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Whanganui Learning Centre

ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION & CODE OF PRACTICE

A public account of how effectively WLCT supports learner wellbeing, safety, voice, inclusion and access.



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ABOUT THE WHANGANUI LEARNING CENTRE

An extract from the external report written for the Whanganui Community Foundation 2022.

The Whanganui Learning Centre (WLC) has been an established, cherished, and award-winning part of the Whanganui community for the last 50+ years, helping countless community members on their road to education and personal growth.

The WLC offers adult learning classes, workshops, and learner licence courses as well as whānau support and assistance to those with more complex situations requiring a more intensive approach.

What sets the WLC apart from its peers and comparable agencies is its unique approach to education, welfare, and personal growth and their Kaupapa of holistic, wrap-around care and support for all elements of each individual journey.

The WLC values its position outside the confines of a standard educational or welfare agency. Although this can bring issues with funding and governmental support, it allows the Centre to remain independent and autonomous and offer a much more diverse, impartial, and holistic service to its ākonga.

WLC's enrolment data figures show that... many (learners) are very vulnerable. WLC works alongside their ākonga, building them up after years of feeling let down and neglected by systems meant to protect them.

Particularly poignant is that almost half (46%) and by far the largest majority of the WLC's referrals come from family and friends of ākonga, clearly showing the word-of-mouth impact the WLC makes in its community¹.

Consistently over the last decade, 50–70% of their enrolled ākonga have been Māori, evidence that Māori actively choose to join WLC because they feel comfortable and empowered to engage with, learn from, and succeed in this space.



¹ WLC enrolment data 2022

CHARITABLE PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES

Charitable Purpose

To engage pro-actively in whanau-centric, community-led, educationally focused activities to achieve a more socially-just outcome for all, where everyone can grow and thrive.

Activities:

- Provides advice / information / advocacy
- Provides whanau-centric, community-led, educationally focused activities.

Sectors:

- Community development
- Education / training / research

Beneficiaries:

- Family / whanau
- Older people
- People with disabilities
- People of a certain ethnic / racial origin
- General public
- Migrants / refugees
- Marginalised people

We work in active partnership with Oranga Tamariki under a Youth Justice contract, positioning WLCT as one of the only providers in the Whanganui region engaged in educational provision for their youth clients, reflecting our commitment to serving the community's most vulnerable learners through evidence-based, inclusive educational practices.

Legal Structure

Charitable Trusts incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act



WHAT IS THIS “CODE OF PRACTICE” (2021)?

Over the past few years, what is called the “Code of Practice” (2021) has become a familiar part of how we think about our work at WLCT. We have come to understand it as a useful framework for reflecting on how well we listen to, support and care for our ākonga.

In this section, we share some of what we have learned through working with the Code, and how that understanding is reflected in our everyday practice.

Outcomes 1—4

These are the categories we need to self-review each year:

Outcome 1: A learner wellbeing and safety system
Outcome 2: Learner voice
Outcome 3: Safe, inclusive, supportive and accessible physical and digital learning environments
Outcome 4: Learners are safe and well

Evaluation scale

How we are doing is evaluated against these headings:

Rating	Meaning in this review
Well implemented	Requirements are embedded in routine practice, supported by multiple sources of evidence, monitored and improved over time.
Implemented	Requirements are in place and operating effectively, with some opportunities to strengthen consistency, evidence or reporting.
Developing implementation	Relevant practice exists but further work is needed for consistency or full coverage.
Early stages	Significant development is required before the Code outcome can be considered implemented.



SO WHO CHECKS THAT WE DO WHAT WE SAY?

Who checks us?

WLCT is audited very regularly by various organisations that want to see that we are doing what we say we are doing—and to see how well we are doing it. These organisations are:

