



Michael Park Kindergarten
Cherishing Childhood

Matapopore Tamarikitanga
Philosophy Statement
2020

*What is special about our place
and what we stand for*

Mā te ahurei o te tamaiki e ārahi i ā tatou mahi
Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work



The Michael Park Kindergarten **Vision** is to cherish childhood (**Matapopore Tamarikitanga**), accompanying tamariki on the journey towards: “developing as free human beings who out of themselves are able to impart purpose and direction to their own lives.”

(Quote by Rudolf Steiner- from the Michael Park Vision)



Michael Park Kindergarten is inspired by the indicators for education from Rudolf Steiner, relevant for Aotearoa. At its heart is a spiritual and human-centred world view based on an understanding of the human individuality, as a being of **body, soul and spirit**. We recognise the interconnectedness of:

Te Taha Tinana - the active physical and physiological aspects, which in Steiner education recognises the involvement of life forces (etheric) in vitality and learning

Te Taha Whatamanawa – heart and emotions, which in Steiner education is enriched through the arts and creativity

Te Taha Hinengaro - the mind, which in Steiner education is stimulated by open ended opportunity to bring ideas to life in play

Te Taha Wairua - the spiritual core, which in Steiner education is at the centre of identity and self organisation deeply influenced by human relationships

Aroha: loving interest in and acceptance of tamariki and their whānau (family) is at the heart of our philosophy. Michael Park is committed to an equitable learning environment that acknowledges the role of the Tiriti O Waitangi, is free of discrimination aiming to foster an environment that is tolerant, understanding and respectful. Joy, humour, and happiness in our everyday life express our love for tamariki and whanau. Manakitanga, respect, hospitality and care of others, is valued.



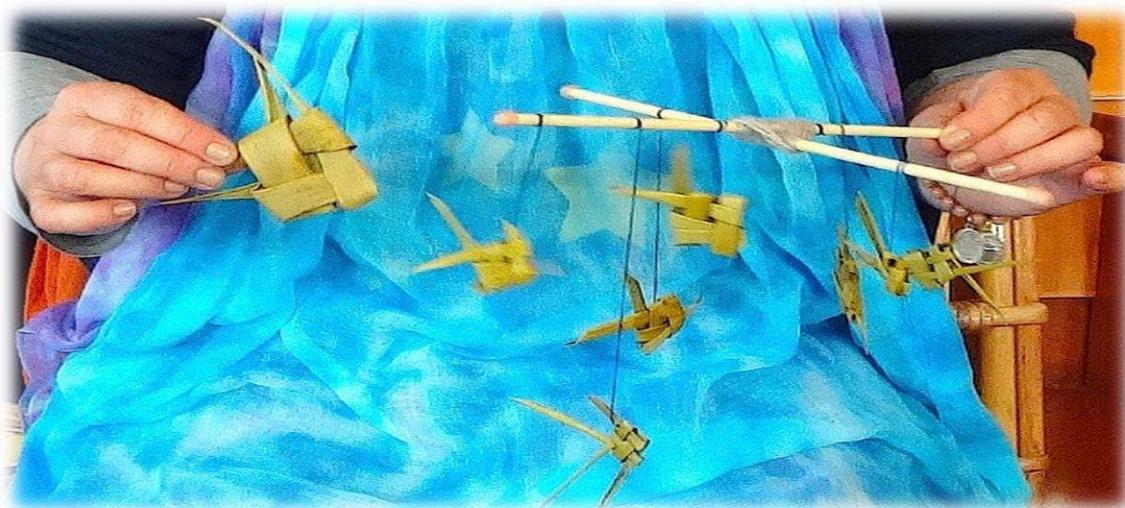
The spontaneous, **self-directed play** of tamariki is seen as an essential activity and a childhood right. Play is an opportunity to meaningfully make sense of experience and integrate cognitive and problem-solving skills, creativity and imagination, self-expression, concentration, investigation, language, numeracy and social skills. It is a priority that tamariki have plenty of opportunity to play with depth and purpose and are able to pursue their own ideas.

Kaikako (teachers) create a learning environment of **meaningful adult activity for children to imitate**. Practical mahi (work) such as cooking, baking, gardening, craft and caring for the environment is woven into daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms. Tamariki contribute according to their interests and strengths. **Secure rhythms** protect mauri (life energy), provide security, and continuity, and a sense of wholeness in life.





