

## CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 7–8 Community Guardianship

Ākonga research Māori leaders or kaitiaki of waterscapes presenting findings to the class. They explore the responsibilities of leadership, service, and protection of people and places. Ngā Tangata Tiaki is demonstrated as ākonga connect historical and contemporary guardianship with action and reflection.

**Tikanga Practices: Ngā Tangata Tiaki is demonstrated by tamariki:**

- **Rangatiratanga – Leadership:** Ākonga take leadership roles in researching Māori kaitiaki, presenting confidently, and upholding integrity and humility as emerging leaders within their school community.
- **Wānanga – Learning through Dialogue:** Ākonga engage in guided discussions to analyse how past and present Māori leaders protect lands and waters, linking ancestral wisdom with modern environmental action.
- **Kotahitanga – Collective Responsibility:** Ākonga collaborate to create a collective class statement or visual display honouring local and national guardians, expressing unity in shared responsibility for people and place.

### Kaiaiko: Questions for Reflection

1. How do you nurture ākonga leadership that reflects *rangatiratanga* through service, respect, and responsibility for community and environment?
2. How do you integrate *wānanga* as a space for deep reflection on historical and contemporary Māori guardianship practices?
3. How do you encourage *kotahitanga*, so ākonga see collective guardianship as a shared cultural and civic responsibility?



## NGĀ KĪWAHA – Sayings

### Ako mai i te ao tūroa!

*Learn from nature, it's the best teacher*

This kīwaha can be used during mat times, environmental play, or storytelling moments to reinforce kaitiakitanga, mātauranga Māori, and tamariki identity as tangata tiaki.

### Wai ora, Wai mā!

*Fresh water, clean life!*

This kīwaha can be used as a playful prompt, wall displays, or woven into waiata and storytelling to help tamariki connect with te ao Māori and their role as tangata tiaki.

### He toa koe i te hapori

*You're a hero in our community*

This kīwaha can be introduced during mat time, walks, or group discussions, and used to support language, identity, and community values.

### He ngākau atawhai tōku

*I've got a kind and caring heart*

This is a celebratory kīwaha, perfect for reinforcing positive behaviour, learning outcomes, and tamariki identity as tangata tiaki.



Scan for  
pronunciation support

## Ngā Taonga Whakaako Tikanga Māori – Theory and Practice

Primary School Contexts



# NGĀ TANGATA TIAKI ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

UC  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CANTERBURY

Te Kāhui Pā Harakeke  
Child Well-being  
Research Institute

Ako  
AOTEAROA

Authors: Ngaroma M. Williams, Tracy Dayman, Lana R. Williams, 2025.





# NGĀ TANGATA TIAKI

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ngā Tangata Tiaki roles and responsibilities of caretakers of the land, waters, and all living things. Their role is to protect and preserve the environment, ensuring it remains healthy for future generations. As protectors, they make decisions guided by respect for nature and mātauranga Māori. Ngā Tangata Tiaki uphold tikanga and values that connect people to the natural world. They also carry the responsibility of passing on this knowledge, language, and cultural practices, ensuring they are not lost. In doing so, they support both environmental sustainability and the preservation of Māori identity, wisdom, and wellbeing.



Scan to find out more about these resources



## CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 1–3

### Community Guardianship

Tamariki role-play community helpers such as firefighters or police and discuss how they keep people safe. They share ideas about how they could help others at school. Ngā Tangata Tiaki is applied as tamariki learn about responsibility and respect for those who care for the community.

**Tikanga Practices: Ngā Tangata Tiaki happens when:**

- **Manaakitanga – Caring for Others:** Tamariki practise being kaitiaki of their classroom by helping tidy shared spaces, looking after classroom plants or pets, and showing kindness to classmates.
- **Whanaungatanga – Building Relationships:** Tamariki work together to support a school helper (e.g., parent help, librarian or caretaker), learning that everyone plays an important role in keeping the school safe and welcoming.
- **Arohatanga – Compassionate Action:** During outdoor play or gardening, tamariki notice when others need help, such as sharing tools or helping replant a small garden area after wind or rain.

**Kaiako: Questions for Reflection**

1. How do we show manaakitanga when we look after our classroom and friends?
2. Why is it important to help each other, just like Ngā Tangata Tiaki help the community?
3. What can we do each day to care for our school and the people in it?

## CURRICULUM ACTIVITY: Years 4–6

### Community Guardianship

Tamariki interview local guardians or volunteers and create posters highlighting their roles and responsibilities. They reflect on what it means to support and protect others. Ngā Tangata Tiaki is enacted as tamariki understand guardianship in both local and cultural contexts.

**Tikanga Practices: Ngā Tangata Tiaki is demonstrated as in:**

- **Whanaungatanga:** Tamariki begin interviews by greeting and acknowledging local tangata tiaki respectfully, showing care for relationships and recognising shared responsibilities within the community.
- **Manaakitanga:** Tamariki prepare thank-you cards or small tokens for the guardians they interview, expressing appreciation and respect for the knowledge and service shared.
- **Aroha ki te Taiao:** Tamariki connect guardianship roles to caring for local places: gardens, parks, or waterways, linking human well-being to environmental health and community strength.

**Kaiako: Questions for Reflection**

1. How do you model and promote respect when tamariki engage with community members who hold guardianship roles or share local knowledge?
2. How do you help tamariki recognise the relationship between cultural guardianship and caring for their community's wellbeing and natural environments?
3. How do you ensure tikanga practices like manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga are embedded in tamarikis' interview and reflection processes?

