leaders will ensure their practice remains equitable and effective.

12.5 When working with children or young people leaders will respect the child and youth development practices of the child or young person's culture.

12.6 Leaders will allow children and young people to express their identity freely and safely with consideration to family, whānau and their social environment.

12.7 Leaders acknowledge and will challenge the attitudes, beliefs, policies and practices that act as barriers to safe ministry and undermine children and young people and their culture.

ENVIRONMENT - THE WORLD OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - TE AO RANGATAHI

"How does our and this person's environment; beliefs, values, socio-economic and political contexts etc. influence and inform the way we do the ministry that we do?"

13. Ōu Tikanga Rights and Responsibilities

13.1 Leaders acknowledge the provisions of:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act 1993
- New Zealand Bill of Rights
- Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989.

13.2 Children and young people, particularly those belonging to under-represented or marginalised groups, are vulnerable to being taken advantage of. Leaders will respect the rights of children and young people they work with, and encourage them to respect the rights of others.

13.3 Leaders will not unlawfully discriminate against children and young people for any reason, including those contained in the Human Rights Act 1993.

13.4 Leaders will be aware of the rights and responsibilities of Tangata Whenua to practice indigenous models of child and youth development.

14. Ngā Mahi Ora Safe Practice

14.1 It is a Leader's responsibility to maintain the safety of children and young people in any service, programme, event or activity provided.

14.2 Leaders will adhere to the provisions of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 2015.

14.3 Leaders and their organisations will ensure that appropriate Risk Management procedures, systems and paperwork are completed for services, programmes, events or activities organised for and with children and young people.

14.4 Specialised activities with moderate to high risk must have:

- A worker, volunteer or external contractor with appropriate qualifications or proven experience pertaining to the activity
- A written agreement entered into specifying who is responsible for what risks, and at what point risk transfer happens.

15. Kawenga Agents of Change

15.1 Leaders will recognise the impact of social, political, economic and cultural structures on children and young people and seek to remove barriers that restrict life opportunities for children and young people.

15.2 Ministry is not limited to facilitating change within the individual young person, but extends to the social context in which the child or young person lives.

STRENGTHS-BASED - HAKAMANATIA NGA UARA RANGATAHI

"How can we utilise and develop this child or young person's strengths and protective factors?"

16 Hapakaritanga - Working Holistically

16.1 Leaders will work holistically with children and young people. Leaders will support the healthy development of children and young people, including their social, emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, whānau and cultural skills. Leaders will support children and young people to identify and develop their strengths, encouraging them to reach their full potential.

16.2 Leaders will seek to be inclusive and ensure accessibility of Child and Youth Work services, programmes, events or activities to all. Leaders will take all reasonable steps to ensure accessibility of programmes and activities for those with mixed abilities.

16.3 Leaders will identify and promote the strengths of the traditions and inspirational people within the cultures of the children and young people they work with.

17. Āhua Pononga - Working Positively

17.1 Children and young people are an integral part of our society. Leaders seek to have this acknowledged and valued by society as a whole.

17.2 Leaders do not see children and young people as problems to be solved, and will avoid labelling children and young people negatively.

17.3 Leaders acknowledge the impact of risk factors on children and young people. They will seek to develop protective factors to build resiliency, enabling them to fulfil their potential.

18. Tiakitanga - Looking After Yourself

18.1 Ethical practice is based on the social, emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, whānau and cultural wellbeing of leaders. This allows leaders to develop their full potential and equips them to best serve children and young people.

18.2 Leaders and their organisation must take responsibility for the leader's overall well-being.

19. Whakahaeretanga – Supervision (*Especially relevant to paid workers*)

19.1 Supervision provides ministry workers with a safe place to reflect on professional development, personal support, organisational and practice issues with the purpose of providing increased effectiveness, safety and accountability for their practice.

19.2 Ministry workers will actively participate in regular supervision (such as individual, group, tandem, peer, or team supervision) with skilled supervisors within the organisation and/or external to it.

19.3 Other forms of supervision, such as cultural or spiritual, are vital processes for the development of the leaders' personal, cultural, spiritual and professional development and to ensure accountability in that context. Leaders will access this where appropriate.

19.4 Supervision will be resourced and initiated by the employee's organisation. Employees have the right to negotiate who their supervisor/s are.

20. Matatau Personal Awareness

20.1 Leaders will actively reflect on their practice with others and maintain support from supervision and co-leaders.

20.2 Leaders will be aware of any physical or personal circumstances that may affect their ability to work safely and effectively.

20.3 Leaders will approach differences in others with respect.

20.4 Leaders will understand and reflect on the impact that their own culture, values, attitudes and beliefs have on children and young people. Where there is a conflict, a leader may refer the child or young person to a more appropriate support person, however the relationship with the child or young person should be maintained during this process.