Artistic experience further tamariki capacity to speak, listen and communicate well with others. Storytelling, waiata (singing), drawing and painting, rhythmic circle games, modelling and craft foster the healthy development of imagination and creativity.



Birthdays, Christian and seasonal **festivals** are celebrated. It is important to us that tamariki develop a robust sense of self and through festivals tamariki experience Mana atuaanga (uniqueness and spiritual connectedness). **Gratitude, reverence, and wonder** underpin our festival impulses.



Whānau are encouraged to bring stories, customs, meals and songs into kindergarten and share with others to enable tamariki to value and embrace the **diversity of our community**. We endeavor to incorporate **Te Reo Māori** and **Tikanga** (Maori ways of doing things, tikanga, customs), so that tamariki may be confident in their own culture and interested in other cultures.



Most playthings and resources are from nature or are hand-made from natural materials providing **nourishment for the senses**. Tamariki are encouraged to be physically skilled, active and healthy and there is plenty of time for adventure and discovery in the garden, exploring life cycles, the elements and the seasons. The environment offer limits, structure and protection as well as the possibility to take risks and meet challenges.



Michael Park kindergarten has a kaitiakitanga (guardianship, environmental stewardship) relationship with Papatunauku (mother earth) and embraces **sustainability principles**.

As well as using resources creatively and cooperatively in play, we encourage tamariki to learn from real experiences and strongly discourage learning from screens (at home and at kindergarten) so children have a living relationship to the world around them





Kai (food) is prepared with care and respect to support healthy eating habits, digestion and physical development. We cook a **nutritious vegetarian lunch** using mostly organic ingredients. Tamariki bring their own lunch boxes for morning tea.

Kaiako recognise that healthy child development takes place best in the context of a community based on healthy social relationships among whanau, kaiako and tamariki. We strive to create **conscious, collaborative communities** so tamariki grow feeling a valued part of community and are able to contribute to it. Whanaungatanga, a feeling of belonging through shared experiences and working together, is a valued part of creating community.

Rose Cottage caters for children aged 2 ½ - 4 years on Monday, to Thursday from 8.30 - 2.00. Jacaranda, Magnolia, Maple and Kowhai Kindergarten groups are open 5 days from 8.30 -2.00 for children aged 3 ½ -6 years. **Whānau grouping** of children in mixed ages (tuakana-teina) encourages children to learn from and alongside each other developing as socially and emotionally secure individuals who can manage themselves in group settings.

We believe that each stage of a child’s development has unique qualities that should be experienced fully before embarking upon the next stage. This means we take an **unhurried approach to learning**. Children transition to school at the beginning of each year at 6 + years of age.

Kindergarten and school aim to maintain a distinct curriculum that develops the potential of every child in an approach that is age appropriate and developmentally attuned. The stepping stones between kindergarten and class 1 are aligned so children experience **successful transitions** and are ready to meet the challenges of school.

It is the task of Michael Park School to provide outstanding Rudolf Steiner Education. The school curriculum is guided by the Steiner view of child development. Students reach their potential within an inspiring academic, artistic and spiritual framework, which educates the whole human being, recognizing that each child is on a pathway to fulfil their destiny. Our graduates will be imaginative and resourceful problem-solvers with vision and enthusiasm for life and an awareness of the interconnectedness of their actions. Self-directed and courageous, they will continue to develop their talents to reach their full potential. Socially and culturally integrated, they value and respect themselves, others and the environment. As positive contributors to society with a well-developed social conscience, Michael Park School graduates will be able to meet challenges and through their deeds make a difference to the world in which they live.

(Michael Park School Charter 2018)

Whānau are consulted on the future strategic direction of the kindergarten and key shifts in philosophy and curriculum, policy and procedures. There are opportunities for **collaboration and whanau are** expected to contribute to curriculum, be involved in community and participate in adult education. Children's Golden books celebrate **learning journeys** and progress.

Kaiako are committed to an **inner path of development**. Professional development and reflective practice offer opportunities to learn from others, to share their experiences and to keep up to date so they offer the best possible learning opportunity for tamariki. Kaiako interact with the school to ensure the pathway for tamariki from kindergarten to school is well crafted.

We recognise ourselves as colleagues in a world movement. As such, we are committed to collaborating with our colleagues on local, national and international levels. Michael Park is an active and leading member of Waekura the national Rudolf Steiner early childhood group, Steiner Education Aotearoa New Zealand and IASWECE (International Association Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education).

