

## Guidance for Teachers: Managing Personal Beliefs

This guidance supports teachers in understanding their responsibilities regarding personal beliefs, as outlined in Ngā Tikanga Matatika mō te Haepapa Ngaiotanga | Code of Professional Responsibility (the Code). All certificated teachers and those with a Limited Authority to Teach, regardless of their role or teaching environment, are legally bound by the Code under s 485 of the Education and Training Act 2020. For more details on legislation relevant to managing personal beliefs (political, ethical or religious) in your role as a teacher, refer to the section below.

The Code requires teachers to uphold fairness and equity, build ethical and professional relationships that affirm learners' diverse heritage, language, identity, and culture, and manage their own assumptions and beliefs effectively. The Code recognises the significant influence teachers have in shaping learners' futures and emphasises that learner wellbeing must always come first.

When considering political, ethical, or religious beliefs in your practice, it is important to reflect on your influential role, the impact on learners' understanding of the world, and the broader wellbeing of society. The Code specifically highlights the importance of being fair and managing personal beliefs responsibly.

Personal beliefs and ideologies such as political, ethical and religious perspectives are all an important part of who we are, and they shape the norms of society over time. All teachers are entitled to hold personal beliefs and ideologies. The Code states that Teachers are required to work in the best interest of learners by being fair and effectively managing any assumptions and personal beliefs. It is essential that teachers do not use their position of authority to enforce, impose or promote their views onto students. In addition, it is important that teachers do not promote extreme, offensive or uncomfortable positions in a way that may cause harm to students.

Regardless of the setting, whether in early childhood education or school, teachers are expected to promote learner wellbeing, protect students from harm, and foster inclusive practices. Schools and centres also have a responsibility to support teachers in meeting these expectations.

Generational change continues to influence the way people view the world and themselves; and with progression it is important to acknowledge different perspectives to accommodate diversity.

To deepen your understanding, refer to [The Code of Professional Responsibility – Examples in Practice](#). The Teaching Council encourages ongoing discussion with colleagues and professional leaders to explore how the Code applies in your specific context.

### Broader guidance on Personal beliefs - political, ethical or religious

State school boards - The Ministry of Education provides a Code of Conduct for State board members (BOT Code) under section 166 of the Education and Training Act 2020. This applies to members of State school boards. The BOT Code requires that members of state school boards be 'politically impartial in [their] role as a board member,' and "not endorse or campaign for a political party or candidate in [their] role as a board member." For more information, please see the Ministry of Education's [Code of Conduct for State School Board Members](#).



**Registered teachers** - The Public Service Act 2020 defines the public service and sets out the principles and values that apply to public service employees. Registered teachers do not come under the term, 'public service,' as defined in the Public Service Act 2020. This means they are not subject to the principles of neutrality outlined within Public Service Act 2020. In line with the Public Service Act 2020 teachers are considered part of the 'state service,' which is a broader grouping that encompasses the public service, other departments, Crown entities and more.

Despite registered teachers not being subject to the BOT Code or the principles of neutrality in the Public Service Act, teachers are legally bound by the Code, under s 485 of the Education and Training Act 2020. This includes expectations that teachers uphold the values of fairness and equity in their teaching, engage in ethical and professional relationships with learners that affirm the diversity of learners' heritage, language, identity, and culture, and effectively manage their own assumptions and beliefs. It is the school's responsibility to support and guide teachers to meet the Code's expectations and standards.

**For more information:** See [Ngā Tikanga Matatika mō te Haepapa Ngaiotanga | Code of Professional Responsibility and Code of Professional Responsibility Examples in Practice](#)