PARTICIPATION - URUNGA - YOUTH PARTICIPATION

“How can we encourage this child or young person to be actively involved in shaping and contributing the ministry they are involved in?”

21. Hiringa Personal Determination

21.1 Leaders will support Tangata Whenua to care for their rangatahi.

21.2 Leaders, with the involvement of appropriate others in the child or young person's community, will encourage and enable children and young people to identify their own strategies to deal with challenges and the direction of their lives.

21.3 If a child or young person lacks capacity, or is otherwise unable to act with self-determination, there is a responsibility to protect the child or young person's rights and welfare.

22. Hakamanatia Empowerment

22.1 Leaders, as part of the child or young person’s wider community, seek to empower children or young people, ensuring they have a greater say in decisions that affect them and the world around them.

22.2 Leaders will use their experience and skills to ensure children and young people are equipped to make positive choices.

22.3 Leaders encourage children and young people to exercise genuine power to consider risk, make decisions, follow them through and to take responsibility for their consequences.

22.4 Leaders will be resourceful in providing opportunities for children and young people to help shape their lives.

NETWORKING - MAKING KEY CONNECTIONS - HONONGA

“Who are the other people and organisations this child or young person needs in their life to succeed?”

23. Papakāinga - Ensuring Key Connections

23.1 Leaders will endeavour to relate to, create, strengthen and maintain children or young people’s connections to their key social environments.

23.2 Leaders will recognise and honour the importance of the relationship with whakapapa through whānau, marae, hapū and iwi when working with Tangata Whenua.

23.3 Leaders will recognise the importance of whānau and the complex nature of these relationships. Leaders seek to strengthen the relationship between children and young people and their whānau.

23.4 Leaders balance the importance of whānau with the child or young person’s need to work towards independence (e.g. when working with children or young people of mixed abilities).

24. Tautauamoia - Working Collaboratively

24.1 Leaders will respect and co-operate with other professionals and/or other significant people involved in the child or young person’s life to secure the best possible outcomes for the children or young people they engage with. There may be issues of confidentiality to take into account.

24.2 Where an organisation contracts or invites an individual or agency for a specific purpose (e.g. outdoor recreation, facilitation etc.) there will be clear communication between the two regarding expectations.

24.3 Leaders will network and build relationships with other leaders in order to gain collegial support and to share experiences, skills and knowledge.

24.4 Leaders will connect with and strengthen networks with other key groups that contribute towards children and young people’s development.

24.5 Leaders will relate to others in the community with integrity, respect, courtesy, openness and honesty.

24.6 Leaders will seek guidance from tangata whenua with regard to working with rangatahi.

24.7 Where there is concern regarding a leader’s practice that is too serious to be resolved by discussion it must be brought to the attention of the appropriate bodies.

DATA - GOOD INFORMATION - HAKAMANATIA TE WHANAKETANGA

“What information do we need to help us make the best decisions and actions possible for the children and young people we serve?”

25. Māramatia Aotearoa - Understanding Aotearoa New Zealand

25.1 Leaders will take personal responsibility to participate in ongoing training on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Reo me ona Tikanga Māori, and apply this learning where appropriate.

25.2 Leaders will acknowledge our shared histories and past and present power relationships between different groups of people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

25.3 Leaders will acknowledge there is a unique relationship between Tikanga Māori and good child and youth development practice in Aotearoa New Zealand - and will recognise the important role this relationship can play in nation-building.

25.4 Leaders will acknowledge the importance of whakapapa and will explore their own cultural heritage.

25.5 Leaders have an obligation to acquire legal knowledge, including Acts of Parliament, public policies and strategies that impact on children and young people.

26. Mana Akoranga - Training and Professional Development

26.1 Leaders will make it a priority to participate in formal and informal training and professional development (e.g. courses, forums, conferences and debates) to enhance and support their practice. It is recognised that needs vary and access to training opportunities can be limited.

26.2 Leaders will develop their practice by regularly reflecting on attitudes and methods, and seeking feedback from children and young people, their organisation and other professionals. They will be open to new knowledge, theories and practices.

26.3 Ministry workers are encouraged to consider and reflect on their long-term career path.

26.4 Leaders will have knowledge and understanding of this Code of Ethics and how it applies to their work.

27. Rangahau me Wāriutanga - Research and Evaluation

27.1 Good ministry is informed by relevant research and evidence. Leaders will source local, national and international research that will enhance their knowledge and skill base.

27.2 Leaders will ensure their work is evaluated (this may be formal or informal) to promote ongoing learning and improvement.