Organisation	What they want to know
NZQA	That we remain a sound PTE: our education and assessment are high quality, our unit standards are properly assessed and moderated, our learners are well supported, and we continually review and improve what we do. NZQA also oversees our annual Code of Practice self-review.
Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)	TEC funds our ACE in Communities and Intensive Literacy and Numeracy provision . It checks that funded learners are eligible, that attendance/contact hours and learner records are accurate, that funding is used as agreed, and that WLCT remains financially viable. Our 2025 desktop audit found us fully compliant.
Te Kāhui Kāhu – MSD	Accreditation for our social-sector/Youth Justice work. At Level 2 it examines how we work with young people and whānau, including safeguarding, cultural competence, staff vetting, governance, financial management, health and safety, complaints, privacy, risk management and continuous improvement.
Oranga Tamariki	Monitors the Youth Justice service contract itself —whether the agreed service is being provided, young people are being appropriately supported, records are maintained and contractual outcomes/reporting requirements are met.
Charities Services – DIA / Silks Audit	As a registered charity, WLCT files an annual return and financial/performance information with Charities Services. Silks provides independent scrutiny of our financial reporting, giving our Board, funders and regulators assurance that the accounts can be relied upon.
Whanganui District Council / Fire and Emergency NZ	Checks relating to the safety of our building—such as the annual Building Warrant of Fitness, specified safety systems, means of escape and maintenance of the evacuation scheme.
Our insurer	Requires us to keep the building and its protections appropriately maintained and to disclose risks so that our property, liability, vehicles and other activities remain properly insured.
Our funders	Funders require reports showing that grants were spent for their agreed purpose, budgets were followed and the promised activities and outcomes were achieved.

HOW WELL DO WE DO?

1. Learner Wellbeing And Safety

These are the things we know we do well...

Code process / indicators	WLCT evaluative statement and evidence
Strategic goals and plans - Wellbeing and safety goals are embedded in strategic planning. - Goals and plans are reviewed and amended when needed. - Learners and stakeholders are involved in development and review.	Embedded kaupapa. WLCT's purpose is whānau-centred and learner-focused. The organisation's existing self-review describes wellbeing as integral to the kaupapa rather than an add-on, and its policies place ākonga at the centre of service provision. External confirmation. NZQA's 2023 EER found a clear educational purpose and direction, strong learner-centred practice, and a continuous cycle of reflection and evaluation informing day-to-day work. Relational planning. Individual goals and support needs are co-designed with ākonga. Learner, whānau and stakeholder feedback is used to adjust support, learning plans and organisational practice.
Self-review of wellbeing and safety - Review practices regularly using diverse learner input. - Use relevant qualitative and quantitative data. - Act promptly on deficiencies identified through review.	Multiple evidence sources. WLCT uses conversation, learner feedback, surveys, attendance and engagement information, case notes, stakeholder feedback and organisational records to understand what is working and where barriers remain. Evidence-informed self-review. The 2023 EER specifically noted effective data analysis and commissioned external research. The 2025 TEC audit found records consistent and detailed across 2023–2025, with clear audit trails of engagement, achievement and adaptive tutor strategies. Action orientation. Policies, learning supports and operational practice are revised when review identifies a need. The organisation's established approach is to respond quickly rather than wait for an annual review cycle.
Responsive wellbeing and safety systems - Identify emerging concerns and connect learners to appropriate support. - Provide role-relevant staff training and referral pathways. - Maintain emergency plans, critical incident processes and annual reporting.	Early response. WLCT staff work closely with ākonga and are able to notice changes in engagement, confidence or wellbeing. Support includes pastoral care, flexible learning arrangements, quiet spaces, referral to external services and follow-up with whānau where appropriate. Prepared staff and procedures. Existing WLCT practice includes first aid, mental-health awareness, neurodiversity awareness, cultural capability, de-escalation and emergency procedures. The 2023 EER noted that WLCT's professional development is responsive to learner and staff needs. Formal controls. WLCT policies define complaints and critical incidents, require appropriate recording and escalation, and link serious matters to relevant registers and learner records.
SELF-EVALUATION	Well implemented Strategic intent, operational practice and external assurance are strongly aligned.



HOW WELL DO WE DO?

2. Learner Voice



Code process / indicators	WLCT evaluative statement and evidence
Learner voice • Build effective relationships with diverse learner groups. • Provide formal and informal ways to hear learner and community voices. • Support learners to participate in decisions and understand how decisions are made.	Learner agency is central. WLCT's 2023 self-review states that "it is their education, not ours". Learning pathways, short- and long-term goals, pace, modes of learning and support are negotiated with each learner rather than imposed through a standardised model. Multiple ways to contribute. Feedback is gathered through everyday conversation, one-to-one meetings, learning plans, surveys, informal check-ins, whānau engagement and direct access to staff. Learners can raise ideas or concerns without needing to use a formal written process. Evidence of participation. The 2023 EER found that tutors partner with each student to co-design a personal learning programme and that students are supported to learn at their own pace within a whānau environment.
Learner complaints • Complaints processes are fair, timely, culturally responsive and accessible. • Learners may use support people and collective approaches. • Complaints are recorded, monitored and reported, and learners are informed of outcomes.	Accessible resolution. WLCT's current Working with Ākonga and Whānau procedures define a complaint, allow concerns to be raised informally before formal escalation, and provide for review and appeal. Learners may use an advocate or support person. Relational first response. Because staff know learners well, many concerns can be addressed quickly through conversation, clarification and practical adjustment. Formal records and registers provide the accountability mechanism when a matter becomes a complaint or serious breach. No disadvantage for speaking up. The intent of the process is constructive resolution and open communication. The Code of Conduct and complaints framework support fair treatment and confidentiality.
External dispute resolution • Learners are told what they can do if internal resolution does not resolve the matter. • External complaint and appeal pathways are made visible and understandable.	Escalation is explained from the outset. Learners are told that if an issue cannot be resolved within WLCT, they may take the matter further. The Student Handbook identifies the Chair, NZQA or the Human Rights' Commission as an external avenue for complaints and provides the relevant contact details. Information is reinforced in plain language. The learner information booklet repeats this in a simple "Not happy with us?" format, explaining that learners can talk to staff, use a support person, request a meeting, make a formal complaint, or contact an external agency.
SELF-EVALUATION	Well implemented Learner voice is strongly embedded in everyday practice, with clear, accessible pathways for feedback, concerns and complaints.

HOW WELL DO WE DO?

3. Safe, inclusive, supportive and accessible physical and digital learning environments

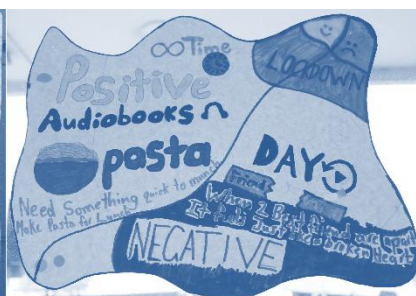
Code process / indicators	WLCT evaluative statement and evidence
Safe and inclusive communities • Prevent and respond to discrimination, racism, bullying, harassment and abuse. • Promote an inclusive culture and uphold cultural needs and aspirations. • Provide accessible environments where learners can connect with others and whānau.	A deliberate culture of belonging. WLCT's practice is built around a warm, non-judgmental environment, respect for individual history and circumstance, and the removal of barriers created by previous negative educational experiences. Independent assurance. NZQA's 2023 EER described WLCT as warm, welcoming, non-judgmental and safe, and found that priority learners with significant learning, language and/or health needs improve wellbeing and enhance their abilities and attributes. Policies reinforce culture. Anti-bullying and harassment, disability and inclusion, privacy, Code of Conduct and complaints procedures provide formal protections alongside relational practice.
Participation and engagement • Learners can participate safely and share their views. • Support connection, cultural and social networks, embedded te reo and tikanga Māori. • Monitored achievement and engagement and a nurturing response to issues affecting study.	Flexible participation. Learning can be individual, small-group, peer-based or self-paced according to need. Gaps in attendance or engagement are approached as circumstances to understand rather than grounds for exclusion; ākonga are welcomed back to re-engage. Confidential support. Learners are able to discuss personal, learning or wellbeing issues privately with staff. Individual learning and case planning enables practical adjustments and referrals to be made without separating pastoral support from educational support. Whānau and community connection. The 2023 EER found that WLCT operates as an essential community hub, with a network of stakeholders for referral and support, and that learners and whānau gain confidence to participate more fully in community life.
Physical and digital spaces • Provides healthy and safe learning environments. • The dedicated, wheelchair-accessible Tech Shed provides a purpose-designed environment for overcoming digital exclusion. • Individualised and self-paced support enables learners with disabilities, neurodiversity, low digital confidence or limited previous access to technology to participate successfully	Physical accessibility and sensory needs. WLCT's has always provided barrier-free access to learning spaces, accessible facilities, quiet study spaces, age and sensory-friendly options, safe equipment and emergency provisions. Digital inclusion. WLCT provides digital literacy support, access to technology, privacy guidance and cybersecurity controls. Digital support is paced to the learner, taking into account their age, stage, and confidence level rather than assuming prior competence. Individual needs' focus. Individual appointments made for one-to-one digital learning, particularly for kaumātua who need patient, practical support with the specific functions and settings of their own mobile devices.
SELF-EVALUATION	Well implemented The environment is demonstrably inclusive and learner-centred.



HOW WELL DO WE DO?

4. Learners are safe and well

Code process / indicators	WLCT evaluative statement and evidence
Basic needs and practical support • Help learners identify and manage basic needs such as housing, food and clothing. • Provide accurate, timely information about provider, community and public services. • Support healthy lifestyles and suitable access to accommodation information.	Whole-person support. WLCT does not treat educational barriers in isolation. The organisation's established practice is to understand the circumstances around learning, including material, family, health and social pressures, and to respond directly or through referral. Community connections. The 2023 EER found that WLCT has a network of external stakeholders to whom learners can be referred and that its work supports pathways through schools, social-service agencies and other community services. Practical response. The existing Code self-review records support such as kai, transport assistance where needed, pastoral care and access to health or community services. These practical supports help learners remain engaged.
Physical and mental health awareness • Promote credible practices supporting physical and mental health. • Support language, identity and culture. • Provide information on health services, peer concerns, emergencies and positive choices.	Health and wellbeing are part of learner success. Staff training has included mental-health awareness, neurodiversity, first aid and cultural awareness. The organisation's relational model makes it possible to notice stress, anxiety, isolation or disengagement early. Culturally responsive support. WLCT's whānau-centred approach, use of ako and tuakana-teina, and commitment to Te Tiriti principles support learners to participate without having to set aside identity, language or whānau relationships. Information needs to remain visible. Local and national service information changes over time. Keeping a current, simple referral directory will make it easier for staff and learners to identify the right support quickly.
Proactive monitoring and response • Maintain appropriate contact information and confidentiality. • Enable learners to communicate wellbeing concerns in confidence. • Identify learners at risk, respond to harmful behaviour, and support re-engagement.	Close contact enables early identification. Attendance, engagement, direct communication and learner records allow staff to notice when someone may need additional support. The 2025 TEC audit found good, consistent and detailed records and no concerns with attendance or registers reviewed. Clear escalation controls. WLCT's critical incident and conduct procedures define serious events, require recording and set out immediate response and follow-up. Complaints, breaches and critical incidents are linked to formal registers and learner files where appropriate. Re-engagement is expected. WLCT's approach is to maintain connection and help learners return after wellbeing-related interruptions rather than treat disrupted participation as failure.
SELF-EVALUATION	Well implemented Learner wellbeing is closely integrated with educational support and record-keeping.



COMPLAINTS & CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Complaints and Critical Incidents

The Code of Practice also asks that organisations publish complaints received each year.

WLCT defines a complaint as a formal expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the learning experience, services, policies or organisational practice. Concerns may be raised informally first and, where required, progress through a formal complaint and appeal process. Support people or advocates may be involved.

WLCT defines a critical incident as a sudden or unexpected event that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of learners or staff and requires an immediate response. Existing procedures cover emergency action, notification, recording, follow-up and review.

Category	2026 number	Summary / resolution / themes
Formal learner complaints	0	
Other formal complaints relevant to the Code	0	
Critical incidents	0	
Recurring or systemic themes	0	

FINAL WORDS

For WLCT, pastoral care is not a separate service attached to teaching. It is part of the educational relationship itself: listening to ākonga and whānau, reducing barriers, protecting dignity, responding to risk, and creating the conditions in which learning becomes possible.

Appendix: Evidence base and source documents

- NZQA External Evaluation and Review reports for WLCT: 2015, 2019 and 2023.
- WLCT, Self-Review of NZQA's Pastoral Care Code of Practice (2023) and NZQA Code Self-Review Attestations (2022-2024).
- Tertiary Education Commission, Desktop Audit Report: The Whanganui Learning Centre Trust (Edumis 7956), November 2025 (final for WLCT; no amendments requested).
- WLCT current Quality Management System and 2026 TEO self-review / quality-improvement working material.



AWHI, AKO

OUR PURPOSE

A community space for whānau-centric learning where everyone can grow and thrive.



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Whanganui Learning Centre

OUR VALUES IN ACTION

CONNECTION

We know and trust our community, and our community knows and trusts us. We build and maintain positive relationships and work together.

ADAPTABILITY

We respond quickly to learner and community needs and do what needs to be done.

SKILL

We know the adult learning sector really well, we complement each other's strengths, and we are constantly learning.

CARING

We are welcoming, we listen, we encourage and nurture, and we don't judge.

INTEGRITY

We put learners at the centre, keep our promises and walk our talk.

HUMOUR

We are quick to laugh, don't take ourselves too seriously, and we value the warmth and humanity that humour brings to our work.

OUR KEY GOALS FOR SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

USEFUL

We provide the services and opportunities that our community wants and needs.

PEOPLE-FOCUSED

We awhi and manaaki everyone who comes through our door.

BI-CULTURAL

We have strong relationships with Mana Whenua and a good understanding of Te Ao Māori.

COLLABORATIVE

We work well with other groups and organisations for the benefit of our community.

